

Words on Schoenstatt's Fifteenth Anniversary: October 18, 1929

As the 1920s progressed, the explicit awareness of the founding day and event of October 18, 1914 only gradually penetrated the movement. The main reason was doubtlessly Fr. Kentenich's own conduct, who, even though he proclaimed the content of the talk of October 18 (called the "Founding Document" only later), did not refer to the day or event, in order to discern if what had begun on October 18 was truly a source of grace. He did this by observing the life it awakened – the "creative resultant" – independent of any suggestive influence that mentioning the historical fact might have produced. Of course it is clear that, from the start, the founder himself lived the 18th of October as a day and event of grace.

The fifteenth anniversary in 1929 may be the first time that a jubilee of the founding day was ever observed; but its observance was quite small – based on an internal initiative of the newly founded Sisters community and only within the context of that community.

The reader will notice how much the talk deviates from the expectation of the Sisters. Without preparation, totally spontaneously, the spiritual wealth of the founder poured out as he presented the vision which flowed from his conviction of faith – that a source of grace had truly come about, through which Our Lady wanted to intervene in the events of the times and urge us and give us the capacity to realize the highest goals.

What may be especially noteworthy for Schoenstatt Fathers is how clearly the founder perceived the risk of trying to introduce an already existing community like the Pallottines to a new spirituality. The danger of division would become tragic reality. On several occasions during the exile the founder referred to his opportunity in earlier years to form a priestly community from the diocesan priests to be the central community of the movement – the "pars centralis et motrix" – but that he did not pursue it because he was convinced as a matter of faith that in God's plan it was "reserved for the Pallottines."

Fr. Kentenich included the text of this talk in the longest study of his life, written in 1956 to the then general superior of the Pallottines, Fr. Wilhelm Moehler ("Letter to Father General"). In the study Fr. Kentenich documented his conviction that the mission of St. Vincent Pallotti could only be realized with the help of a new and special divine initiative, a source of grace such as was offered through the founding of Schoenstatt.

In the "Letter to Father General," Fr. Kentenich wrote a short foreword and afterword to this talk. It is included below.

This passage is found in the Generalsbrief 1956 (unpublished), p. 204ff.

[I. Foreword from 1956]

In order to better understand the following October talk (1929), two further aspects should be recalled. As can be seen from the text, the audience was the Sisters of Mary. They had just been founded in October 1926. In 1929 they were therefore still in the very first stage of their existence. The Immaculata children had been followed by the Virgo-Sacerdos and the Virgo-Mater children¹. All three courses gave the family a distinct vibrancy. October 18, 1929 came. The course mother

¹ The first course to make its consecration was the Immaculata course on December 8, 1927. The two older courses soon followed suit, as well as all the courses to follow. It is the custom within the Sisters community to speak of the members of each course as the (course name) children.

of the Virgo-Mater children suddenly had the idea to petition me through “heavenly mail” to come from the Retreat House into the valley – to the Shrine – to give a talk – rather like a founding document for the Sisters of Mary. Without much deliberation I accepted the request and went down to the Shrine. Although the talk’s content is deep and vision broad and comprehensive, its stylistic features immediately show that it was unprepared and spoken “off the cuff.” As a result, it gives even more eloquent and powerful testimony to the ideas which were constantly at work in me at that time and urged themselves to spontaneous expression. I attach it here unabridged. No commentary is necessary. A thoughtful read will make clear how the individual parts complement and explain one another.

Here is the text of the talk:

[II. The Talk of October 18, 1929]

You must have read the letter from “Federation Heaven” before it reached my hands. Or am I mistaken? At the very most, the Sisters who have come down from the Retreat House have not yet seen it. But they also have a right to know what it says. Only when this letter from “Federation Heaven” arrived did I recall that we commemorate an important jubilee today. Fifteen years ago the movement began here in this little place. What I said here then – I believe it was exactly here in this spot where I am now standing – afterwards proved to be something of a prophecy. Now our Virgo-Mater children would like, in the spirit of their course ideal, for me to walk with the “prophets” again today. What I don’t know yet is if I should stand before you as a minor or a major prophet! Later history will have to decide. But before I begin to “prophesy,” I want to read out loud the mail from heaven:

“Federation Heaven, the Month of the Holy Rosary, 1929

“Dear Father of my Sisters!

“Does everyone in Schoenstatt know what a memorable day we celebrate today? It is October 18. Fifteen years ago today I gave the young sodalists myself and my Shrine and received them as my instruments...”

