

Talk given on Silver Jubilee

15 August 1935

My dear Schoenstatt Family,

When the invitation to this jubilee celebration was sent out about a week or two ago, a whisper passed through the ranks of our 'old soldiers', our old Sodalists, who have worked with me from the beginning: Can miracles still happen? Is it possible? How did the people in Schoenstatt manage to get such a celebration going? And when some of the eldest arrived, their first question naturally was: How was it possible? They got the answer: Because it serves the cause, that is why he agreed.

I don't know if that was the ultimate reason why I not only allowed the celebration to be arranged, but even urgently asked for it. It is true, I often used the harsh saying: "I shall die where I am!" Or the other harsh saying: "The standard bearer is nothing, the standard is everything!" If they apply to you, they also apply to me. We have to serve the cause while personally staying in the background; we have personally to give whatever serves the cause.

I know and have experienced how our family celebrations have strengthened our family bonds and nurtured our loyalty to our common cause, to our Mother Thrice Admirable, but also to one another. Have we realised that we need the obligation of this profound community membership even more than before, because the circumstances of our times rend people apart to such an extent, and because the dark and difficult future will most probably give rise to further thunder storms? It could well be that difficult times are approaching. And it is true, the more difficult the times, the more closely we must be united, the more we must form a single, big Family that has been called by God, if we are to consume ourselves in hard times for God's Church, for the kingdom of our Blessed Mother. All this is justified, but it wasn't the final and deepest reason why I said a joyful yes to this celebration, and even wanted it to take place.

What really moves me personally has already been said jokingly. I am really celebrating the jubilee with you. I am thinking of all who have worked with me in the course of these 25 years. Yes, I invited you in order to celebrate your jubilee. Isn't it true that what God has foreseen from all eternity has gradually become a reality? I don't know whether there is any other community today in which the main leaders have so directly connected their destiny with that of the leader of the Family as is the case with us. What God has united, people should not divide. Quot Deus iunxit homo non separet. Can you therefore understand why I accept all that you have expressed as a hymn of thanksgiving, in particular what you have said about simple faithfulness, that I accept it with inner emotion, but also pass it on to the person for whom it was intended from the first? I am thinking of her, of our dear Mother Thrice Admirable. If you ask me: Why should I

thank, whom should I thank? I thank the dead, I thank the living, and I thank the future generations.

I. Thanksgiving

I thank the *dead!*

In the same way as the celebration began so beautifully, so we want to let it come to a close. Our dear departed are not dead, our dear departed are amongst us today. The work that has been created here is just as much the work of those who co-operated with me. I am inconceivable without you. My whole work cannot be explained without your most personal and deep co-operation. This applies in the first place to our dead. Whom do I mean? Should I remind you of our hero sodalists? I don't want to mention them all by name so as not to do an injustice to anyone. Of course, our dear departed from the ranks of the Sisters are also meant here. They are all with us today, it is their work that has developed. And if every hymns of thanksgiving rise up to heaven, we don't want to forget to whom they are addressed.

Did not our hero sodalists, and our deceased Sisters, give their lives for our common work with boundless, selfless loyalty? Did not many of them soak Schoenstatt's ground with their blood? And many reap the benefit of their holy lives and the selfless oblation of their deaths. They work on, our departed, they work on through their heroic example, they work on because they embodied, sometimes in an heroic way, what we see today as a great ideal in the heavens of our lives. And we hope to God and admit with great gratitude that they work on through their intercession, through praying for us together with the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt. Yes, the hymns of thanksgiving should therefore rise to a crescendo, far more than they have done until now.

We want to and should also sing a hymn of thanksgiving to Vincent Pallotti. He, too, has to be counted among the departed who are at home here in Schoenstatt. After all, he founded the community in which the thoughts and goals to which we have committed our entire life and strength have been more or less consciously alive. Through his life and sacrifice he has placed a tremendous number of contributions into our capital of grace. This river of grace continues to influence our Family.

So let me repeat: I want to collect again all the gratitude you have sent up to heaven and direct it into eternity to those who have died for us, and who continue to live in eternity for us.

However, I may and must also say a word of thanks to the *living*.

