

Covenant of Love



Novena in preparation for
October 18, 2022

108 years after the first Covenant
of Love with the Mother Thrice
Admirable of Schoenstatt



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108 years since the First Covenant of Love
with the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt

*Listening to God together
This is the best opportunity*



RECOMMENDATION

This novena is intended to contribute to the creation of a prayer network.

It begins on October 9, 2022.



SUGGESTION:

We can program an alarm on the cell phone, at a certain time (at the evening blessing or at the actual time when the first Covenant of Love was made at 5:00 p.m.) as a reminder:

Introduction

These words will accompany us in the novena in preparation for Covenant Day, October 18, 2022.

We all find ourselves at a time when we perceive great processes of change in the world and in the Church, and we experience some uneasiness and some turmoil.

This can be paralyzing but slipping into a standby mode is not an option.

Effective action needs to be taken. We would like to respond in the way the Founding Document suggests we should: through the “capital of grace”!

We receive so much through our Covenant with our Mother Mary! and we want to respond to her through our contribution, through the evaluation of our inconveniences, difficulties, desperate situations: All of this can become the source of an unexpected blessing.

This is the best opportunity.



Day 1

Words from the Founding Document

“Not simply the great and greater, but the greatest heights ought to be the object of our increased efforts.”

Day 1

An inspiration from life

This invitation meant to create something new, something great, even in the most difficult circumstances, not waiting for a better time. Father Kentenich himself, father and founder of the Schoenstatt Work, demonstrates this to us.

On October 18, 1914, months after the beginning of World War I, he, together with some of his students, took the providential step of founding a new movement.

He was well ahead of his time when he announced to his young listeners his “secret favorite idea”: That the person rooted in high ideals, of his own free will - not out of obligation - commits himself to “great and greater” goals.

In this way, the minor and major difficulties of everyday life, taken to the shrine of the MTA, become a gift and a blessing, well beyond the house of studies.

The Schoenstatt Work grows in breadth and depth.

Father Kentenich first embraces all the tribulations himself. He does not give up

- under the burden of his way of the cross through prison and the concentration camp,
- through 14 long years of exile and separation from the Schoenstatt Work,
- through countless misunderstandings and slander.

He considers them as the best opportunity to listen to God's plan and to respond to it: with courage - with patience - with creativity.

My contribution today

Listening to God together - This is the best opportunity.

Our Lady can make something great out of my small sacrifices. Do I accept this opportunity to contribute to the blessing of Schoenstatt's capital of grace?

Courageous - patient - creative: Which of these three attitudes from the letter of the International Congress of Pentecost 2022 can be an inspiration for me today?

Prayer (*see Closing Daily Prayer at the end of the novena*)



Day 2

Words from the Founding Document

“Undoubtedly, we could not accomplish a greater apostolic deed nor leave our successors a more precious legacy than to urge our Lady and Queen to erect her throne here in a special way, to distribute her treasures, and to work miracles of grace.”

Day 2

An inspiration from life

Sealing a covenant of love implies:

Starting something new.

Doing whatever I am able to do.

Increasing the capital of grace and placing it at our heavenly Mother's disposal.

Even under the daily circumstances of war, Joseph Engling surrendered himself in an extraordinary way. His everyday sanctity stands out: Providing food to his comrades while risking his life, his apostolate through his letters from the battlefield, his love for God and Mary, so real and intimate that he feels the reassurance and closeness of the Blessed Mother, even when the grenades explode around him.

He and his friend Karl made a promise to each other: "We will not give up until we become saints of our time".

Our Founder spoke of him in 1957 and described the "admirable competence" that Joseph achieved: a competence that combines "the highest ideals with the smallest details of everyday life", to the point of offering his life to Our Lady "for the goals you have set for our Congregation". (Joseph's diary entry at the end of May 1918).

At all times and all over the world, Schoenstatters are guided by Joseph Engling and allow themselves to be led by his example and his dedication to work hard according to their original vocation.

My contribution today

Listening to God together - This is the best opportunity.

What apostolic work can I put into the capital of grace today?

Is there an opportunity in which someone is waiting for me to do good?

I offer it as a gift to the MTA.

Prayer (*see Closing Daily Prayer at the end of the novena*)



Day 3

Words from the Founding Charter

“All those who come here to pray shall experience the glory of Mary and confess: “It is good for us to be here. Here we will build our tents, here our favorite place.”

Day 3

An inspiration from life

Having a favorite place, an idea, a person: that gives you a home. It provides strength for taking action. It provides the courage to take new steps, even if it requires sacrifices.

