

Covenant of Love



Novena for Covenant Day
on October 18

I believe, that my
contributions counts



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ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATION

This novena is intended to contribute to networking in prayer. The digital version is available at <https://schoenstatt.com/>.

→ **It starts on October 9**



A GOOD EXPERIENCE AND SUGGESTION:

Some people install a personal acoustic signal on their cell phone, such as a ringtone, which reminds them to pray the novena at a specific time (for the evening blessing or at the historic hour of the Covenant of Love at 5:00 p.m.).

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My contribution counts

Introduction

Every year, we remember with great gratitude the beginning of Schoenstatt, the first Covenant Day on October 18, 1914.

The hearts of young people were set ablaze with Father Joseph Kentenich's quiet favorite idea. With enthusiasm, they wanted to move our Lady and Queen to "erect her throne in Schoenstatt in a special way, to distribute her treasures and to work miracles of grace."¹ But this did not happen without their contribution.

Great things have come out of Schoenstatt's basic principles: new people, even new communities, have been formed in covenant with Mary for the world and the Church from the Shrine.

It carried them
the belief in their personal ideal,
the belief that you can grow,
the belief that God is at work in their lives,
the belief that their contribution matters,
and belief in the charisma of one's neighbor.

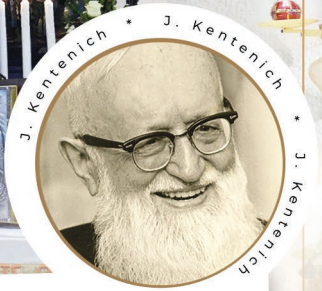
¹ Founding document

The focus of this novena is on the fourth fundamental principle: I believe that my contribution matters. We allow ourselves to be reinfected with the fire of enthusiasm of specific personalities from Schoenstatt's history, the fire that has been burning in countless hearts worldwide ever since for the covenant of love with the Mother, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt, who is three times wonderful.

We are not without concern about the major changes taking place in the world and in the Church, but we refuse to allow ourselves to be paralyzed. Time and again, we have been able to experience that each of our contributions, large and small, counts and can become a source of unexpected blessings. "Now you have the best opportunity to do so."² Like Mary, and with her, our lives should become a life in Christ that makes a difference. In this way, our journey through life becomes a journey of love.

2 ibid

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Day 1

A word from the Founding document

"It is not simply the great and the greater, but the greatest heights ought to be of our increased efforts."



Day 1

An impulse from life

Our founder, Father Joseph Kentenich, shows us what it means to create something new and great even under the most difficult conditions and not to wait for better times.

On October 18, 1914, shortly after the outbreak of World War I, he and a few students, believing in divine providence, took the bold step of founding a new movement.

He, is far ahead of his time when he announces his “secret favorite idea” to his young audience. The idealistic person who, out of their own motivation—not out of a sense of duty—commits themselves to “great and greatest” things.

In this way, the small and large inconveniences of daily life, which are carried to the Shrine of the Blessed Mother, become gifts and blessings—far beyond the confines of the study home! The Schoenstatt Work is growing in width and depth.

Father Kentenich leads the way in all trials. He does not give up.

- under the burden of his Way of the Cross through prison and concentration camps,

- through 14 long years of exile and separation from the Schoenstatt Work,
- amid countless misunderstandings and slander.

He sees them as the best opportunity to listen to God's plan and respond to it: courageously, patiently, creatively.

I believe that my contribution counts

"Now you have the best opportunity to do so."

The Blessed Mother can make something great out of my small sacrifices. Will I accept this opportunity to contribute to the blessing of Schoenstatt's capital of grace? Be courageous, patient, and creative!³

Which of these three attitudes can motivate me today?

Prayer *(see the conclusion at the end, of the novena)*

³ From the letter from the International Pentecost Congress

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Day 2

A word 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 impulse from life

Forming a covenant of love means:

Starting something new.

Doing what I can do.

