

## Talk of 16.7.1967 in Dachau

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## Talk of 16.7.1967 in Dachau

My dear Schoenstatt Family,

Now that we have gained a deeper insight into the main trends that can be followed up through the entire Dachau period, we should pause for a moment and discover the developments which characterise the two foundations - the Family Movement and the Brothers of Mary.

It is possible that what I am about to say is not very well known to you. Let us keep to the disposition of that part of the Christmas Congress (1966) in which we discussed the need to foster a sense for history. If we want to understand history, we must first of all know what happened. Knowledge of the historical facts should then become insight as a result of interpreting these facts. This will then lead to our historical responsibility and the historical mission of a work which is seen in this way.

It is necessary, first of all, to say something about the **historical facts**.

With what are we concerned here? Allow me for the sake of clarity to recall what was said in the first talk given today. We are not only striving to reach the ideal of the supernatural, naive person, but also to use this ideal to create and sustain a new, Christian social order.

The facts - then we will be able to understand everything we have to consider here. We have to bear this in mind in a special way. The Brothers of Mary have already had their private celebration; they have summarised what is

their personal possession. They didn't have the courage to let us share in it. Perhaps they will do so later when they are fully fledged. We now want to concern ourselves with the Family Movement.

How did it come about? In order to give a quick answer let us differentiate between the pre-history, the actual history and the later history.

Our concern is the creation of this new, Christian social order. Two things had not been achieved before I went to Dachau, we still lacked two things: an organized Family Movement and a community of Brothers. I went to the concentration camp with these two tasks in mind, and according to the law of the open door I repeatedly tried to discover whether God was not opening a door for these two foundations somewhere, somehow - even under the most adverse conditions.

A brief word, then to the

### **P r e - h i s t o r y .**

Allow me to remind you how strongly we emphasised the idea of the community even in 1912. This gave rise to the one great aim - the new person in the new community. At that time our concern was to infuse new spiritual life into the existing communities which were more like societies than communities. All that existed was seriously malformed. Hence, even then I was thinking: I want to create a new community, one borne by the spirit. These thoughts, as I have already pointed out, became clearer to me in the 1920s when I gained an insight into the position of the father in our modern Western society. At that time one could recognise a slow decline. Many ideas which originated in that period, but which were not generally spoken about in public, became part of our family history.

Then in 1932 I gave a training course on "Education for Marriage"<sup>1</sup>, and took the opportunity to discuss many related topics. I should like to read out one or the other extract, but I would like to ask you, and in particular the members of the Family Movement, to read the very valuable article on this topic in "Foundation and Crown"<sup>2</sup>. It has been most conscientiously compiled. In the Jubilee Issue, on page 6, a basic principle is given to start with:

"The founder says: 'We are inspired and live by the great thought that our Blessed Mother wants to use us from here as her instruments to build up and re-conquer the kingdom of God. Therefore our most important task is to carry her picture before us, and increasingly see to it that countless people make a perfect covenant of love with her'."

We do so because we believe that from here she will be active as an educator, and see to it that the families are again united by spiritual bonds and in the end re-found the kingdom of God. In the notes made during the 1932 Training Course we can read, among other things:

"Unless a religious community influences and forms everyday life, it deserves to be mowed down by the trends of the time."

At that time a Family Movement did not exist. My concern was that all the members of our Schoenstatt Family should try to renew their own natural families. I was not dealing formally with a Family Movement, with an organisation for marriage and family life.

"What is the central problem of everyday life? It is marriage and the family. Therefore, every association must set the example and ask itself: What are we doing to create holy marriages and families? The ideal for which we are working here is to create islands of Catholic marriages. In the same way as the early Christians, we must lift ourselves up by the Catholic ideal of marriage from our heathen surroundings. ... Something like a storm should rage through our country - a storm of holy self-surrender for the renewal of our families. A large religious movement, exerting an elemental influence on its surroundings, should come into existence"<sup>3</sup>.

"We should commit ourselves with great fervour to starting a Catholic marriage movement. This would have to bear the Catholic concept of the pure, God-willed marriage into the world at large. In other words, it would have

to see to it with great warmth and enthusiasm that the Catholic ideal of marriage shines with classic purity before the people"4.

