



**2. “Hail Mary, as you are so pure,
keep me pure in body and soul.
Open wide to me your heart and the heart of your Son;
give me souls and keep everything else for yourself.”**

Fr Kentenich described the above prayer as the “rootstock” of Schoenstatt’s spirituality (cf. the previous text). He called it his childhood prayer, which originated in his own childhood, and he often invited us to pray it and live it. He equated it with our consecration prayer.

What follows are a number of short quotations from various talks, most of them from the 1940s following the Dachau period. From the quotations, we can see how Fr Kentenich quite spontaneously talked about this prayer in the most varied contexts, and in this way pointed out the various dimensions of this apparently very simple prayer.

The texts presented here are less for study than for meditation. When you read them, try to empathize with the founder’s spiritual breath, and to meet him in his words and in prayer.

29 July 1945

We have often prayed a little prayer recently, including yesterday morning after the talk, Hail Mary, as, you are so pure keep me pure in body and soul; open wide to me your heart and the heart of your Son!

It is a prayer that a number of you have prayed privately... If you look at it more closely, you will notice that spiritual currents are expressed in that little prayer that have been constantly at work in our Family since the Inscriptio. Do you notice how strongly both hearts are indicated? The heart of our Lord and of the Blessed Mother have to be opened to us – not only that, they must be opened wide, as widely as possible. Open wide to me your heart and the heart of your Son.

5 August 1945

You could also pray the little prayer in much the same way as our little consecration. We often pray it not just for ourselves, but also for others, “ My Queen, my Mother, I consecrate them to you ...” Couldn’t we also pray something similar when we feel inspired to do so? “Hail Mary, as you are so pure, keep them pure in body and soul, open wide to them your heart and the heart of your Son.”

Actually it would be a good idea, and we would be wise to make that little prayer the subject of our meditation as often as possible. “Hail Mary, as you are so pure, keep me/them pure in body and soul, open wide to me/them, your heart and the heart of your Son.”

13 July 1947

We have got into the habit of praying that prayer every day, "Hail Mary, as, you are so pure, keep me pure in body and soul" Let me tell you that it is a prayer that I personally composed when I was still very young. I always knelt down to pray this prayer.

6 August 1949

Let us tell each other that we want to belong to one another far more closely than before, we want to stick together with far greater loyalty.

However, the Mother of God has to intercede for the grace for all of us to grow into her heart and the heart of God, because we now belong to one another.

This is very simply expressed in the little prayer of a child, "Hail Mary, ..." How lovely that is! "Open wide to me your heart and also the heart of your Son!" We all want to enter in. Our relationship to one another has to be such that when we think of one another, we also think of God. We are God for one another. That is the grace we want the Blessed Mother to intercede for us today.

15 September 1949

I want nothing for myself alone. I want to use everything I am given not only so that I may grow, but also that my heart may grow wider. It has to bear within itself all the needs of the Sisters; it has to be interested in everything and ready for sacrifice; it has to do away with all desire for pleasure – I don't want pleasure. If God gives me something, it has to be transformed so that everyone can say to me, "Let your heart be filled with concern for us!"

"Give me souls!" Please add to the prayer for yourselves. What do those words mean, "Give me souls"?

We pray the first part, "Hail Mary, as, you are so pure, keep me pure in body and soul." The Blessed Mother has given us the grace to remain pure in body and soul.

"Open wide to me your heart and the heart of your Son; give me souls, and keep everything else for yourself!" Do I thirst for souls in this way?

Do I promote every apostolic activity everywhere? When I travel through the world, is an apostolic spirit at work in me all the time, one that assimilates everything, that knows no rest until, wherever the opportunity offers, the world is set on fire?

"Give me souls!" Think of how many souls God has given us! Each time someone comes to me to tell me their needs – give me souls! I may sow seeds.

"Give me souls!" They are formed by the way I give myself to them, and what I say to them germinates. Today, when I travel and beg for money, the money is not the main thing, but souls. It doesn't say, give me pesos!¹⁴ but, give me souls! We want to win souls. Hence, we have to live in such a way that through our prayer, through our being and our sacrifice, people can also say of us, "Remember me and turn aside God's just anger".

20 September 1949

It takes some time before the apostolic spirit has penetrated us to our fingertips. So don't be so quick to say, 'What a burden the apostolate is!' It is fine to say here or there that it is a burden, but our basic attitude has always to ask why are we here. We want to consume ourselves for God's kingdom.

Can you still remember my little childhood prayer, "Give me souls"? Not just one little soul, although we have to relinquish the whole world for the sake of one little soul. "Give me souls, keep everything else for yourself!" It is a very profound little prayer. Remember all that it contains, "Hail Mary, as, you are so pure keep me pure in body and soul, open wide to me your heart and the heart of your Son! Give me souls, keep everything else for yourself."

Can you see the inner context? Can you see how purity really is the means to open the heart of our Lord and of the Blessed Mother?

From this we want to receive an all - embracing apostolic spirit.

10 October 1949

You really have to see how nicely God does things, for example, when I think of that little prayer.

When I examine myself, I notice that God has led me according to this little prayer, "As you are so pure, ...

¹⁴ The "peso" was the money unit in Spain (before the Euro), and remains the money unit in some Latin American countries.

open wide to me your heart and the heart of your Son...”, and the other, “give me souls and take everything else from me!” It is as though God has educated me accordingly.

9 February 1963

We have mentioned some points regarding the spiritual daily order. I think I should indicate one or the other thing to supplement what has already been said. First of all, I forgot to mention the little prayer which is an essential part of our Sisters’ daily order,

*Hail Mary
as you are so pure,
keep me pure in body and soul.
Open wide to me your heart and the heart of your Son.
Give me souls
and keep everything else for yourself.*

It is a little prayer that is actually the heart and centre of the whole of our lives, and it includes our whole calling, especially the virginal calling. It is not as though we have to do this [because I say so]. I think it is important to mention it, because we have to be precise and faithful in little things. (Milwaukee Tertianship, Vol. VII, 63rd Conference, p. 10)