I don’t want to repeat what it says here. They are all reasons for heartfelt thanks. Everything has literally come true which Our Lady says to us here from Federation Heaven...

“On that day I came to dwell for the first time as the treasurer of the capital of grace in the Shrine, and since then – now 15 years – I have let streams of grace flow, even far beyond the borders of Germany, even into the missions. How I have rejoiced that my Sisters in the Mother House have remembered this hour of grace with great gratitude! This morning they let the memorable event sink deep into their hearts once more as they [read] the written documents of that day. How they would rejoice if there would be an hour of grace for them in the Shrine today, similar to the one back then for the sodalists. I would be so happy to do this, in order to bring the zeal and esteem for the capital of grace once more to its original, even to its highest, blossoming.”

This evening our Virgo-Mater children therefore expect something to increase our fervor, even motivate us for the capital of grace.

“I know that Father would be glad to help me and will give himself to me in this spirit today as an instrument for my Sisters. I will give my abundant blessing for this and am

gladly ready to make October 18, 1929 the starting point for another 15 grace-filled years. My Sisters are full of joy today, are open to God and the world, and not yet tired this evening.”

How well Our Lady knows us!

“What October 18, 1914 was for the entire movement, let October 18, 1929 become for the community of my Sisters.

“With my Motherly greeting and blessing!

“The *Mater Ter Admirabilis*.”

The mail from heaven treats me kindly...

The little letter has two thoughts which the Blessed Mother wants to give to us today for our further way in life. One concerns the future, the other the present.

[Concerning the Future]

“I will give my abundant blessing for this and am gladly ready to make October 18, 1929 the starting point for another 15 grace-filled years....” Is our dear Lady really ready to pull back the veil a little from the coming 15 years? That would be of interest to us all. It would also make all of us still more fervent in attaining the Blessed Mother’s main object – awakening in us more enthusiasm for the capital of grace. Well, what might we be able to expect in the next 15 years? You see, what I said at the consecration of the high school boys a few months ago² might come closer to fulfillment in the next 15 years. At that time I said, “In the shadow of our little Shrine the destiny of the Church will be essentially co-determined for centuries to come not only in Germany, but far beyond Germany.” If today is meant to be a profound turning point in the development of our Family, if our dear Blessed Mother promises her blessing to us today in a new and deeper way, does not the weave and warp of the blessing point in this direction; must and should it not flow in this direction?

It is otherwise our style to read the future from the past and the present. And deep lifestreams are currently growing in our Family with more and more of a public side; lifestreams which powerfully strive to shape the life of wide and wider circles. It is remarkable how many individual priests and how many communities of priests have come to Schoenstatt in the last months and gone to great lengths to channel the streams of grace from here to their diocese.

[Priests in the Shadow of the Shrine]

So, the way I see the present situation, our dear Lady seems to want to draw priests here in greater numbers. Now think about this – is this not an answer to our perseverance? If the destiny of the Church is to be co-determined from here, then the Blessed Mother must above all send her priests here – our diocesan priests, our religious priests, and even the priests of our *pars motrix*, the Pallottines – to give them orientation. She must send all these groups here so that they can be shaped by her stream of grace and then go forth to fight the battles of God in the world.

[The Unselfish and Hidden Service of the Sisters of Mary]

From the beginning it was plainly not in the spirit of a Marian movement for us Sisters – permitted as we are to work as instruments of our dear Blessed Mother directly in this little place –

² Talk of April 7, 1929 (Text 16).

to make bold gestures and poses in public. We can suppose that in the coming 15 years our main task will continue to be staying in the background and doing the littlest “little work.”³ It will also be our task in the future to be available as an unselfishly serving member of the great universal Church and the movement.

[Renewal of Priests from the Shrine]

We, especially we who have worked together for a longer time, we who have already discovered our course ideal, we know how important the priesthood is in God’s plan for the sanctification of the world. The priesthood is the normal means by which the Spirit of God channels his streams of grace into this needy world. If the priesthood is therefore shaped and renewed, if the priesthood gains an orientation from Schoenstatt and has breathed our spirit, then we are on the swiftest, shortest, surest way to helping Our Lady so that the destiny of the Church is determined here in the shadow of the Shrine for centuries to come.

Yes, the meaning of the priesthood for the healing and sanctification of the world! There is a word which you may have already heard; a word which has proven itself through many centuries of history. The word says, “*Omne malum a clero!* All bad things come from the clergy!”