"If you have understood what we have been saying about Marian education, you will know and admit that I am right in maintaining that the Marian person is naturally open for the great thoughts about marriage. If we give our people a Marian education, we need only enlarge upon the great thoughts about the Catholic ideal of marriage for them to become an objective value. Consider whether this is not theoretically correct. Better still, try it out in practice. Try to educate Marian personalities. You will then experience that education for marriage is easy. Of course, Marian education demands constant work" 5.

"Marian education is built on two main pillars: attachment to Mary and the attitude of Mary. Attachment to Mary is the core of Marian education. If we ourselves achieve, or lead others to a simple, childlike devotion to Mary, the entire blessing of devotion to Mary will in time fall into our laps. Whoever manages to bring those entrusted to them to this degree of love for Mary, will have practised a most eminent pedagogy for marriage" 6.

Thus our main concern was the renewal of family life. Father Eise came to Schoenstatt in 1931 to take up the responsibility for creating such a movement of renewal among families, but he was not meant to concentrate on the organisational structures at first. Later he was sent to the concentration camp and continued to work zealously for this aim. I was also sent to Dachau. For me, however, the problem remained that if we were really to bring about a renewal of the Christian social order, we would not be able to achieve our goal without having our own strong Family Movement. He was sent to the concentration camp. I was sent to the concentration camp. These facts need to be noted as part of the pre-history.

Now let us consider the  
**a c t u a l h i s t o r y.**

Allow me to remind you again that for us, and indeed for me in particular, the law of the open door always prevailed. The tiniest details always caused me to question: What does God want to say to me through this event? God never approached us with thunderous strides, at least this was not his usual way. Once or twice this did happen, but we understood God's thunderous strides because we had understood and answered his almost silent approach on other occasions. He thundered in Dachau, later he thundered during my second exile. From time to time God's writing resembled "the claw-marks of a lion", but on the whole tiny, almost invisible hints were sufficient to direct us.

While I was in the admission block I quickly made friends with Protestant pastors, and in particular with Pastor Wilms from the Bodelschwingh<sup>7</sup> School at Bethel, a training centre for theologians, deacons and deaconesses. When he told me about all that Bodelschwingh had brought into existence there, and of the tremendous blessing that had gone out from there for the Protestant Church groups, I immediately asked myself: What is God trying to say to me through this? I thought about it. I realised that we could obviously not ordain the couples that were trained at our centres, and then send them out as ordained priests. However, what was being done in this regard by Bodelschwingh, or rather, at Bethel, would also be possible for us if we founded something like a Secular Institute for Schoenstatt Families.

What did this mean? A Secular Institute is always a group of leaders, for example, the Secular Institute of the Sisters of Mary, the Brothers of Mary, etc. This presupposes that the other sections already exist. From this insight came the plan to concentrate first of all on the highest section, the Secular Institute. This was prepared for by the two lower sections. It meant applying the entire organisation of the other branches of the Schoenstatt Movement to the families.

At that time two men presented themselves here for carrying out this aim and task. The one was Father Eise. He was meant to take over the task of building up and extending the top-most section. At the time the whole branch was simply called the Family Movement. Later the three sections - Family League, Family Union and Family Institute - were called the Family Movement.

How did we manage to carry out this plan in Dachau? Hardly had I arrived than I was approached on all sides by laymen. They wanted information about this or that, they looked for orientation and they asked to be led more deeply into the spiritual life. Even in those terrible circumstances one found that individuals were being mysteriously motivated to strive for a deeper spiritual life. Among them were two friends: **Doctor Kühn** and **Doctor Pesendorfer**. Try to imagine the situation. I went to Dachau with the thought that we still lacked two communities. Would they be founded there? It has never been my habit to start things in theory. If I had a plan in mind - let us leave aside for the moment the fact that I always read this plan from the striving of souls - I none the less always waited until someone began to work in that direction. After a period of comprehensive training, which was carried out amidst the constant threat of death if it was discovered - you should ask those concerned to tell you about all the hair-raising escapades in Dachau - I was faced with the fact that Doctor Kühn wanted to commit himself to the Family Movement, that is, he was prepared to found the highest community, and Doctor Pesendorfer was ready to start the community of the Brothers of Mary. There was, in addition, a Brother from a congregation in Austria who wanted to join him. Thus in Doctor Kühn and Doctor Pesendorfer we had what seemed to be chosen leaders for the two communities we still needed before our Family could set out into the world to work with every means at its disposal for the unification, and hence renewal, of the social order.