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

Even under the conditions of everyday war, Joseph Engling made an extraordinary number of contributions. His holiness in everyday life was striking: he risked his life to provide food for his comrades. He also maintained a lively correspondence at the front. His genuine and deep love for God and Mary gave him a profound sense of security, even when shells were exploding around him.

He and his friend Karl make a promise to each other: „We won't give up until we become modern saints!“

Our founder spoke about him in 1957 and called it an „admirable mastery“ that Joseph had achieved: a mastery that combined „the highest ideals with the smallest things of everyday life,“ even to the point of offering his life to the Blessed

Mother: „... for the tasks you have set for our congregation.“ (Joseph’s diary entry at the end of May 1918)

Throughout history and around the world, Schoenstatters have looked to Joseph Engling and let themselves be inspired by his example and dedication to strive according to their own unique vocation.

I believe that my contribution counts

Who is my guiding star, helping me to grasp the ideal of my life and follow it? Is there someone who is waiting for me to do good? And whom I want to meet in such a way that they can take me as their guide? ... Is there a situation in which others smile pityingly at me, even though I know that my actions are right? I offer this as a gift to the MTA (*Mater Ter Admirabilis* = *Mother Thrice Admirable*).

Prayer (*see the conclusion at the end of the novena*)

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Day 3

A word from the Founding document

"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 want to build our tents, here shall be our favorite place."



Day 3

An impulse from life

Having a favorite place—in a location, an idea, or a person—gives you a sense of home. It gives you the strength to act. It gives you the courage to take new steps, even if it requires sacrifice.

Gertraud von Bullion does not shy away from these sacrifices. Her life could have taken a different course because of her noble origins. Many paths are open to her at the beginning of her young life. But her motto is simple: „Serviam“—I want to serve. For her, serving is not submissive slavery. Serving God and people in freedom and love becomes for her the highest form of self-realization. When war breaks out, Gertraud voluntarily enlists in the Red Cross. Through personal insistence, she is sent to the Western Front, Cambrai, and Mons, where she meets the members of the Schoenstatt Student Congregation. Gertraud becomes an important instrument of the MTA and commits herself with all her strength. Schoenstatt becomes decisive for her life, and her life becomes decisive for Schoenstatt.

While serving as a Red Cross nurse during World War I, she contracted the fatal disease of incurable pulmonary tuberculosis. Her agonizing suffering, which she endured with admirable fortitude, was a conscious contribution to the capital of grace. She once wrote: “Is it not ultimately love that drives us to give her (the Mother of God) the joy of abundant distribution through as many contributions to the capital of grace as possible? We should ask ourselves every evening: Did the thought of the capital of grace inspire my day’s work, and did I thereby stamp even the most insignificant tasks of everyday life with the mark of apostolic work?”

I believe that my contribution counts

What inconspicuous work that no one sees would I like to give away so that God can work through me as He wills? Where can I step back (today) in order to give others a listening heart that takes in their questions and needs? How can I help others experience the comforting home of our “favorite place” through a word or an action?

Prayer *(see the conclusion at the end of the novena)*

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Day 4

A word from the Founding document

"How often in world history have not small and insignificant beginning been the source of the great and greatest accomplishments?"



Day 4

An impulse from life

That is precisely what is so incredible: that God often begins His great works in small ways. Bethlehem, by no means the most insignificant town in Judea... (Matthew 2:6). Or the words that Holy Scripture applies to the Mother of God: Because she was lowly, she was highly favored by the Most High. We cannot help but draw a comparison with that small, 800-year-old chapel, no longer used for sacred purposes, which has become a shrine, a place of grace visited by people from all over the world, and the origin of a great international movement. The secret: Nothing without you – Nothing without us!

Hearing God – where my contribution is needed. How often does it happen quietly, in small ways, inconspicuously... almost imperceptibly: when someone does a good deed, performs a silent service, sacrifices their own suffering and thereby draws down grace.