I am thinking here of all those who have connected their entire lives and destinies with mine, either throughout the past 25 years, or at least through a major part of them. Let me say again: Try to find another community today which is so much the spirit of the spirit and flesh of the flesh of the individual members as is the case with us! Or am I exaggerating? Am I trying with a few tactical measures to shrug off or pass on all this is actually unpleasant? No, it is my conviction. My whole work as it has developed is equally your work. I don't know where to begin. Since the whole celebration has more the

character of a family celebration, you will not take it amiss if I now speak more in the first person than I usually do.

Please take note and examine it for yourselves. Think of all who bear responsibility in the Family, think of the oldest and middle generation, of the Schoenstatt Priests, of the women, of the Sisters of Mary. By far the majority - perhaps with a single exception - have for decades connected their destiny with mine. Am I mistaken when I state that it can be proved that their calling to Schoenstatt is connected with a personal meeting with me? I would be grateful if you would examine such statements for yourselves, because I am anxious that we should feel inwardly united in the way the Triune God has wanted it from eternity. "Quod Deus iunxit homo non separet."

This bilateral faithfulness becomes all the deeper, all the stronger, the more we see how God has combined human destinies in a unique way. Yes, when and where did these meetings take place? It would be tactless to lift the veil from so many mysteries in this public gathering. When I think of the first generation, of all those who are now working directly with me, it is obvious that their childlikeness received an answer from me. Their whole lives have been united with what I thought and wanted. If I also think of the first generation of our Schoenstatt Priests, or of our Sisters, I usually know that the first meeting took place during a Conference or a private discussion. And I believe I could even prove to the individuals in detail: That's where grace started to work, that's where we came into deeper contact, and from there our relationship has become extremely fruitful.

Yes, my dear Schoenstatt Family, that is how it is, this first contact has on the whole been uniquely and profoundly alive and active in the time that followed. The whole, widespread work, before which we now stand with wonder, has grown out of this integrated work in the depths of your souls on a personal and community basis.

Will you take it amiss if I try for once to describe your share in this work very briefly? I will have to admit, to start with, that you have personally had an extremely strong influence on my own, personal development. What was just now said as a joke is really true: what one of our members said at that time is true - he is one of our "conference hunters" who tries with every means at his disposal to get hold of every transcript. And when I once said that the talks might not be passed on, he said, "He knows all this only from us!" The book in which I have read is the book of our times, the book of life and the book of your holy souls. If you had not bared your souls so completely to me, most of my spiritual-intellectual achievements would not have been discovered. You can't get these things out of books, you can only get them from life. And one of our Sisters of Mary was correct when she remarked a few days ago: "We have been so dependent on you, and this has awakened so much in you. In all probability it would not otherwise have been awakened."

If the first statement applies more to my spiritual-intellectual insights, the second refers more to the unfolding of the abilities of my heart.

Last night one of our older members reminded me that at that time, when they were in the war, I must have had a warm heart for them. I quietly and unobtrusively got hold of all sorts of clothing - something to protect the head, a warm vest, etc. It is true, I developed a very warm heart for our youngsters at that time. But this development continued through all the people God has given me and who have made demands on me. If you want to know the secret behind what is almost a prodigal fruitfulness, I can tell you: It is to be found in our deep, bilateral union in the depths of our souls. In answer to the question that was posed just now: "Where does this richness of heart and mind come from?" I can tell you: A person who loves, who has ultimately placed his love in God's heart, shares to a certain extent in the immeasurable riches of God's love. If there is anything that doesn't make us poor, it is love, the giving of the warmth of one's heart. You may tell yourselves - all of you who have made demands on me, sometimes loudly, sometimes quietly, all of you can tell yourselves: Without you I personally would not be what I am today.

You may not underrate this one point, this one train of thoughts. Let me repeat: If you want to know the source of the riches of my mind and heart, you have it here! My wish and prayer to God is that he will give all future generations the same possibility to serve human souls quietly in the background as I have had. Great riches then flow back to those who try to place themselves with all their abilities at the service of souls.

Yet this is not enough. What I was able to read in your souls in this way gave me the direction for the partial goals we were striving for each time. An objective historian must be able to prove one day through critical research that seeing the ultimate great goals, and consciously holding onto these great goals, was my primary task in the last 25 years. But the individual partial goals that had to be achieved, holding onto and discovering these partial goals, as well as the enlightened striving to achieve them, is simply inconceivable without you, my dear Schoenstatt Family. It is here that a deeper linking of what we did and aimed at, of our life and love, began. These things are so alive in me that I can usually tell you: That and that came from him or her, that is a bit of what is alive in his or her soul. It is here that we find the mysterious source of our profound community life. As you know, I have no time for socialising, nevertheless your faithfulness never wavered. This was because the union in the depths of our souls rested on such a deep foundation.