### **Doctor Fritz Kühn**

He was well known, at least in certain circles. He was a friend and co-worker of Heinrich Brüning<sup>8</sup>, and was active in a number of organisations. He was released from the concentration camp before the end of the war, and did all he could for the Family Movement. He had a 'Fazenda'(farm) in Brazil. He settled there, fell ill, and died there (27.10.1950). In order to show you what sort of person he was, allow me to read you a letter he wrote to me shortly before his death. I must do so even if only because our families in the Movement want to take upon themselves the mission he received. It is a very comprehensive mission and requires total self-sacrifice in every respect. Since with the mission we are given strength, a goal and grace, you can hear from the few words that follow what is awaiting those who want to follow in his footsteps.

"Rolandia (that is the place in Brazil where he had his house and farm), 5th August, 1950.

Reverend Herr Pater, revered and beloved fatherly friend<sup>9</sup>,

A few days ago I had an operation in the hospital in Londrina staffed by the Sisters of Mary. I have cancer of the liver, that is to say, a disease which by human calculations will sooner or later cause my death. Thus my life is more than ever in God's hands. The Sisters immediately began a novena to Josef Engling, and after my return home my wife and I joined them in this prayer.

I have again consecrated my life completely and unconditionally to the Mother Thrice Admirable. If my suffering and death will be of greater benefit to her work (the Family Movement) than my life, I give it to her. May she accept it and intercede for me with her Son for the grace to complete this oblation in a manner he expects from me, a child of his Mother. If my life should be of greater benefit to our Mother's work, may she restore health and life to me, and intercede for me for the grace to work, suffer and one day die as an instrument in her hand for building up the Marian kingdom of Christ in this world. Since my life can only be saved by a miracle, may she then work this miracle through the intercession of Josef Engling, so that the third miracle for his beatification may be acknowledged, and that also in this way her work may be glorified. Because of my lack of initiative and awkwardness, I still do not know where I should begin and how I should work; our Mother will show me. To start with I shall work in the Movement in Londrina until you visit us and I can discuss things with you."

You may be interested to hear another short report on his death. A Sister of Mary who nursed him writes:

"Londrina, 29th October, 1950

Today I can tell you the sad, joyful news that Doctor Fritz Kühr died after 10 p.m. on 27th October, 1950. He was released, as one says, by an easy death after he had suffered a great deal. I was with him for the last time on 18th October. He had often asked me to visit him, but you know how far it is from Londrina to his Fazenda. ... Therefore Sister M. went a few days previously to him. However, because he again and again asked for me, I went there on 18th October.

I found Doctor Kühr in a very weakened condition, and he had lost a lot of weight. One could see that his days and hours were numbered. He wanted to speak to me privately, because he was repeatedly filled with anxiety that he would not be able to carry out the promise he had made to the MTA. By this he meant the Inscriptio (complete self-giving), joyful suffering, longing for the cross and suffering. He said: 'Sister, I live, suffer and die for Schoenstatt and its mission, but I am often so weak that I cannot be joyful. I feel as helpless as a little child at such times. What should I do? What should I say to our Blessed Mother? Will she still be able to love me even though I was able to do so little for her work when I was healthy?' - He could only speak with great difficulty and very softly. Then he suddenly said: 'Sister, I give everything, absolutely everything to our Blessed Mother; but what must I do so that she can be satisfied with me? I can no longer pray, only every now and again a small ejaculation.'

I knelt silently next to his bed. I was alone with him and could observe how he suffered. Outwardly he was very calm. Only slight contractions of his face betrayed how much he was suffering. He remarked: 'I can bear the pain far better than this terrible weakness, which almost stops me from breathing.' His whole body was full of water, and the jaundice poisoned his whole system. His poor body was tortured. He writhed with pain, yet he still refused strong sedation. The doctor allowed him three morphine injections a day, but he only had half at night. His greatest worry was that he would not be able to live the Inscriptio. He said that he had no joy in suffering. I was able to calm him by pointing out that he was suffering freely because he refused to be sedated; our Lady was surely pleased with this.