Sister M. Emilie had an extremely keen sense of this. In 1955, Father Kentenich said of her in a study: "Her favorite music was the axiom for her ears and heart: It is you who does the greatest

works only through the smallest and works only on the smallest.”

Sister M. Emilie, a socially and apostolically committed teacher whose youth was marked by crises and emotional distress, did not break down, but grew through Father Kentenich’s guidance to a childlike security in God and a relaxed sense of responsibility for herself and others. The founder called her to the General Council of the Community of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary and, despite her serious tuberculosis, appointed her Provincial Superior. Even in the year of her passing, which was accompanied by much suffering, she was able to write: “Our tasks are so great. We must not remain stuck in mediocrity, we must not stop at a certain wall, which looks different for everyone. The Blessed Mother wants so much to help us make the leap over this wall. So let us go forward courageously! Let us not put anything off!” (1955)

I believe that my contribution counts

I wonder who in my immediate surroundings is waiting for a loving glance, warmhearted participation in their experiences, or an encouraging word, instead of me shutting myself off in my own painful experiences.

I give secretly, but honestly, a little effort and trust that with God's grace, something great and even greater can grow from this small seed.

Prayer *(see the conclusion at the end of the novena)*

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Day 5

A word 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 impulse from life

... And Divine Providence had something special in store for her!

The nerve-racking events of war, which the young Sodalists of the founding generation experienced at the beginning of Schoenstatt's history, became the best opportunity for them to take the covenant of love seriously. They strengthened and encouraged one another, trying to listen to God together, to recognize his guidance, and to offer all the sacrifices of this time to the "Sodality Queen" in the Shrine, as they affectionately called the MTA, as contributions to the capital of grace.

Max Brunner was no exception. Even at the front, he consciously maintained written contact with his fellow Sodalists, with Father Kentenich, and his spiritual connection to the Shrine. In a letter written in 1916, he honestly shared the challenges he was facing: "... When you have to listen to bad talk every day – and that's been going on for six months now – you have to be careful not to become indifferent yourself. And on top of that,

there is often a certain mental sluggishness. One is averse to anything religious, and it takes a lot of effort to even form a religious thought ... But it is precisely on days like these, when one truly recognizes one's own sluggishness, ...lead straight into the arms of my dear mother ... But I hope that my heavenly mother will continue to educate me well during the war. I entrust everything to her ..."

The words spoken at his admission to the Congregation are taken seriously by Heaven: "Hail Mary, our guide, those who are ready to die for you greet you!"

The reactions of his classmates to his death highlight the greatness of his young life: "But our dear mother will know why she took her fiery knight to herself, ... the virtuous Sodalist who was so enthusiastic about her." Father Kentenich recognized the danger of National Socialism very early on and prepared his foundation for the difficult years ahead, inspired by the "heroic Sodalists." He had them buried in a small cemetery of honor in the shadow of the Original Shrine as a reminder and encouragement in all times of upheaval to come, when trust and commitment would be needed.

I believe that my contribution counts

Where do I have a certain sluggishness or indifference that I would like to overcome in regard to my charisma? ... In regard to the charisma of my neighbor? Where can I improve (today) through an exercise in patience or self-denial?

Prayer *(see the conclusion at the end of the novenas)*

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Day 6

A word 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 impulse from life

The song “Seelenfunke” (Soul Spark) says: “Shine bright, little soul spark, for your light shines far into the dark night! Become a fire that warms hearts and illuminates them with its glow, for through you God transforms the world!”

The spark that jumped from the heart of the spiritual father to the boys on the afternoon of October 18, 1914, ignited a fire that burns to this day..

Countless hearts are constantly being rekindled by their covenant of love with Mary.

João Luiz Pozzobon, deacon, husband, and father of seven children, became the initiator of the Pilgrim Mother Campaign of Schoenstatt, which spread from Brazil throughout the world. He loved the MTA, the Shrine, and Father Kentenich. In 1950, a Sister of Mary asked him to accompany a large picture of the Mother of God, the Mother of the Three Graces, together with young people during a three-month missionary campaign. João Pozzobon accepted this task and remained faithful to it until his death—for 35 years.