Is this true? Just ask century upon century of history. For instance, ask the age of the Reformation! One of our finest scholars who died in the middle of his labors, the great Dominican Denifle, made studies his whole life through about Luther and the Reformation. Do you know what he wrote as his overall conclusion? “The Reformation was the great cesspool through which the filth had to pass which overwhelmed the Church of that time.” And through whom did this filth enter God’s Church? “*Omne malum a clero!*” If things are not going well in the Church, we can generally assume that things are not going well with the clergy, unless it can be clearly proven otherwise and we are forced to seek other reasons.

I therefore find – and in this you are surely with me – that it is something truly grace-filled and grace-empowered that not only individual courses, but also many individuals from our Family feel themselves so strongly urged to make sacrifices for the priesthood, especially for the priests which God and our dear Lady send here.

Does this not lift the veil a little from the future? In these days I myself have been moved by such thoughts, not even thinking of the 15-year anniversary. The last talk which I gave you in the auditorium already pointed out such future tasks in general terms. I also told you then about the many requests and inquiries from priests. Since then they have become even more frequent, and not only from individual priests, but from communities of priests, so that the idea lays hold of me that in the next 15 years we may and must direct the main thrust of our efforts in this direction.

When I speak of the priesthood in general, then I am urged to divide the entire priesthood into three classes: diocesan priests, religious priests, and our *Pia Societas*⁴.

[Regarding the Pia Societas Missionum]

We Sisters live here so quietly and peacefully that we totally forget that from here, from this

³ German: *Kleinarbeit*, see note in Text 15.

⁴ *Pia Societas Missionum*, PSM, was the name imposed by Pope Pius IX on the Pallottines not long after the death of Vincent Pallotti (on April 9, 1854), because Pius considered the Church itself to be the “Society of Catholic Apostolate.” It was only in 1946 that the name was restored to that originally intended by the founder: *Societas Apostolatus Catholicus*, SAC.

Shrine, a reorganization, yes, a reformation of the entire *Pia Societas Missionum* has gone forth, and that this reorganization and reformation attracts ever wider circles within the Society.

What will the next 15 years bring in this regard? Might not a strong rupture and division one day enter the Society? Come with me to a higher observation post! Look from the standpoint of history at how other religious movements came about through the centuries, how they unfolded, and how they produced secessions, separations in the bosom of their communities. Think of the community which by its very nature most has the character of a movement: think of the Franciscans. How many divisions have there been. And all were certainly God-willed, all held fast to the ultimate idea of the founder.

Yes, what will the next 15 years bring? Will the entire community let itself be reorganized or will it come to a division – with on the one side those who stand on the ground of the movement and offer themselves up for it, and on the other side the others? Or will a unity come about? Humanly speaking it would be easier and there would be more blessings for the movement if a division came. You already have proof of this in the history of our little Sisters community. Think of the negotiations that took place at the beginning of our history regarding the Bosweiler Sisters⁵. Can you imagine what would have become of our family if the merger with the Bosweiler Sisters had become a reality? Then we would have been dealing with interior crises this whole time, would not have been able to work our way into the depths, into the core; we would have had to constantly move on the periphery.

I ask you again, has the veil been lifted from the next 15 years? I have only shown the possibilities on this point and in this regard. I personally hope that things go forward without a division. I personally hope and will do everything in my power to make sure the whole community remains one and grows together in fruitful unity.

What will the next 15 years bring? Perhaps battles, difficult battles, but ultimately the victory of our cause, the victory on the way of a quiet, unassuming work of reformation, not deformation. This I confidently hope.

[The Orders]

When I speak of the priests, then I gladly think of the second group – all those in religious life. It is not my fault for telling you all these things today. It is the Virgo-Mater course's "fault," or rather the Blessed Mother's, who placed the letter from heaven in my hands through the Virgo-Mater course!

You may not yet know how much destruction happens in God's Church because of the rivalries between religious communities, and the opposition between the religious and diocesan priests.

You see, if we consider it our great task to be a Marian movement working quietly in the background, then we must also try to make progress in this direction and contribute to a harmonious unity among all clergy.

I may say this because I clearly see how things are developing right now. We always deduce the future from the past and the present. Of course, with this I speak about a task which will cause insiders immediately to say: This is utopian, this is unthinkable, this is a pipe dream. The lack of unity has been there for centuries. And you dare to try to create unity in this great community!