From time to time I said a few prayers with him as well as the little consecration. I reminded him of 18th October and spoke about the shrine. To calm and relieve him I told him that I would help him to carry out his promise. I would tell our Schoenstatt Mother to let me suffer what was intended by God for him, in order to relieve him and to give him strength for the last, great battle - death. This made him very happy. All that mattered was that his promise should be fulfilled, he said, because he considered himself too weak to do so. He often said: 'I can do no more. Please pray for me, for my sinful soul.'

He was so childlike, so humble, in a way one rarely finds in a man. I admired Doctor Kühr's greatness of soul. Outwardly he was so childlike, so unpretentious. It was an expression of his attitude of soul, and yet he had such a great soul. We heard this just now at his funeral. ...

On 28th October we received word of his death during the night. A doctor immediately offered to take me by car to his farm. Sister G. and I were therefore able to be present at the funeral in the afternoon. There, before the open coffin in the church, we heard the priest tell of Doctor Kühr's simplicity and great love, of how he thought little of himself, and of how well he was able to be in the background. His life was dedicated completely to God.

A Brazilian also spoke about Doctor Kühr: he had learnt a great deal from Doctor Kühr about what he knew, about his simplicity, but most of all about his humility. This man was completely taken up with the latter virtue. Hardly anyone spoke about Doctor Kühr's greatness, but very many spoke about his silent, hidden life. He attracted many.

Indeed, Doctor Kühr died for Schoenstatt. I offered myself again and again to our Lady for him. I heard that he died quietly, without any struggle. His wife is also very composed, which surprises everyone. Our Lady has done much for her. Inwardly she is very calm, in a way she has not been for years. She told me this herself. Despite all her suffering she feels much stronger."

Whoever, therefore, consciously takes over Doctor Kühr's mission, must be prepared for the cross and suffering.  
Allow me to remind you that there is hardly any prayer which God so loves to answer as the request for the cross and suffering.

One of Doctor Kühr's special longings was that the highest political and business posts should be filled by Schoenstatt members. He thought in long-range terms and was of the opinion that we must fill every type of office, of course, only after we have been educated in our true Schoenstatt spirit. He himself had always been in the foreground, his name was well-known, but later he increasingly withdrew into the background. His idea is one of the great tasks we will one day have to carry out once we have become more of a community and represent a world of our own. Then our members will have to go out and take up the highest, most dangerous posts in the midst of the world. Let me repeat, whoever wants to take over Doctor Kühr's mission, whoever feels called to do so, knows what it includes.

I need hardly say anything about Father Eise. The celebration has already described him and his character.

With that I have touched upon the central thoughts.

Now let us enlarge upon

### **t h e l a t e r h i s t o r y**

I have already indicated that, prior to the above events, Schoenstatt had had no separate organisation for families. After 1945 this task was given to Father Tick. He took over the responsibility for building up and extending the entire Family Movement, beginning with the League and continuing through the Union to the Secular Institute. It would be worth our while at this point to hear what has come into existence in the meantime. However, I do not want to go into this now. Allow me -to round off our train of thoughts - to read you a letter I wrote to Father Tick from Santa Maria, Brazil, on 15th April 1948. It is a letter that has since gone down in the history of the Family Movement as its Founding Document. You may know it. The first families usually met at Pentecost, and the entire Family Movement has since developed slowly out of these beginnings.

"It was a good idea to reserve Pentecost for yourselves again. The day is in keeping with the dignity and importance of the work for which you are being used as an instrument.

Since it is difficult even for individual people to let themselves be governed by grace, it may seem almost impossible to create a family according to the example of the Blessed Trinity or the Holy Family of Nazareth. It has always been difficult to do so. Our present-day world, however, which brings about the uprooting of stable living conditions everywhere, shows its destructive effects most fully within the sanctuary of the family. If our Blessed Mother wants to create a new human society and a new person from Schoenstatt, she must necessarily concentrate all her power and graces on creating and increasing strong Schoenstatt Families. That is why we pray in our Schoenstatt Office:

Your shrine is our Nazareth  
in which Christ the Sun shines warmly.

