



CHAPTER 5: ACCOUNTABILITY TO SELF – THE SPIRITUAL DAILY ORDER, An Expression and Tool of Love and of the Apostolate

Success only comes if one keeps the appropriate rules. A Christian, too, should want to have success and not leave it to others. The evangelist Luke says: sit down and begin to calculate (Luke 14:28-30). That sounds like a recommendation to have written reflections and a plan of action – quite a different approach than that made fun of in the saying: see the finish line, rev your engines, go!

Christian life is always like building a tower in some way. It certainly cannot be accomplished without grace, and it takes a plan and a reasonable order, which is followed by perseverance and trust in God.

We cannot do without “rules” in the world, neither in the technical-organizational one, nor in the world of health and hygiene, and much less so in the realm of personal relations. Nothing works without rules, neither in the school of character nor in religious life. It is a peculiarity of the good that it does not succeed on its own. Nobody becomes good ‘all by itself’ ... virtues are conceivable only as a result of the self-conquest of free individuals.

Father Kentenich says: “We do not demand particular individual exercises. Everyone shall choose in complete freedom those exercises ... which he believes to be part of his organic development ... spirit without form is in the long run unthinkable. Therefore, a certain spiritual daily order is necessary. Those who adhere to a spiritual daily order, sin less and work more” (1929).

By making the membership dedication we decide to build the tower, to join the competition. We decide for it because the Blessed Mother has called us to be her cooperators and because we love her.

Our founder said: “Happy is he who by his very nature is passionate ... and knows how to guide the strength of his passions towards the good. Do you by chance lack opportunities for that? Think of your daily order ...”

In the Book of Sirach (Sir 43:24) is a sentence speaking of God’s greatness as Creator which can be modified to reflect our work with the Spiritual Daily Order: “His is the wise plan that calms the deep, and plants the islands in the sea.” The Spiritual Daily Order is the “wise plan” which, figuratively speaking, calms the deep or – as Father Kentenich expresses it – guides the passions towards the good. Whoever has educated himself, can be like an “island in the sea”. He becomes a place of refuge for many who search and err, because he is a person who is calm within himself and secure, a person from whom blessings go out to others.

Using the Spiritual Daily Order

The purpose of the Spiritual Daily Order is to make sure that we unfold, cultivate and secure a living heartfelt contact with the Blessed Mother, the Heavenly Father, and Christ throughout the day... It is a tool to secure the covenant with God and with the Blessed Mother, a means for self-education, and an excellent tool for the apostolate.

The Spiritual Daily Order is – as the name implies – a spiritual matter, because it integrates the spiritual = religious life into a daily order. However, it is not a merely intellectual exercise; rather, it is a very real, “hands-on” one. In Schoenstatt, the Spiritual Daily Order has been kept in written form from the beginning. For that purpose I need a means. In “Schoenstatt language” it is the so-called schedule.

The Schedule

The schedule is a printed form, either as sheets or part of a booklet. One can also create one’s own page or booklet, jotting down the days of the month. The heading on the printed SDO is: **“Spiritual Daily Order as my Contribution to the Capital of Grace of the MTA”**. Every line I enter into the SDO can be a contribution to the capital of grace. Whether it is a particular apostolic deed or the work for my self-education, it is always under the heading (in small print also on the form of the SDO): **“I sanctify myself for them”**. That means: I want to be an apostle. Why? That too is expressed on the SDO: **“The love of Christ urges us on!”** Love and apostolic work shall be my motivation when I keep a SDO.

○ What is written on the lines and in the boxes?

- ✓ The Particular Examination goes at the top of the printed schedule. The letters a.m. and p.m. – morning and afternoon – remind us that it is good to check the SDO at these times.
- ✓ On the lines under the Particular Examination is room for additional points or practices which we choose ourselves and which give my day religious, Christian, And Schoenstatt roots. If these points or practices are not as secured in my everyday life as they should be, then I write them on my schedule in order to get accustomed to them, and to secure them permanently. I have to know, from experience, what I personally need, which religious exercises bring me into a living contact with God in the easiest, quickest and surest way. In this way I draw, as it were, lines of structure through the day. God and the Blessed Mother give it shape through the covenant of love. Examples are:
 - Morning and Evening Prayer
 - Renewal of the Covenant of Love with the Blessed Mother
 - Renewal of the Blank Check, Personal Ideal and Mission
 - Other Daily Prayers – The Mass, The Rosary, the Angeles, Meal Prayers, Short Prayers, etc.
 - Very personal additional points such as:
 - ten minutes quiet time, daily visit to the church, daily reading about Mary
 - daily reading from the writings of Father Kentenich or Schoenstatt literature
 - consciously greeting the Blessed Mother in the Home Shrine, to remain a few seconds with her
 - Schoenstatt Office
 - Gymnastic & breathing exercises, diet – have I done what is necessary for my health?
 - No unkind conversations!