Community implies the harmony of hearts. And if you can say that the Family is marked by the deep, inner community of the individual members - to a very large extent this is because most of you have contributed your very best to the Family as a whole. I would like to ask each of you individually to admit honestly and humbly - or if you don't know, I will gladly tell you privately - what you have contributed of your heart's blood to the life of the Family. If you want to thank me for anything, it can only be for one thing - that I have tried to take up everything that was developing in you, to open up the way for you, and once it had come alive in the community to some extent, to proclaim it as a motto. So I could tell you who were the main leaders at that time in our Mission Movement¹. As the master builder I have also built up things on my own, but when I knew that something sound was developing, I withdrew completely, because I knew it would grow on its own.

¹ The original Sodality in the College at Schoenstatt was divided into two main groups: the Mission Section and the Eucharistic Section.

I could also tell you who were the main leaders when the Outer Organization² was founded. Please remember, this can be proved. To an outstanding degree it is your work, it came about through your co-operation. It is mainly through your activity that the whole war apparatus - the *Congregatio militaris* - was carried over into peacetime. Here you have a classic example - I purposely did not go to Hoerde³, I was so sure what would happen there. Everything had been prepared, because each individual soul had gradually grown into the whole, big apparatus.

My dear Schoenstatt Family, please admit that I am right to re-address the hymn of thanksgiving you have been singing and return it to you with gratitude and joy. I know that by doing so I include in very general terms what is moving me personally. I could sing a hymn of praise to all who have not been directly mentioned in what has already been said. I am thinking now of all of you, also of the young generation, who again and again stand as guarantor for the whole Family through the capital of grace, through enriching the capital of grace. Right from the beginning it was my ideal to do nothing in the whole Family without my co-workers. I know that this thought has permeated all that I have done. Other bodies with whom I do not have direct contact also act according to the law: Nothing without us! Eternity will one day show that the Family, with its spirit as it exists today, is unthinkable without the smallest and most insignificant members of our Family who have contributed treasure upon treasure, without the heroic life of sacrifice and prayer of the members of the Family.

Indeed, nothing without you! I don't know what I should highlight in particular.

Just imagine, our Sisters have lived for ten years without a written law, and yet they have grown into the most varied fields of activity. How was that possible? And when you look back for a moment, you will find that not one jot of their original ideal has been cast aside. Our eldest Sisters have merely matured inwardly in these ten years to such an extent that they gradually begin to understand what we set up as a programme ten years ago. I can prove precisely which spiritual trend has come from this or that Sister. Each can discover herself again, the best qualities of her soul, in the Family, in all that we are aiming at. That is part of our pedagogy of ideals, of development (movement), a pedagogy of anticipation.

Don't you think that in this context I should make particular mention of those who work with me up there in the Retreat House⁴? Without their loyalty it would have been completely impossible for me to undertake so many different tasks. Please take a look at how much life and spirit proceeds from up there, and how each one is trying to give of their very best for the whole Family.

² Comprising those young men in the army who had taken up the spirituality and aims of the Sodality at Schoenstatt, also known as the *Congregatio militaris*.

³ On 20 August 1920 leaders of the Schoenstatt Sodality and the *Congregatio militaris* met in Hoerde, Dortmund, to work out the Statutes for the Apostolic Federation, which would merge the members of both organizations. The Schoenstatt Family developed out of this original body.

⁴ Built in 1928 as the first Centre of the Schoenstatt Movement. It was built on the slopes overlooking the original shrine on the opposite side of the valley to the College.

Yes, let me repeat: I want to take up and direct upwards to the Triune God all the hymns of thanksgiving you have sung. All honour is due to him, all thanks to you.

I may not forget our growing youth! This morning, when I saw what sacrifices they have made, I thought to myself: What an heroic youth is developing! They say: We have to become what the older members have become! Schoenstatt may not develop without us, also not without our young people. I greet our onward-storming young people with special warmth - our young women and young men! I received a letter of congratulation from the young men at High School, and in it resonated the spirit of the founder generation: "We want to take up the spirit lived by the older members, and with courage for battle bear it into the new generation. Our symbol is the graves of the heroes⁵."