With its clear and radiant light it forms  
the history of the Holy Family,  
awakening quiet, strong workaday sanctity  
in happy family unity.

God wants to save families  
in the Nazareth for homeless times,  
and mercifully grant workaday sanctity  
when people consecrate themselves to Schoenstatt.

Mother, grant that Christ may shine more brightly in us;  
unite us in a holy community

prepared at all times for every sacrifice  
our holy mission requires of us.

May God the Father be joyfully honoured  
through Christ, with Mary, highly praised,  
in the Holy Spirit full of splendour  
by all the universe for all eternity. Amen.

Whoever knows life today, whoever knows what terrible catastrophes are approaching for the world and Church, must be deeply convinced that the entire Schoenstatt Family, as a whole and in its individual parts, will not be able to carry out its mission unless every effort is finally directed towards creating holy islands of Schoenstatt Families, who increasingly unite to form a single Family Movement.

In moments of calm deliberation it may sometimes seem an impenetrable mystery why our Lord spend thirty years in the loneliness of a family while the world around him rushed towards destruction. Involuntarily we might even ask ourselves what he could have achieved if he had placed his divine powers sooner at the service of the world. This problem can only be solved by the one answer: 'I always do what pleases the Father'<sup>10</sup>. 'I speak the words that he has placed upon my lips, and I do the works that he gave me to do'<sup>11</sup>. This immediately shifts the question and re-directs it to the Heavenly Father. The answer is not unknown to us. The Father unmistakably wants to safeguard the immeasurable blessing that goes out from genuine Christian families.

May our Lady in her Cenacle, therefore, intercede for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon you, so that you may understand the great importance of your God-given, freely chosen, and freely willed new task in life correctly. May you also receive the strength to carry into action the moral code laid down for families by the Popes in their encyclicals, to work out a useful spirituality and educational system for families, as well as to perpetuate tested and meaningful family customs. If you do this, you will become the vessel from which all the other sections of the Movement will be nourished and renewed.

All of us without exception are interested in this new miracle of Pentecost. Therefore, let us united and pray fervently for a new and effective miracle of transformation. Take our Lady's picture with you and give her a place of honour in your homes. These will then become little shrines in which the picture of grace will mediate grace, create a holy family and form holy members of the family.

In the Founding Document our Blessed Mother promised to see to it that our country should again be placed at the head of the Western world. We now know that this can only be achieved if we create holy Schoenstatt Family islands. The MTA will carry out her promise if we carry out the conditions laid down in the Founding Document.

With hearty greetings and my blessing to all present and to all whom they represent."

With that I think I have said enough to help you recall the historical facts. What I have said applies only to the Family Movement.

(Turning to the Brothers of Mary)

The young man who took the foundation of the Brothers' community on his shoulders at that time had previously held a position of honour in the world, which he received again afterwards. After his release from concentration camp he met priests who told him that Schoenstatt had been completely rejected by the Church, and that he had better marry. He took this advice, yet in spite of this he wrote to me on a number of occasions. With that the seed which had been sown had - should I say - died? No, it was taken over by others. These then saw to it that the seed which had been sown in their soil should develop until today. We have now said something about the first point, the historical facts.

The second point:

**the interpretation of history**

The word 'interpretation' naturally has a number of meanings. I would only like to use one: both foundations are a fruit (how should I put it?) of many divine challenges, on the one hand, and of as many human appeals, on the other.

Did God challenge us? You may be sure that this happened from Schoenstatt's very beginning. Nothing ever came into existence in Schoenstatt unless God spoke. In this instance we have mentioned many divine challenges. What were they? They were interior and exterior in nature.

Exterior: the first great challenge on God's part was the **break-down of the Christian social order**. God also speaks to us through such break-downs. What does God require of us as a result? He wants us to re-build the Christian social order, but we must do so in a way suited to the coming era, that is, in keeping with the Church at the shores of the post-modern time. This is exactly what the Church has now laid down at the Council, and the task which the post-Conciliar Church has to carry out in every respect.

A second challenge: Where did it come from? From the break-down of religion in families. What is meant? We may have experienced this in our own lives or in the lives of others.