⁵ Or the Hildegardis Sisters. See Monnerjahn, *A Life for the Church*, p. 109, for details on this part of the founding history of the Sisters of Mary.

It is true! Who will dare to try forming such a harmonious unity in this great community with its many conflicting interests! We do not have the courage to this on our own strength. We dare it only and to the extent that we believe and hope that we have received a mission for this from our dear Lady.

One thing is certain: If the destiny of the Church is meant to be determined from here for centuries to come, then we may and must assume that our dear Blessed Mother wants us to put our shoulder into this great, important, and difficult task.

[The Diocesan Priests]

As a third circle of the priesthood I see before me the diocesan priests. All religious life-streams which do not at least rest on the shoulders of the diocesan clergy, will eventually be condemned to be unfruitful. This is why the diocesan priests play such an important role in our movement. An additional reason is that they must live today in the midst of a world contaminated by paganism. As a result they are constantly in danger of being infected by the pagan spirit of the times. It is therefore important that we gather them and bring them under the influence of the Blessed Mother here in our Shrine.

Everything I have been able to say to you in broad strokes, gives us reason to hope that the next 15 years in the history of our little Family will be eventful and filled with blessings. But with this I have not yet spoken the last word on the topic. If from here, from our Shrine, the destiny of the Church is meant to be truly and profoundly influenced in today's situation, then we must urge at least two other great streams of grace to flow from here – to water and make all things fruitful – into the wide lands of Germany and Europe. It is not as if the two life-streams that I am thinking of would be the only ones. They are simply the currents which already now are slowly beginning to flow, whose flow we can hasten, but which we should also support with our interest and prayers.

[The Women]

In a similar way to the priests – even if not so strongly, but still to a relatively great extent – the well-being of the world depends on woman. And anyone familiar with our times today knows how the nature of woman is infected down to its deepest core, causing it to waver. We stand on the threshold of a new era in history. Wide and widest Catholic circles can already see this. If we as Catholics do not succeed in taking in hand and forming the new type of person which has come about since the invention of the steam engine, then, humanly speaking, the Church will lose modern humanity. If we – as a Marian movement should – remain quietly in the background, then we may not expect the great idea of the “shadow of the Shrine” to produce actions right away that attract the attention of the whole world. Everything which unfolds according to the law of grace loves and seeks silence. This is especially true in our case.

May I speak more clearly? I sense that all the educational principles which we have carefully fostered in each Sisters' course, are just what our times need and point the way to the future.

The unique way we educate ourselves is also the way that the new man – who gradually comes into view on the horizon of the future – can be interiorly shaped and formed in a specifically Christian manner. Do you understand what I am trying to say? I may not go into too much detail; I do not want to say everything that I see and think; but this much I will say: If we in our way manage to shape the new type of person in a Christian manner and to win him over interiorly for God, then we will have shown the Church the way she can lead the world in these new times to Christ.

This makes understandable why we place so much emphasis on remaining in the

background and not pushing ourselves too quickly into the public eye. Everything great, everything deep matures in silence.

[The Man in Modern Times]

The give priority to our striving for the new type of person among women. But with this I do not think we have completed our mission. The idea of the shadow of the Shrine demands still more of us. My intuition is that later we will have to go even further, that our educational principles and our educational methods will have what it takes to form [the new type of person] in our modern times, presenting it to the Church. The very law that we push so much into the foreground – freedom as much as possible, obligations only as much as necessary, but therefore all the more cultivation of the spirit – is, in my view, probably the only “star of the Three Kings” which can lead modern humanity to Bethlehem, coming to rest over the stable until all those led by the star kneel there and adore.

I think that when scholars later write the history of our times and we can read there the story of this little sprout planted here in this soil, we will realize how much of essence was contributed for the salvation of our times from our Shrine. Then we will be amazed that we, as simple and unassuming children of Adam, could cooperate in building up this great movement of renewal; [we will be amazed] that things sprouted and grew in total silence and solitude, seemingly on their own, for which our modern times thirst like parched pilgrims longing for refreshing water.