Gertraud von Bullion did not shy away from these sacrifices. Her life could have taken a different course, due to her aristocratic background. Many paths were open to her at the beginning of her young life. But her motto is simple: “*Serviam*”, I want to serve. For her, service is not servile slavery. Serving God and men with freedom and love becomes for her the expression of the highest personal fulfillment.

When the war broke out, Gertraud volunteered for service with the Red Cross. Driven by personal motivation, she went to the western front, to Cambrai and Mons, where she met the Schoenstatt Sodalists. Gertraud became an important instrument of the MTA and committed herself with all her strength. Schoenstatt becomes decisive for her life and her life for Schoenstatt.

While working as a Red Cross Sister during World War I, she was stricken with a fatal and incurable illness, pulmonary tuberculosis. Her agonizing suffering, which she mastered admirably, is a conscious contribution to the capital of grace.

She wrote: “In the end, is it not also love that impels us to offer Mary the joy of generous self-giving, contributing as much as possible to the capital of grace? We should ask ourselves every evening: has the capital of grace inspired my daily work, have I thus stamped even the discreet work of daily life with an apostolic activity?”

My contribution today

Listening to God together - This is the best opportunity.

What unnoticeable work that no one sees do I want to offer to the capital of grace?

Where can I sacrifice to give others a heart that listens and welcomes questions and needs?

How can I make others experience the glories of home from our favorite place through words or deeds?

Prayer (*see Closing Daily Prayer at the end of the novena*)



Day 4

Words from the Founding Document

“How often in world history have not small and insignificant beginnings been the source of great and greatest accomplishments!”

Day 4

An inspiration from life

That is amazing, that God often initiates his great works out of small things. Bethlehem, by no means the least important city in Judah.... (Matthew 2:6). Or the words that the Holy Scriptures use for the Mother of God: Because she was small, she was very pleasing to the Most High. Naturally, there is a comparison with the small chapel, 800 years old, which was no longer used for sacraments, and which has become a shrine, a place of grace visited all over the world and the origin of a great international movement.

The secret: Nothing without you - Nothing without us.

Listening to God - where is my contribution needed. Quite often things happen in silence, in simplicity, in discretion... almost imperceptibly: when someone does a charitable deed, he renders a silent service, offers his own suffering, and thus attracts graces.

Sister M. Emilie had a profoundly fine sense for this. Father Kentenich said in a study about her in 1955: "The favorite music for her ear and her heart

was the exhortation:

So it is with you: the greatest works are accomplished through the lowliest, and in them.”

Sister M. Emilie, a socially and apostolically committed teacher, whose youth was marked by crises and emotional difficulties, did not break down, but grew through Father Kentenich’s guidance to a childlike sense of security in God, to an inner free responsibility for herself and others.

The founder appointed her to the General Council of the Community of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary and made her Provincial Superior in spite of having contracted tuberculosis. In the year of her demise, in the midst of great suffering, she was able to write: “Our tasks are so great. We must not become stagnant in what is mediocre, we must not be stuck on a particular wall that seems different for each one of us. Our Lady is so eager to help us to leap over this wall. So go ahead with courage! Do not postpone anything.” (1955)

My contribution today

Listening to God together - This is the best opportunity.

I wonder who, within my immediate surroundings, is waiting for a loving glance, a chance to share their experiences in a warm atmosphere, or an uplifting word, instead of shutting myself up in my own painful experiences.

I offer any small improvement to the capital of grace and trust that with God's grace, great and greater things can grow from the small seed.

Prayer (*see Closing Daily Prayer at the end of the novena*)



Day 5

Words from the Founding Document

“Whoever knows the history of our sodality will have no trouble believing that Divine Providence has something special in store for it.”

Day 5

An inspiration from life

... And Divine Providence had something special in mind for it!

The distressing events of the war, in which the young sodalists, the founding generation, found themselves at the beginning of Schoenstatt's history, became the best opportunity for them to take the Covenant of Love seriously. They strengthened and encouraged each other, tried to listen to God together, to recognize his guidance and to offer all the sacrifices of this time as contributions to the capital of grace to the "Queen of Sodalists" in the Shrine, as they affectionately called the MTA.

This is also Max Brunner's case. Consciously, even at the battlefield, he maintained written contact with his fellow sodalists, with Father Kentenich, and the spiritual connection to the Shrine. In a letter written in 1916, he shared the serious challenges with great honesty: "... If one has to listen to rudeness every day - and this has already been the case for six months - then one must be careful not to become indifferent. And then there is usually a certain mental laziness. You have an aversion to anything religious and it takes a lot of effort to grasp

even a religious thought.