The fire burning within him makes him aware of people's longing for an encounter with God, both near and far. His response, in terms of capital of grace, is very concrete. He travels over 140,000 km with the pilgrim image on his shoulder, bringing the Blessed Mother to homes, hospitals, schools, and prisons. He sums up what drives him in simple words: "The Blessed Mother entrusted herself to me. It was now up to me not to disappoint her."

In all these places, he promotes devotion to Mary and communal prayer, especially the Rosary. One morning, on his way to daily Mass, he is hit by a truck in thick fog. A few days earlier, he had offered his life so that the campaign might become international.

I believe that my contribution counts

Looking back on today or on a longer period of time, where do I see God working through me? What fire of enthusiasm for Schoenstatt burns within me? Is there someone in my environment waiting to be illuminated by the light that God has kindled in my heart shrine?

Prayer *(see the conclusion at the end of the novena)*

Covenant of Love



Day 7

A word 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 impulse from life

For many people, the Original Shrine becomes the “cradle of sanctity” referred to by the founder. Father Kentenich shows the ideal of modern holiness in a time when people are far from God and values and dignity are crumbling. This is precisely what fascinates Karl Leisner.

Shortly before graduating from high school, Karl came into contact with the MTA in the Shrine and with Schoenstatt spirituality. He discovered this path for his self-education in the service of the apostolate. He repeatedly referred to the “wonderful high school conference in Schoenstatt,” to which he owed “so much grace and vocation” (1939). “I made so many beautiful and good resolutions there” (1933). Despite many inner struggles, he followed God’s call to the priesthood.

Karl’s devotion is put to the test. Even under the difficult conditions in the infirmary of the Dachau concentration camp, he maintains monthly contact with his group of priests. Two incidents reveal how deeply he was moved by his

longing for the Shrine in Schoenstatt during the last weeks of his life and suffering: Karl asks his father, who is visiting him in Planegg, to visit the Shrine on his way back to Schoenstatt, which he does. He also writes the words “at the MTA” in his diary when he hears about a visit there by a priest friend. He knows that he is represented “at the MTA” by people who are close to him. He gives a special greeting to the Mother of God in his last diary entry on July 25, 1945: “Good night, Eternal, Holy God, dear MTA, dear saints, all dear living and dead, near and far! Bless also, Most High, my enemies!”

I believe that my contribution counts

Can I see God’s providence in a situation that I did not choose for myself? Do I believe that it is God’s plan of love that can become the cradle of sanctity for me and even a blessing for others? What worries are weighing on me? Can I simply hand them over to the MTA and entrust them to her?

Prayer *(see the conclusion at the end of the novena)*

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Day 8

A word 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 impulse from life

Mario Hiriart, a university professor in Chile, feels called to live a distinctively lay holiness. In Schoenstatt's educational program, his ideal of being „like Mary, a living chalice, bearer of Christ“ unfolds. He is co-founder of the Schoenstatt Boys' Youth in his country and enters the community of the Brothers of Mary in order to serve the apostolate and the movement more fully through total dedication to the supernatural world. He entrusts his dedication to the Blessed Mother in the Bellavista Shrine.

Mario puts it this way: „I want to be a personified encounter between heaven and earth!“ and lives out how work and faith, apostolic commitment, leisure time, and prayer belong together.

He even offers his life to the Mother of God „for the complete fulfillment of his personal ideal in heaven.“ A serious cancer diagnosis at the age of 33 fulfills a secret childhood wish to die at the age of 33, the age of Christ.

I believe that my contribution counts

In what specific way does my love for Mary express itself today? How do I want to show the Blessed Mother today that I truly love her? Where can I discover and reciprocate her love and concern for me today? Or where does she want me to let the people around me feel her love?