You yourselves do not see how much you are already a totally new type of person. Once again there were many new priests here recently on retreat, including some older ones. I just met one. He belonged to the very old generation. He said to me: What kind of Sisters are those? I have not yet met them. Then he explained in detail what he noticed and what he found different about you from other sisters. I repeat: We all take it for granted. But it is by no means self-evident. From all this we may conclude how very important it is that we hold unyieldingly firm to our educational principles. Of course it is also very important that God sends us Sisters capable of applying these principles in an enlightened way in our Sisters’ formation. When I think of these great connections, I want to tell you many, many things. But for now I will not do that; this is something I would rather talk about in the future. It may make a final judgment about us and our way of educating.

[Overcoming the Collectivistic Spirit of the Times]

But I am not yet at the end of my survey of the future. Might we not remove the veil just a bit more? Does not the word about the shadow of the Shrine ask still greater tasks of us? Might not the past and future shed more light on the future? Please allow me to climb one last time to high and highest observation posts.

The main opponent of the Church in today’s world is the socialistic (or collectivistic) spirit. I do not even say socialism, but the socialistic spirit of the times. This spirit is found not only in socialism, but also to a large degree in capitalism. It seems to me that in the foreseeable future we will also need to do battle (to a still greater extent) with this powerful contemporary phenomenon. Be not afraid – Socialism and capitalism, and whatever other names these illnesses of our times have! – God has permitted them for the good of the Church. They have a great task. And we are some of the first who have been called to help fulfill this task. If we think correctly, if the spirit of our Family lives in us, then we may and want to rejoice that we live in times in which the Church is surrounded by so many battles. We do not need to have any fears: in the end the victory will fall to our side. After all, we serve the cause of God and of Our Lady. Without such things to shake us

up we live in constant danger of dozing off and falling asleep. Thanks be to God that we therefore have the great currents of our times which must be overcome and give us no rest. If I personally live in the midst of the spiritual stormy seas of modern currents, if I see therein the devil at work in a prominent way, then it is also true that – even if I am cut off from the public by walls – I can never be alone, [for] the mighty waves of the whole world wash over my spirit and pass close to my heart, seeking a home. In this way we can also co-suffer in the background the things the world endures in a truly feminine way. This is how we have done it from the very beginning.

Is this not all something truly great? May I not say that I am not the “great prophet” now? No, it is our Virgo-Mater children. Let me read the text again from the “heavenly letter”: “I will give my abundant blessing for this and am gladly ready to make October 18, 1929 the starting point for another 15 grace-filled years.” I can surely assume that you now better understand these words.

We have tried to look more deeply into the likely development of our Family in the coming 15 years. What we have found may cause our hearts to sing. But it might also place a second question on our lips. It is: “What can we do, here and now or in the current circumstances, to support these developments so that the word of the shadow of the Shrine comes true?” And so the question of the future is replaced by the question of the present.

[Gather Capital of Grace]

The answer we are looking for is already in the letter from “Federation heaven.” Indeed, we read there: “How they would rejoice if there would be an hour of grace for them in the Shrine today, similar to the one back then for the sodalists.” An hour of grace! You must not expect this hour to cause a great stir. Because we are Sisters of our dear Blessed Mother, everything in us and around us happens quietly and calmly. Nonetheless I believe that the hour we now experience together signifies a deep turning-point both in the personal life of our souls and in the history of the family. Indeed, the “heavenly letter” points to the capital of grace. You yourselves are not aware – and it is good so – of how thus far God and Our Lady have used you Sisters to guide and direct the entire Family in an outstanding way from the background. I believe that I have a clear and sure view of subterranean streams of grace indiscernible to an outside observer, streams unceasingly fed by your magnanimous contributions to the capital of grace. I am convinced that as Sisters of Mary we consequently have been given and are called to fulfill the most important task for the future of our history – at least for the immediate future. I ask you: What do we call ourselves? Or: To whom is the heavenly letter addressed? Answer: “Dear Father of my Sisters.” Just listen, “my Sisters!” Who writes that? The Blessed Mother! I am totally proud to be personally addressed this way – “Dear Father of my Sisters.” Hence, whose Sisters are you? Sisters of our dear Lady! What makes the title “Sisters of Mary” so dear to us is the thought that resonates with it. We understand that the importance of our dear Blessed Mother for the redemption of the world indicates that we, as “her” Sisters, also have an important role in a certain sense and to a certain degree in drawing down the graces of redemption into the today’s time. As Sisters of Mary, as Sisters of our dear Lady you must never forget this. To be a sister of the Blessed Mother means to help redeem the world as she does, following her example...