But it is precisely those days, when you really become aware of your own lameness, that lead you straight into the arms of your dear Mother. I hope my heavenly Mother will continue to educate me well during the war. To her I entrust everything..”

His words upon his admission to the Congregation were taken seriously by heaven: “Hail Empress, those who are ready to die for you, greet you!”

The reactions of his fellow disciples to his death highlight the greatness of his young life: “But our dear Mother will know why she has taken for herself her zealous knight, the virtuous congregant who was passionate about her”.

Very soon, Father Kantenich recognized the danger of National Socialism and prepared his foundation for the difficult years ahead, drawing inspiration from the hero sodalists. He had them buried in a small graveyard of honor near the Original Shrine as a reminder and as an encouragement for all the times of change that were to come, when trust and total surrender would be required.

My contribution today

Listening to God together - This is the best opportunity.

Where do I suffer from a certain laziness or indifference that I want to overcome?

Where can I (today) attract others with me through an exercise of patience or renunciation?

What is my concrete contribution to the capital of grace today?

Prayer (*see Closing Daily Prayer at the end of the novena*)



Day 6

Words from the Founding Document

“Your hearts have caught fire. You have made my plan your own. With confidence I place it and its fulfillment into your hands”.

Day 6

An inspiration from life

The song “Spark of the Soul” says: “Shine, little spark of the soul, for your light shines far in the dark night! Become the fire that warms hearts and enlightens them, for through you God transforms the world.”

The spark that leapt from the heart of the spiritual father to the boys on the evening of October 18, 1914, lit a fire that burns to this day. Countless hearts are rekindled by the Covenant of Love with Mary.

John Pozzobon, a deacon, husband, and father of seven children, became the initiator of the Schoenstatt Rosary Campaign, which spread from Brazil to the whole world. He loved the MTA, the Shrine and Father Kentenich. In 1950, a Sister of Mary asked him to escort a large image of the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt, along with young people, during a three-month missionary outreach. John Pozzobon accepted this task and remained faithful to it for 35 years, until his death.

The fire that burned within him made him perceive the longing for an encounter with God in people near and far. His response in terms of the capital of grace was very concrete. He traveled

more than 140,000 km. with the Pilgrim MTA on his shoulder, taking the Blessed Mother to homes, hospitals, schools, and prisons. He summed up what moved him in simple words: “The Blessed Mother entrusted herself to me. Now it was up to me not to disappoint her”.

In all these places, he promoted the bond with Mary and community prayer, especially the rosary. One morning, on his way to daily Mass, he was hit by a truck while walking through thick fog. A few days earlier, he had offered his life so that the Campaign would become international.

My contribution today

Listening to God together - This is the best opportunity.

What fire of enthusiasm for Schoenstatt burns within me?

Where is there someone in my environment who is waiting to be illuminated with the light that wants to shine from the shrine within my heart?

What fuel do I want to give to the capital of grace today?

Prayer (*see Closing Daily Prayer at the end of the novena*)



Day 7

Words from the Founding Document

“...this sodality chapel will become for us the cradle of our sanctity. And this sanctity will apply gentle force on our heavenly Mother and draw her down to us”.

Day 7

An inspiration from life

The Original Shrine becomes for many that cradle of sanctity of which the founder speaks. Father Kentenich showed the ideal of a modern saintliness in a time distant from God, in which values and dignity were broken. It is precisely this that fascinated Karl Leisner.

Shortly before his final exam in high school, Karl first came into contact with the MTA in the Shrine and with Schoenstatt spirituality. He discovered this path for his self-formation at the service of the apostolate. He often referred to the “wonderful journey for high school students in Schoenstatt” to which he owed “so much in terms of grace and vocation” (1939). “I made many beautiful and good resolutions there” (1933). He followed God’s call to the priesthood despite many internal struggles.

Karl’s devotion was severely tested. Even in the difficult conditions of the Dachau concentration camp infirmary, he maintained monthly contact with his priestly community group. The extent to which he was moved by his longing for the Schoenstatt Shrine in the last weeks of his life and suffering is evident in two instances: Karl asked his father, who was visiting him in Planegg, to visit the Shrine on

his way back to Schoenstatt, which he did. He also wrote in his diary the key word “in the MTA” when he heard about the visit of a priest friend there. He knew that he was represented “in the MTA” by people close to him. In his last diary entry, on July 25, 1945, he sent a special greeting to Our Lady: “Good evening, eternal, holy God, dear MTA, all dear saints, all dear living and dead near and far! Bless also, Most High, my enemies.”

My contribution today

Listening to God together - This is the best opportunity.

Can I see God’s providence in a situation I have not chosen?