Our young women are also at work. Not just the eldest generation, also the youngest generation is included in my thanks. They, too, are celebrating a little bit of jubilee. It is their jubilee.

I must also express my thanks

to those who are not yet alive, to the coming generations.

Yes, what will become of Schoenstatt if the coming generations are not gripped and permeated by the same spirit as we are? Must that not remain the law of the Family for all the times to come? Each generation must conquer Schoenstatt for itself. Unless my thanks to those who are not yet alive, to the coming generations in the coming centuries, is given a foundation in the timeless development of the coming times, we can busy our Family. Unless God awakens people in every age who are prepared to use the same means and the same ways to attain the same goals, we will have built up a work that is just a day-fly. It will not last for all eternity, it will not continue till the end of time and into eternity. I hope, however, that the God who has protected us until now, that the Blessed Mother who has spread her hands so lovingly over the Family until now, will accompany us with their grace and love. For the sake of our loyalty, may they always send us people who will give of their heart's blood for Schoenstatt. At this point I also want to thank these coming generations most sincerely.

I thank our MTA.

I know a second person who has to be addressed. You know her as well. I think that the gratitude expressed to me in these days, and which I have returned to you, should also be taken up by the whole Family and directed into the heart of our dear Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt. Many years ago I read of an old and revered priest who was celebrating his jubilee. As is the custom at such jubilees, people collect all they know, and in this case they could say a lot about this priest. At the end of all these hymns of thanksgiving, he stood up and said: "Yes, you have said a lot about me, about what I was able to achieve in my life ..." Then tears came into his eyes as he said: "I woe everything to our Lady!"

⁵ Situated behind the original shrine. In 1934 the remains of some of the soldier sodalists who had fallen in World War I had been found and re-interred behind the shrine. The remains of Joseph Engling have never been found. Later the ashes of members who had died during World War II were also re-interred here.

I, too, know that countless numbers of people owe the complete reformation of their lives to a meeting with Schoenstatt. I now how many priests declare again and again: What would we be without Schoenstatt! It would be gross ingratitude to overlook these thanks. Yes, I also know and gladly admit that there are very few priests whose lives have been so extremely blessed as mine. But I can just as well say: What has come about, what has come about through me, has come about through the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt.

May I explain how and what was developing and at work through the individual stages? To start with, then, I may say that she has personally formed and moulded me from my ninth year onwards. I would not like to say this elsewhere, but I think that in this context I can explain it briefly. When I look back, I can say that I know of no other person who has exercised a profounder influence on my development. Millions of people break down when they have to depend so much on themselves as I had to. I had to grow up in total inner loneliness and isolation, because a world had to be born in me that had later to be carried on and passed on to others. If my soul had had contact with the culture of that time, if I had been personally bonded to anyone, I would not be able to say with so much conviction today that my education is simply the work of the Mother of God without any profounder human influence. I know that with that I have said a great deal. You may not think that I am saying this just in order to say something nice about our Lady. I know that the Mother of God has placed her suppliant omnipotence and motherly heart uniquely at my disposal. You have also experienced it and can examine it historically. From the moment she took up her abode in this shrine, she placed her power and her motherly heart at my disposal for the work I was allowed to create, and it was she who gave you to me as my co-workers.

Please study the subject and see how everything we see before us today has developed out of this deep and childlike love for Mary. Am I right, then, when I ask you not to forget the one to whom we owe special gratitude today?

II Promise of Loyalty

I may also not forget to take up your simple promise of loyalty in the same way. It is true, if there is anything that can touch me, it is grateful loyalty!

To whom should we return this grateful loyalty? That sounded so strong and solid just now: "Faithfulness, loyalty!" I am happy and accept your loyalty with great gratitude. I know that it is not just faithfulness to me, but also to God and our work. We want to make this promise of faithfulness together at the end of this celebration, your jubilee celebration. Faithfulness to our Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt, faithfulness to her work, and faithfulness to one another!

Faithfulness to our dear Mother Thrice Admirable!

Don't you think - I address myself to the eldest children of our Family - that we owe the fruitfulness of our Family, don't you think that we owe the amazing fact that despite the chaos of our times we could develop as organically as we have until now, don't you think

we owe all this and our childlike faithfulness to our Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt?