You will certainly not expect me to dwell on this point and tell you something new about the capital of grace. I think we can declare: In her own way, Our Lady completely exhausted herself in gathering contributions to the capital of grace. At the same time this was her contribution to the redemption of the world. She joined herself in a mystical way to Christ on the Cross (as his

permanent Helpmate) in a gigantic life of sacrifice and prayer⁶. In all my own works and plans I build and trust on your contributions. I gladly admit that the work which circumstances demand of me is to a great extent more than a man can bear; it is un- and superhuman. And nonetheless I do all of it as the most self-evident thing in the world. Why? Because I am convinced that I am carried by the stream which flows forth here from the Shrine thanks to your life of prayer and sacrifice.

In the last days, when I stopped to consider our overall situation, I was thinking quietly to myself: What we have done together so far, what we have suffered and fought for, is truly something quite great and beautiful and profound. Next to God no one knows better than I how the individuals from our circles of Sisters have strived for their attachment to God, but at the same time also for a detachment from self or for mystical dying⁷. It seems to me, on the basis of this fact that the next 15 years ought to see a great many of our Sisters continue to be led up the ladder of the graces of prayer. How high, how far that can and should go: I do not know. Please read what I have said here and there about the graces of prayer received by St. Teresa [of Avila]. It seems to me – let me repeat this – that we, we who as Sisters try to fill the capital of grace to the brim, in the next 15 years we ought to strive for deep and earnest graces of prayer and learning how to pray. St. Teresa practiced for 22 years until the loving God drew her so near to himself. If God gives you a similar grace, if he draws you so profoundly to himself and thus makes you Sisters of our dear Blessed Mother in a deeper sense, then you will have fulfilled the greatest task one can imagine. I am not saying all this because it is said here and there in learned books, but because I read it from the guidance of grace which the Holy Spirit lets prosper in you.

I go another step further and declare: If God does not give the movement a good number of pure young women who totally consume themselves in a constant life of sacrifice for the movement, and who espouse themselves with every fiber of their being to Christ as the Bridegroom and in this way go to the Father, then I do not think the movement has or will be able to fulfill its hoped-for task.

I say all of this not only because, humanly speaking, I am personally fond of you – although even this would be reason enough to be at your disposal day and night – no, I say it for another reason, too: because I weigh and cherish each of you in the organism of the great task of our times which Our Lady wants to fulfill from her Shrine, or because I truly value our Sisters' community in the organism of the great and powerful tasks of our time and world.

With that I think I have said everything which the Blessed Mother wants to communicate to you. You may wonder why I did not speak about the true Marian way or Immaculata spirit. You can see all of this and much more of what is familiar to us included in what I have said, for only to the degree that we strive for the graces of prayer, only to the degree that we reach out for mystical dying, will we in our delicate, feminine Marian way become a *sursum corda*⁸ for the world; and also: only to this degree will we be able to preserve the soul of woman today from complete deformation. Perhaps you see too little how the nature of woman is in danger of losing itself in the gearworks of our modern times. And woe if the laws of the nature of woman one day interiorly break down. Then the whole culture of peoples and nations will go with it into the abyss.

What else should I say to you? I think I should finish. After all, it was not my intent to get you excited this evening. Originally I did not even intend to say anything! But in response to the

⁶ Compare with Fr. Kentenich's meditations of Mary as "deaconess" in *Heavenwards*, p. 53, 56f, 95-97.

⁷ Dying to self.

⁸ From the preface dialog at Mass: "Lift up your hearts!"

heavenly letter I decided to show you only a few general contours of what God must very well have in mind for our entire Family in the coming years, and which task we have in this regard as Sisters of Mary.

Perhaps you miss something being said about our perpetual adoration. It too will doubtlessly grow and take definite form in the coming years. But even here we will only be able to make the right decisions and find the unique God-pleasing form for it if we as the entire Sisters' Family earnestly strive for the indicated high aims – for deeper graces of prayer and for greater mystical dying.

Res venit ad triarios! This is what we read about the ancient Romans... If a battle went down to the wire, if there was a real danger that the battle would be lost, then the troop known as the Triarii, those who scoffed at death, were unleashed into the battle⁹. *Res venit ad triarios!* [It has come to the Triarii!] I do not consider it exaggerated for everyone from our circle to consider herself one of the Triarii.

