

Homily Father Alexandre Awi Mello
MTA Festival - Lisbon, Portugal
July 31, 2023

Today we have chosen the Mass of Pentecost - different languages, the same Spirit (that's why I am changing languages...) Pentecost meant for the apostles the moment of "1,2,3 go!" "Vai" in Portuguese... Repeat with me... 1,2,3 go! An expression that is used in sports, in games... but that can also be used in life. When Pope Francis was in the Cenacle (in the Holy Land), the place where Pentecost took place, he said: "Here the Church was born, and she was born to go forth!" The Church was born to go forth! We can also apply it to our Original Shrine (many have passed by there these days): Schoenstatt was born there and was born to go forth!

Once the Civil Defense passed by a Schoenstatt Shrine in Brazil and, for security reasons, had to place a sign on the door that said "EXIT". (As if it would be difficult to find the exit from the Shrine in case of emergency!) But, celebrating Mass there, I understood the message: the Door of the Shrine is an exit door! The DOOR is an important symbol for the Portuguese Schoenstatt Family? Door to Europe... Door to enter, but, above all, to go out! Pope Francis says that too often we leave Jesus (and the Mother of God) locked up in the Church.

So this will be the Mass of 1,2,3 go!

Repeat after me... 1,2,3 go! I have had the situation where, at the end of Mass, someone meets me and says: "What a nice thing you said at Mass! And I ask what I said and the person answers: "Ah! I don't remember anymore, but it was good!" (it was great, it was fun...) Well, so you don't get embarrassed later, I'll give you a hint: I'm going to talk about 1,2,3 go! Nothing else... "What did the priest say, what reflection can we take away from today's mass?" 1,2,3 go!

LET'S GO because we are at the sending forth Mass of the two Schoenstatt Youth Encounters (In Brazil, the Schoenstatt Family says: "to come down from Mount Tabor"). That is what Jesus heard from the Father at the Incarnation: 1,2,3 go! And do you know when? When Mary said YES, when she said FIAT. At that moment, the Father said to Jesus: now let's go!

And after the Annunciation, Mary felt the interior urge to go and visit her cousin Elizabeth, she felt an interior voice telling her: "Come on, Mary, let's go! 1,2,3 go!" And she "got up and went with haste" (Lk 1:39 - WYD motto).

Therefore, it is not by chance that we are here at the starting point of the explorers, of the discoveries that brought the faith to the Americas, India, Africa.... Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Pedro Álvarez Cabral, José de Anchieta and so many others departed from this place... Today we are in a historical place... "This is holy ground..." Lisbon is holy ground! Restelo - Belén, the neighborhood where we are located, is holy ground! The Schoenstatt Shrine could not be anywhere else, we cannot diminish the greatness of this place!

Most of us here are Christians because one day, from this place, the Gospel departed, carried by missionaries and adventurers, saints and sinners, with both economic and religious interests, who one day heard an inner voice telling them: "1,2,3 let's go!"

Here Jesus and Mary were telling them, "1,2,3 go!"

In fact, they always carried the Crucifix and the image of Mary together. As Father Kentenich says in *Heavenwards* (n. 332): "Let me present the cross and the picture of Mary to the nations as the sign of redemption so that the two who stand as one in the Father's plan of love may never be divided."

We are here today to be sent to WYD, and after WYD to be sent to the world. Today, Jesus and the Blessed Mother tell us: "1,2,3 go!" They ask us to carry the cross and the image of Mary, to put on the Marian T-Shirt, the Schoenstatt T-Shirt, to play on this team and to listen to the voice that tells us: "1,2,3 go!"

Let us run this race, let us play the game of life, for Schoenstatt, for the MTA, for Father Kentenich.

This is our team. Jesus' team, the Pope's team, the Church's team... "This is the Pope's youth!" But I want to talk about three attitudes to start with. They are in the word VAI (Portuguese for go).

V.A.I.: so as not to forget... Let's start at the back

I for INITIATIVE - Let us take the initiative, let us be protagonists, let us not be satisfied, let us "make noise", as the Pope says. The angel did not tell Mary to go and visit her cousin Elizabeth. She took the initiative and went; she went to serve. We know about the initiative of young Portuguese people with the Country Mission, for example. What can I do for others, what can we do?

A for ALEGRIA (JOY) - It is the trademark of youth. It is the characteristic of the saints. The enthusiasm, the optimism, the joy of youth is what is contagious to others. That is what makes them wonder: what is so special about them, why are they so happy? This is what we are going to see at WYD... young people who are happy because they are Christians... This is evangelizing, this is being missionary... without having to say anything. But I hope that it can also be said....

V for VICTORIOUSNESS - It is the rarest and most difficult word. It must be explained. Our Mother is "Mother, Queen and Victress." Victory is trust, abandonment, certainty that God is in charge.... It is a spirit of prayer, of abandonment.... The Work belongs to God, it belongs to the Blessed Mother.... I am simply on my way... I am ready to go... everything is in their hands! I do not worry about the results. They know everything...

OK, Father, I understood the "VAI", but the "1,2,3"? Simple! How do I go, what do I take with me? With the number three we could say many things: the Trinity, the triple spirituality, the triple message, the three objectives of Schoenstatt... But we will not go that far... let's stay with the most basic: The three graces of the Shrine! (We will reflect on them tonight). Shelter, transformation, and apostolic zeal. When I leave, when I go forth, I become a Schoenstatt Living Shrine and I take the graces of the Shrine with me. I sealed a Covenant of Love with the Blessed Mother, which means that my Heart Shrine is a Schoenstatt Living Shrine!

I go forth to shelter, transform and send others!

I am an ambulatory Shrine, which distributes shelter, care, empathy, concern for others (the opposite of indifference...). I go out to transform myself and others with my prayer and my service. I go forth to gain more apostles for Christ. I am a bearer of the three graces of the Shrine.

But we can certainly think: I am weak, I am a sinner, I am not capable, I am only a young person... And it is true! It is normal to feel this way. And therein lies the secret: God does not want us to do it by ourselves; He wants us to trust in Him, in the Holy Spirit. Nothing without us (1%), but, above all, nothing without You (99%)!

All this can only happen thanks to the GRACE of God, to the ACTION of the Holy Spirit, it is not the fruit of our will alone! We have to want it, but it is the Holy Spirit who does the work! And so that we can understand how the Holy Spirit works, I will make a comparison.

Do you know what a parachute is and what it is for?

Have you ever seen a parachute at work on the ground? Suppose this is my parachute. But what if the parachute doesn't open? To see the parachute in action, you have to jump! You'll only know if you jump! There's no other way! You have to take a risk; you have to trust. The Blessed Mother will take care of you, you just have to jump! "1,2,3 go!" with initiative, joy and victoriously.

In closing, I want to share with you a secret: When we seal the Covenant of Love with the Blessed Mother, it is as if She has given us a wonderful parachute.... But the parachute only works when we jump, when we are ready to "go forth" and trust her, when we jump!

Are you ready? So, close your eyes... Let's have a moment of silence... Let's surrender everything to the Blessed Mother.... She will make the parachute open, let us be enkindled by the Holy Spirit to carry our mission to the world... Let us stay silent in order to implore the Holy Spirit.

Now: "1,2,3, go!" This is what we must do at WYD and in life.... You will see how beautiful it is when the Blessed Mother's parachute opens and fills with the breath of the Holy Spirit!

Now it's up to you, have a good jump! Amen.