Do I believe that it is God’s plan of love that can become a cradle of holiness for me and even a blessing to others?

What worries are weighing me down?

Can I simply hand them over to the MTA and offer them to the capital of grace?

Prayer (*see Closing Daily Prayer at the end of the novena*)



NICHTS OHNE DICH  NICHTS OHNE UNS

Day 8

Words from the Founding Document

“Do not worry about the fulfillment of your desire. Ego diligentes me diligo. I love those who love me.”

Day 8

An inspiration from life

Mario Hiriart, a university professor in Chile, felt called to live a life of holiness as a layman. In the Schoenstatt School of Education his ideal of being “like Mary, a living chalice, bearer of Christ” unfolded. He was co-founder of the Schoenstatt Boys’ Youth in Chile and joined the community of the Brothers of Mary in order to serve God more fully through complete dedication. He placed his devotion in the hands of the Blessed Mother in the Bellavista Shrine.

Mario stated: “I want to become an embodied integration between heaven and earth” and put this into practice by uniting work and faith, apostolic commitment, free time, and prayer.

He even offered his life to Our Lady “for the perfect realization of his Personal Ideal in Heaven”. A deadly cancer, detected too late, at the age of 33, made it possible to fulfill his silent youthful wish that he be allowed to die at 33 in Christ.

My contribution today

Listening to God together - This is the best

opportunity.

In what concrete contribution to the capital of grace is my love for Mary expressed today?

How do I want to show Our Lady today that I love her?

Where can I discover and respond to her love and concern for me today?

Or where does Our Lady want the people around me to feel her love through me?

Prayer (*see Closing Daily Prayer at the end of the novena*)



Day 9

Words from the Founding Act

“Prove to me first by deeds that you really love me and that you take your resolution seriously. Now you have the best opportunity to do so.”

Day 9

An inspiration from life

Difficulties are by no means an excuse for just waiting for better times to come, setting aside purposes, or taking the easy way out. Fidelity is demonstrated especially in times of challenges.

This year 2022 we remember the anniversary of Franz Reinisch's death 80 years ago. As a young Pallottine, he came to know the Schoenstatt Movement with its heartwarming devotion to Mary and its missionary impulse stemming from Vincent Pallotti.

Father Reinisch was very impressed by what he learned from the texts and also by what he experienced during his first visit to Schoenstatt. When the National Socialists came to power, Father Reinisch faced a great challenge in his life as a man and as a priest. He took a clear stand against their inhuman ideology. When he was drafted into the Army, his mind was made up: he would not swear allegiance to Adolf Hitler.

Father Reinisch was sentenced to death for "subversion to military authority". In his defense of his faith and against the injustice of the Nazis, he was willing to accept his own death.

He was the only Catholic priest who refused to take the oath of allegiance to Hitler, for which he was beheaded in the Brandenburg-Görden prison on August 21, 1942.

My contribution today

Listening to God together - This is the best opportunity.

God's standards are different from mine. Even if I am not absolutely certain how everything will turn out, I can trust like Mary did: "He has shown the strength of his arm" sings Mary in the Magnificat. Covenant Day is a good opportunity to wonder with the MTA about my vocation for Schoenstatt.

How do I show her today my gratitude for having been invited to know Schoenstatt?

Prayer (*see Closing Daily Prayer at the end of the novena*)

Closing Daily Prayer

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt.

In the shadow of the Shrine our worldwide family was born.

With our founder, Father Kentenich, we believe that you established yourself here in a special way on October 18, 1914 and worked miracles of grace.

In the Covenant of Love, we know that we are united across countries and continents and place ourselves at your service.

“We must understand our mission in the present challenges.

For its fulfillment, hearts that are moved by these ideals are essential, and a practical implementation through projects and initiatives is necessary”. (Father Ludwig Gütthlein, Covenant Letter of the Schoenstatt Movement Germany July 2022).

Together we want to listen to God.

Together we want to seize every opportunity to adequately assess the challenges of the great processes of change in the world and in the Church.

Together we consciously make our contribution to the capital of grace today and entrust to you all

the people we carry in our hearts.

Together, gathered around you, we pray that the Holy Spirit may guide us in these intentions.

May all Schoenstatt shrines be places of divine grace. Give us shelter, transform us, and send us forth.

In this way we place ourselves at your disposal once again with the consecration prayer in preparation for Covenant Day, October 18:



Prayer

*My Queen,
My Mother,
I give myself entirely to you.
And to show my devotion to you,
I consecrate to you this day my eyes,
my ears, my mouth, my heart,
my entire self without reserve.
As I am your own,
my good Mother,
guard me and defend me as your
property and possession.
Amen.*

Sources:

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