Res venit ad triarios! To a great and greatest degree it depends on us whether Schoenstatt gains the hoped-for importance in the world. But what am I saying? I speak too ethically. I want to put it differently and say: The fulfillment of the movement's mission in today's world depends on us. But not even that is said correctly. So I must say: Whether the Blessed Mother, in practical terms, can take up the part in the redemption of the world foreseen for her in God's plan – depends on us! If we hold fast to this standpoint, then every act we do in the Family and for the Family will in a certain way be an act of Marian devotion, then everything we do will radiate the glories of Mary. Indeed, that is the great goal to which we owe our existence as Sisters of Mary and for which we strive with all our strength.

On the outside of the envelope containing the heavenly letter were the words, "Urgent Priority Mail! To the Reverend Father of the Sisters of Mary of the Catholic Apostolate, currently in the Tabor-Bethany of the Mother Thrice Admirable." Now I can tell you the last thing: It depends on us whether Schoenstatt becomes a Tabor-Bethany of the Mother Thrice Admirable. You know both words: *Tabor-Bethany of the Mother Thrice Admirable*. They are familiar to you. In our mouth this is no empty phrase. It therefore depends on us whether Our Lady as the Mother Thrice Admirable will radiate from here her glories into the world of today, whether from here she will embody in many people her glories and thus reveal herself to the world.

I would be happy if I could be counted among the "prophets" again after another 15 years. I would be happy if what I have said to you today would have turned out to be prophetic. In any case we want to unite in promising our dear Blessed Mother that we will go on pilgrimage as a family, hand in hand, into the new period of our history. We gather close together around her and her Shrine. Even if everything breaks down in our life, the love for our Shrine and the love for our Mother Thrice Admirable must never break down. Even if difficult and most difficult battles come – and we must count on them – it does not matter. Our shoulders are no longer so weak. And if they should become weak, we are supported in every situation by our dear Lady, the Mother Thrice Admirable. Yes, we are weak and will remain weak. That is alright.

What does it say in one of the old issues of the *MTA*? One of our hero sodalists wrote to me from the battlefield and asked me to give the *Mater Ter Admirabilis* a heartfelt greeting from her *Filius ter miserabilis*¹⁰. We, too, gladly and joyfully acknowledge that we are *filiae ter miserabiles*

⁹ The *triarii* (from: third) were the standard third line of the Roman infantry.

¹⁰ Son thrice miserable.

*Matris Ter Admirabilis*¹¹. That is alright. Nor do we forget another word which touches the entire depth and reality of the order of grace: through our powerlessness the interceding omnipotence of our dear Lady shall be glorified. And again, “God’s mercies and the miseries of our poor nature extend their hands to each other!” We therefore have no need to fear the miseries indicated. If we put them to good use, they become the standard for measuring God’s mercies.

If we receive the deeper graces of prayer we request and if our love grows to the point of mystical dying and heroism, we will be able and obliged to profess with great gratitude: The *Mater Ter Admirabilis* has shown herself admirable through her *filiae miserabiles*. She is and remains our great hope in every circumstance. At all times we hold to the words:

“*Mater habuit curam, Mater habebit curam.
Nos cum prole pia benedixit Virgo Maria!
Nos cum prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria!*”¹²

[III. Afterword from 1956]

Thus far the talk.

It would be quite interesting to explain the thoughts presented here in the context of the situation, and to follow their development to the present day. The memory of how many priests once gathered in Schoenstatt should still be fresh. It was not for nothing that Monsignor Wolker called Schoenstatt the “filling station” for modern priests. Indeed, there was a time when it almost seemed to be part of a good reputation as an up-to-date priest to have participated in a course there. To the extent I recall, there were years when about one tenth of the entire German clergy received spiritual nourishment and orientation there. The number of religious who regularly came also grew noticeably...

Moreover, it would be of value to retrace the steps taken by Schoenstatt to realize the new type of woman and man which has been before my mind’s eye as an ideal since my childhood. But later historians can research all this and determine the exact truth. In summary at least one thing should be noted here: There is no doubt that the Blessed Mother opened in Schoenstatt – in total opposition to the factory of the collectivistic person – a workshop of and home for the true Schoenstatt person.

Further Reading: *A Life for the Church*, p. 113-119.

Moved by the Spirit, p. 144f (the new type of person and community).

Visit to America, p. 199-213 (the collectivistic man).

Second Founding Document, No. 91-99 (capital of grace).

¹¹ Daughters thrice miserable of the Mother Thrice Admirable.

¹² Mother has taken care, Mother will take care.
The Virgin Mary with her holy child has blessed us!
Virgin Mary with you child, bless us!