Prayer *(see conclusion of the novena)*

Covenant of Love



Day 9

A word from the founding document

"Prove to me first that you really love me, that you take your resolution seriously. Just now you have the best opportunity to do so."



Day 9

An impulse from life

Difficulties are by no means an argument for waiting for better times, setting aside resolutions, or taking the easy way out. Loyalty proves itself especially in times of challenge.

As a young Pallottine, Franz Reinisch became acquainted with the Schoenstatt Movement, with its warm devotion to Mary and its missionary zeal inspired by Vincent Pallotti. Father Reinisch was very impressed by what he learned from the texts and experienced during his first visit to Schoenstatt.

The rise to power of the National Socialists presented a major challenge in Father Reinisch's life as a human being and a priest. He took a clear stand against their inhuman ideology. When he received his draft notice for the Wehrmacht, his decision was made: he would not swear allegiance to Adolf Hitler.

Father Reinisch is sentenced to death for "undermining military morale." In his fight for his faith and against the unjust rule of the Nazis, he is prepared to accept even his own death.

As the only Catholic priest, he refused to take the oath of allegiance to Hitler and was therefore beheaded on August 21, 1942, in Brandenburg-Görden prison.

I believe that my contribution counts

God's standards are different from mine. Even though I don't have absolute certainty about how everything will turn out, I can still trust like Mary: "He performs mighty deeds with his arm." Covenant Day is a good opportunity to marvel with the MTA about my vocation and the vocation of others to Schoenstatt. How can I show her my gratitude for this today?

Prayer *(see conclusion of the novena)*

Daily prayer at the end of the day

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt.

Our worldwide family was born in the shadow of the Shrine. Together with our founder, Father Kentenich, we believe that you settled here in a special way on October 18, 1914, and that you work miracles of grace. In the covenant of love, we know that we are united across countries and continents, and we place ourselves at your service.

“All who come here to pray shall experience the glory of Mary and confess: It is good for us to be here. Here we want to build our tents, here shall be our favorite place. (...) Whoever knows the history of our solidarity will have no trouble believing that Divine Providence has something special in store for it. (Founding document)

Together, we want to listen to God.

Together, we want to take every opportunity to properly evaluate the challenges of major processes of change in the world and in the Church.

Together, we consciously contribute to the capital of grace and offer to you all the people we carry in our hearts.

Together and gathered around you, we ask for the Holy Spirit to guide us in all matters.

Together, we commit ourselves to the fundamental principles of the covenant of love:

I believe in my personal ideal

Be my guiding star, helping me to grasp the ideal of my life and follow it.

I believe that I can grow

Be my guide, showing me the next step in my personal growth.

I believe God is working in my life

Be my tracker, allowing me to recognize and respond to God's work in my life.

I believe that my contribution counts

Be my role model in doing what needs to be done, so that I can contribute where my contribution is needed.

I believe in your charisma.

Be a loving mother to us, who helps us recognize our brothers and sisters in others, so that an atmosphere of trust may arise among us, which radiates.

Let all the shrines of Schoenstatt be places of divine grace. Grant us a home, work conversion, and send us forth.

In preparation for the Covenant Day on October 18, we place ourselves once again at your disposal in a small consecration:



Prayer

*O my Lady,
O my Mother,
I offer myself entirely to You,
and as proof of my devotion to You,
I consecrate to You this day
my eyes, my ears,
my mouth, my heart
and my entire being.
And because I am Yours,
O incomparable Mother,
keep me and defend me as Your thing
and property.
Amen.*

Source references:

Lives of members of the Schoenstatt Family; compare

- Margareta Wolff: Their hearts caught fire,
- www.schoenstatt.de
- I. Roempler and M. Semmelbauer: ... by your hand ... The Life of Max Brunner
- www.franz-reinisch.org
- Inspiration from the preparatory prayer/
spiritual step toward the coronation in
Belmonte in June 2025

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