If we want to be at home in the supernatural world, in the heart of the Triune God, the normal way to this goal is to be at home in a truly Christian, Catholic family. For example, if we want to come into contact with God the Father, this normally requires many different experiences on the natural level, that is, we need preparatory experiences with an earthly father. The same applies to family life.

Let us return for a moment to the break-down of the Christian social order. We may not overlook that if everything is to be renewed according to the vision of the Church at the shores of the post-modern time, the source and wellspring of a Christian society must be re-regulated, re-vitalised and re-activated. What is this wellspring? The family.

These are thoughts with which we are all familiar, and which we hear shouted from the rooftops everywhere. My intention was only to remind you of them once more.

A third and fourth challenge may also not be overlooked. We are concerned here with the **crisis of existence<sup>12</sup> facing the Church at the shores of the post-modern era and a crisis of existence in our own families**.

A crisis of existence in the Church. Let us call to mind thoughts which may be well known to us. In the course of the Church's history and development the family has left the major share, almost the greatest share, of its responsibility to the Church and the schools. This may have been the correct thing to do, but these two bodies are no longer able to carry out this task today. Therefore it is more urgent than anything else that the task of education should be restored to the family.

A crisis of existence facing the Church! When we think of the present-day struggle to save the schools, and consider the rights and wrongs of the case, we will have to admit that sooner or later we will all be forced back on our last line of defence - the family, our Family Movement.

Finally, we are concerned with a **crisis of existence in our own Schoenstatt Family**. If we as a Family want to have new members, I must turn in a special way and address our Family Movement. Your periodical, as we all know, is called 'Foundation and Crown'. The family is the foundation and crown of the entire Schoenstatt Family. This is a title that was taken over in relation to the Church. **The family is the foundation and crown of the whole Schoenstatt Family**. What does that mean? Unless we again create sound families, we will receive no vocations, or at any rate insufficient vocations for our other formations. This is a challenge from God - an outward challenge.

What is the *i n n e r* challenge?



I am sure that this challenge from God has not been heard so often only by me personally, it has not been called out by God only into my heart. If we really want to create a new, useful Christian social order for the future, we must return to the source of society, we must **renew the family**, we must create a comprehensive Family Movement. Thus individual members and sections of the Schoenstatt Family have felt the inner urge to spend their love, lives and strength in the service of this mission.

What is the human plea? It is the anguish of countless families, or of children who have grown up without families. They cry, they call out - what for? To be saved! How should they be saved? Recall the words of Nietzsche which are often quoted: "The crows cry out and hasten with whirring wings towards the town. ... Woe to those who have no home!"<sup>13</sup> What is meant? When a storm or a natural catastrophe is approaching, the birds usually sense its coming instinctively. They cannot bear to remain in their usual surroundings where they grew up. Therefore, "the crows cry out and hasten with whirring wings to the town ..." They have no home.

Something similar happens when a new civilisation is arising. The old civilisation is shaken to its foundations, all that has existed collapses. Here, too, those words apply: "Woe to those who have no home!" On the other hand the opposite is true: How fortunate those who have a home!

This is the plea. If we want people to be really happy once more, we must give them a nest. What sort of nest? A truly Christian family. Let us not overlook that experiences in the Christian family are the condition, the requirement, if we are to be more fully at home in the Family of God, the Church, and in the Triune God himself.

Think of the classic saying of St Augustine: "O God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you"<sup>14</sup>. The human heart comes from God and is urged to return to God. It cannot rest until it has found its ultimate resting-place. Augustine has expressed in classic form what we have all probably experienced on many occasions. He had a tender heart, and was extremely dependent on his senses. He gave his heart to a variety of creatures, whether women or other created things. He was simply a man, truly a man like the rest of us. And he asked all created things: Are you my God? They answered: No, I am not, rise higher!<sup>15</sup>

Do you understand the inner context? If we want to bring people home again, if we want to make them happier, healthier, stronger, the heart must rest in God. However, in order to do this, no other course remains open to us than to see to it that the foundation and crown of the entire Schoenstatt Family is increasingly safeguarded. With that I think I have answered the second question: the interpretation of history.

The third question concerns our **historical responsibility**.

