



25. “With hope and joy, confident in the victory, we go with Mary into the new era”

Fr Kentenich died on 15 September 1968 after he had been confined to bed for a number of months because of a weak heart.

A week before he died, on 7 September 1968, he wrote a message to the members of the Schoenstatt Family who had followed his urging to take part in the 82nd German Katholikentag in Essen. Since the end of his exile three years previously it had been his challenge and strategy: Enter into the Church!

In his message he sketched the situation of the time especially from the point - of - view of collectivism. The forces at work at that time presented a great danger to the Church, to the substance of the faith in the people, and to their souls.

It is in this context that the special mission of the Blessed Mother, as she had “revealed” herself in Schoenstatt, shone out with particular clarity. In keeping with Don Bosco’s dream, which he quoted, the barque of the Church has to anchor itself to the pillars of the Eucharist and the Immaculata in the storms of our present times if it is to overcome its enemies.

Fr Kentenich’s message ended with a survey of the activity of the Blessed Mother in Schoenstatt’s history, which justified the motto he gave to the Schoenstatters in Essen:

With hope and joy, confident in the victory, we go with Mary into the new era!

It was as though our founder guessed that this greeting would be his last, his testament, as it were. Looking back on Schoenstatt’s history within the context of the times, and in view of the Church, he gave expression to his conviction that he had been given a Marian mission, and at the same time summarized his life.

It is highly recommended that you read the whole document, which is available in English as a duplicated booklet entitled: Message 1968. To provide an incentive to do so the last chapter is quoted in this collection. With this final message we close the section of autobiographical and historical texts, and hence Volume One of this collection.

Already very early in our history we Schoenstatters set ourselves the ideal as a Family to take over the responsibility, as the Second Founding Document states, “that we may be found worthy to help lead the way to a time in which the Church will be justified in singing: *Omnes haereses – etiam anthropologicas – tu sola interemisti in universo mundo!* You have also overcome the anthropological heresies of the new era and initiated a new, Christian order in society.” Year after year since 1914 we have committed ourselves

increasingly through our covenant of love with the MTA to carrying out the meaning of the motto: With hope and joy, confident in the victory, we go with Mary into the new era! Throughout the past years we have directed our gaze unwaveringly to the shores of a new era for the Church and world. This is how all that has been written over the years has to be seen. We know that for a long time certain circles in the Church, which have orientated themselves in a one - sided way to the shores of the old times, have not understood us on account of this attitude. Our covenant of love is an obligation to both partners. We wanted to surrender ourselves completely to Mary and allow her to educate us. And she, the great educator of the people and of peoples, accepted the obligation to draw us to herself from her shrines in order to educate us to become useful instruments in her hands for the Marian formation of the coming world into Christ to the glory of the Father.

We know how both partners carried out their task. All of us have experienced it for ourselves to a greater or lesser degree. She has shown that she is not only the masterly educator of the elite and the masses from her shrine; as the great Missionary she has not only worked continuous miracles of helping people to find a spiritual home, transformation and fruitfulness; she has also proved on a small scale in the many and varied formations of our Family that she is the brilliant reformer of human society, and the one who crushes the serpent in the battle for Christ and against all diabolical powers. It is not without reason that she is praised as the *terribilis acies bene ordinata* - a terrible army in battle order. Our morning prayer in "Heavenwards" leads us to thank with all our hearts for this when it prays:

We give you thanks for all the gifts
we have received in such abundance:
for choosing Schoenstatt
as the place of Christ's rebirth
and the place where you radiate into the world
the glories of our Mother,
so that streams of love may pour forth
to warm cold hearts.²⁶³

The Hymn of the Home sings the praises of the Family's readiness for battle and confidence in the victory, precisely because of the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt's proven educational wisdom and leadership. It sings:

Do you know the land prepared to fight,
accustomed to victory in every battle:
where God espouses himself with the weak
and chooses them as his instruments;
where none build on their own strength
but all heroically trust in God;
where out of love they are ready
to rejoicingly offer blood and life?
This wonderland is known to me –
It is the meadow radiantly lit by Tabor's sun,
where our Three times Admirable Lady reigns
in the midst of her favorite children,
loyally rewarding each gift of love
with the manifestation of her glory
and immeasurably abundant fruitfulness:
It is my home, my Schoenstatt Land!²⁶⁴

Now that we have experienced for more than fifty years the importance, implications and fruitfulness of the motto we have given out as a fruit of our reciprocal covenant of love, we will not find it difficult to repeat it with great warmth, take our bearings from it in the coming fifty years, despite all the revolutionary

²⁶³ *Heavenwards*, p. 13f.

²⁶⁴ *Heavenwards*, p. 161.

spiritual currents in the world and Church, and commit ourselves body and soul to it. At the beginning of the second fifty years we want to repeat in our own way, but with the same warmth, what Max Brunner solemnly proclaimed at the beginning of the first fifty years, *Ave, Imperatrix, morituri te salutant!*²⁶⁵ We also want to repeat in spirit what the first members of the Family at that time promised on oath on their banner as an expression of their consecration, or covenant of love, with the words, "This is the banner I have chosen, I will not abandon it, I swear it to God!" We hope that like them we will be allowed to hear the answer of our covenant partner: This is the instrument I have chosen, I will not abandon it, I swear it to God! This oath applies to the whole Family, it also applies to each individual member.

Let us go out with this attitude into the dark future. We do so with the motto, "With hope and joy, confident in the victory, we go with Mary into the new era!" To the extent that we are on fire for it, we will not be able to rest until all whom we love at home and abroad have adopted the same motto. All will then be able to repeat with us,

**I firmly believe that no one will be lost
who remains faithful to the covenant of love!**²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Hail, Empress, we who are prepared to die for you, salute you!

²⁶⁶ *Heavenwards*, p. 139.