We want to promise once again to remain true to her. We all feel proud, especially those who are working directly with me, to realise that the battle surrounding Schoenstatt⁶ ultimately concerns our devotion to Mary. As long as we may battle for our Lady, everything is in order. Please study all the spiritual trends of our times. Take, for example, the youth movement or the liturgical movement⁷. If we had not held onto our love for Mary without wavering, we would without doubt have fallen prey to the extremes of these spiritual trends.

We want to remain faithful to the Blessed Mother no matter what happens. In these days I was told that the opposition had concerned itself with us. They say that we have put the Mother Thrice Admirable in God's place⁸. It doesn't matter! What is wonderful is that we have developed so calmly until now. I don't know whether there is another community that can boast about a similar calm, about such a profound calm! And the reason? Because we have remained true to our Lady even when it sometimes seemed as though the lightning was about to strike. As long as we are faithful to her, she will spread her protective mantle over us. Even if she one day allows thunder and lightning to strike, even if she allows what sounded so serious just now at the end of the talk, that the Family is rocked and shaken in every possible way, we may be certain that as long as we remain true to her, everything will be alright! We shall remain true to the Mother of God, to the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt! And when I utter the word "faithfulness", a promise immediately re-echoes in our little shrine.

I can remember how a few months ago, when it was said that people wanted to take our picture from us, many declared: "No one will be able to enter our shrine unless over our dead bodies!"⁹

We are grateful to God that the place of pilgrimage is primarily connected with the place, not with the picture. Places don't move so easily, pictures can change. Hence our simple loyalty to our dear Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt.

Our promise of loyalty also applies
to our common work.

Please don't think that we have already reached the end of our activity! We have a tremendous goal before us. We want to help to create a new type of person such as the Church needs in order to overcome the severe shocks of our times. We want to help to create a new type of Family, a holy community. Our work must make us into holy people. Woe, if we become superficial! Woe, if the members of the Family start to become babblers about God, and not God-bearers! We have to strive for true holiness.

⁶ In 1935 the German bishops started an enquiry into Schoenstatt's "special ideas".

⁷ Both developed strongly in the German Church after World War I.

⁸ See note 6.

⁹ The Nazi secret police already had their eyes on Schoenstatt and it was becoming increasingly dangerous to be a member.

Faithfulness to our work, therefore, includes unflinching striving to reach the ideal of our state of life, to reach the ideal of our sex.

This morning one of our priests said to me as he looked at our girls: "How much purity there is in our girls!" If only we could manage to save a really sound womanhood and girlhood and bring them through our present times! The same applies to our men, to our priests! I don't want to go into this, it should be sufficient to mention faithfulness to the ideal of the type of human being, the holy and saintly human being, who is called to serve the church in an outstanding way.

We want to be faithful
to our dead.

And here I want to greet all who are working for the canonization of our Josef Engling. I know what this loyalty to our dead means to our generation. The Family has brought forth great people. We want to remain true to them. Faithfulness to them is faithfulness to our MTA, to our shrine, to our ideal.

But we also want to remain true
to the coming generation.

We have a task to fulfil for the coming generation. We bear responsibility for the coming generation, for our future history. That is why we try to lead youthful people into our family circle.

Yet we also want to swear that we will be faithful
to one another.

I am happy that one of the local sections of our Priests' community has given me the following jubilee present: "To build up our community in the sense of a Schoenstatt Apostolic Order and family." How much reciprocal faithfulness we need when we are out in the world, since we are not chained to one another by community life, how much profound faithfulness we need if we are one day to realize this great ideal of "a Schoenstatt Apostolic Order living in the world"¹⁰. We need faithfulness if our whole Family is to become an organic entity at a time when so many conflicting trends are at large. The less we can live our way of life together, the more we want to swear simple faithfulness to one another. Faithfulness for faithfulness, love for love!

May our jubilee - your jubilee, my jubilee - thus come to its God-willed close. So let it be, we remain true! Somewhere in a boarding school there was an ordinary lad who lay dying. His lips formed just one sentence: "So let it be!" The Rector of the house heard those words, but didn't know what to make of them. In the delirium of the fever the youngster prayed again and again: "So let it be, we swear once again, Heart of Jesus, we shall remain true!" I think that this should be our conclusion. We swear once again: Schoenstatt land, we shall remain eternally true to you! I swear with heart and hand to

¹⁰ Later to become known as a Secular Institute.

remain true to my love until the grave! All that I am and have I consecrate to you, my
Schoenstatt land!