If, as can be proved by our history, God has given us something, we bear responsibility for it. For what are we responsible? I do not know to whom I should turn first: Should I address the Family Movement? Should I turn to our Brothers of Mary? I don't want to separate them. Let us look at the Family Movement and the Brothers from the point of view of **forming the new person**. Both communities, since they involve men, should educate men according to the order of being as God intended, men who bear God's stamp<sup>16</sup>. However, an essential component in the education and perfection of man is the **father**. Hence, for what are both communities responsible? For the formation of the true image of man and the father; they are responsible for bringing into existence an all-embracing **Marian kingdom of the Father**.

When we talk about the kingdom of the Father, and think of man as a member of this kingdom, we see two characteristics in him - that of man and of father. This applies to his physical and spiritual fatherhood.

How can we describe **man**? Let me use a saying of a brilliant French orator, although it was used in a different context: "As hard as a diamond and as tender as a mother". As hard as a diamond - what does that mean? What we consider to be the ideal character of man. He is a being who can think clearly, who can decide surely, courageously and unambiguously, who has a strong will and the power to enforce his will. Hence it is our responsibility to see to it that such men are again given to the modern world. They must not simply be formed

on an ethical level, but must be inspired by a genuine religious ideal. By this is meant a masculine spirituality which awakens both the warmth of a mother in man, as well as the strength and sureness we attribute to diamonds.

A consideration of what could be included in a masculine spirituality for today would open up a vast field of discussion. Allow me to mention only a single thought - we want to remain with our theme. Have you noticed before how very different our faith in Divine Providence is from that which is generally held? Our concept of faith in Divine Providence not only shows us what we have to suffer and to bear, it also places clear and tremendous tasks before us. We let ourselves be shown how to keep these tasks in view and carry them out with great strength, power and unwavering loyalty, because they are in keeping with God's will. These are thoughts which we need to hear expressed at least once. We must then consider what we have to do.

Secondly, both communities have also to bring about a genuine father-figure as the perfection of manhood. First of all, let us cast a side-glance into presentday literature, into life today. We know it anyhow. Writers today do not tire of pointing out that the father is constantly fleeing. Many reasons are given. I shall only summarise them briefly and trace everything back to two factors.

To start with, developments in the economy have brought it about that there is a separation between man's place of work and his home. In the past the man usually worked at home with his own family, and the family was constantly under his influence. Through social developments the two have become completely separated. Therefore the influence of the father - so we are told - has increasingly been reduced in every respect.

The second point: To a great extent we have all experienced personally how the sons have rebelled against their fathers. After the war - and even before the war, because the fathers were constantly in military service - the sons rebelled against their father - against the father in the Church, against the father in the state, against the father in the hierarchically organized family. In every respect the sons rebelled against their father. Of course, it would be a mistake to dwell on these negative aspects alone.

We know another saying that we have often read: Today we are concerned with the "**re-birth of fathers**". Fathers should be re-born! Once again, to simplify the subject matter: The father should not so much see his power in a merely official sense - although this is not excluded - but far more in his **personal relationship to his wife and children**. Personal influence! A personal relationship really only begins when the father returns from work. Of course, it is understandable if he then says: I don't want to have anything to do with the children, they should leave me in peace! But this is when his creative power, his fatherly activity, is at stake. It is in this that the father's strength and power as the begetter of life consists.

Now a vast field once again opens up before us. We should now discuss in every respect: What is fatherliness? Whether we belong to the Family Movement or are Brothers of Mary - what is fatherliness? What is meant by the building up and extending of a markedly Marian kingdom of the Father here on earth in dependence on God the Father in heaven?

When I think of the Family Movement, it is obvious that the Family Movement is not merely made up of the husband and father, the wife and children also belong to it. How can we describe the genuine Catholic, or if you like, Schoenstatt Family in its fundamental relationship to the Triune God in heaven? I only want to pose the question, not give an answer. So if our Family Movement wants to know what mission it has been given, it must realise how vast and manifold the burden is that God has placed on our shoulders and is prepared to place on them in the future.

Now for the final question:

What is the  
**historical mission?**

It does not matter whether we speak of the historical mission or of the historical task and responsibility, they are the same. I would like to express it from another point of view in this way: Our historical mission consists in two things - faithfulness to the vital original forces of the Family and to its historical development, as well as faithfulness to the great aims of the Family.

### **Faithfulness to the original forces!**

How can we describe these original forces? We can summarise them in the covenant of love with the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt, with Schoenstatt as a place and with Schoenstatt as a Family. So faithfulness to this covenant of love. This contains the fundamental forces. In every respect we are concerned with the vital and inseparable connection with the three "points of contact": the Queen, her shrine and the head. I so not want to say much about this. I am talking to the initiate.

However, not merely faithfulness to the original forces, but also **faithfulness to their historical development**. Development upwards, development inwards.

Development upwards: The covenant of love with the Mother of God must become a covenant of love with our Lord, with the Triune God. Inwards: What a long time the historical development needed before it had unfolded the covenant of love in this regard in the Family. We had to penetrate ever more deeply into the detachment from our selves. We had to live the covenant of love on the level of the Blank Cheque, the Inscriptio and the Josef Engling Act. That is our great, historical mission.

Finally also **faithfulness to the great aim**. In a word this concerns creating a new, genuine, Christian social order in the sense of the Church at the shores of a new era. In detail this means forming **a new person in the new community** to the extent and in the sense we have just discussed. But it also means committing our entire strength to the re-conquest and preservation of the **mission of the West in salvation history** and the **building up and extension of a federally structured Apostolic World Association**. This again places a whole world before us.

Now you would like to make a promise to the Blessed Mother. If I am not mistaken the promise goes in the same direction: the Brothers of Mary want to put up an MTA plaque. For us the MTA symbolises the three points of contact which we are trying to fill with vital life through the covenant of love. Our Family Movement (Institute) wants to do two things: to present the foundation stone for a future shrine to serve the families, and to have it blessed. It stands as a symbol of their home shrines. Other groups of families want to take on the obligation to build the shrine outwardly. All in all, therefore, both promises mean nothing else than a symbolic acceptance of the mission of the family as we have just described it.

A brief concluding word. It is a word that I have used on similar occasions, now in this form, now in that. I told the story of a man who became ill. He went to Bonn for a medical examination. The diagnosis of the doctor: The vocal chords are not in order. He had to have an operation, but he had to be aware that he might not be able to speak afterwards. The doctor pointed out to him: "So if you have something important to say, say it now! It could be the last thing you will be able to say." The man, he was an honest and upright working man, turned round in the operating theatre, looked at his wife, children and relatives who surrounded him, bowed his head and said: "Blessed be Jesus Christ!"

So his last words should also be the first words of the new epoch:

**"Glory be joyfully given to the Father, through Christ with Mary, highly praised, in the Holy Spirit full of splendour, from the universe now and for all eternity. Amen."**

Notes:

1. English translation 1971, Schoenstatt, Constantia, South Africa.
2. The title of the bi-monthly publication of the Family Movement in Germany.

3. Marian Education for Marriage, p.8.
4. *ibid.* p.57.
5. *ibid.* p.104.
6. *ibid.* p.15.
7. Bodelschwingh, Friedrich v. (1831-1910), took over the Bethel Institute in 1872. By combining a nurses' training school and hospital with a training institute for deacons and deaconesses he made it the largest Protestant institute in Germany.  
His son and successor, Friedrich (1877-1946) extended the radius to include schools, academic and technical, for boys and girls.
8. Chancellor of Austria when Hitler annexed Austria to Germany, March 13, 1938.
9. Every priest belonging to a religious community is called Herr Pater X in German. Father Kentenich was so well known that he was simply called 'Herr Pater'. The form of address of the original has been translated as literally as possible in an attempt to convey some of its warmth.
10. cf. John 8,29.
11. cf. John 5,36; 8,28; 12,49-50.
12. Existenznot - a life or death crisis.
13. cf. Poems. Until now no translation has been found. This is my own translation.
14. Opening paragraph of "Confessions", Penguin Books 1977, p.21.
15. But what is my God? I put my question to the earth. It answered, 'I am not God', and all things on earth declared the same. I asked the sea and the chasms of the deep and the living things that creep in them, but they answered, 'We are not your God. Seek what is above us'... (*ibid.*, Book X, 6).
16. I have tried to keep the image of a coin that is stamped with the image of the head of state.

