

THE GRACE OF APOSTOLIC FRUITFULNESS

BECAUSE WE NEED AND WANT TO BE USED FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD. The Blessed Mother intercedes for



us the **Grace of Apostolic Fruitfulness** so we can fulfill our personal mission in life, giving of ourselves in Service to our families, Parish, Diocese, and the world around us. **From the Shrine, our Mother Thrice Admirable calls apostles, educates apostles, uses and sends apostles. Through her we become persons who radiate something, radiating (God's life) into our environment.**

IN THE SPIRIT OF BEING FRUITFUL FOR THE CHURCH—TO SERVE AND EVANGELIZE:

(My Covenant Way, Chapter 8 – Being An Apostle at All Times)

I. CREATED AND CALLED TO BE APOSTLES

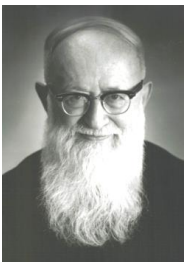
We influence others and others influence us. We are here for one another in order to guide each other to our eternal destiny, to show each other the way and to facilitate reaching the goal – to return to the One from whence we came. That is the meaning and purpose of each human life. The nature of being human coincides with the nature of being an apostle. **Being human means being an apostle.** More precisely: a life of solidarity means an apostolic life. Because we have been created and called to be apostles, we have been given a fundamental apostolic disposition. We have been endowed to be apostles. Everyone can be an apostle, because everyone has

natural inclinations for the apostolate with which God has endowed each person, enabling them to be apostolic. According to the translation of the original Greek word, we know that **apostles are ambassadors and messengers.** Every person is sent into the world with a unique mission, that is, to do something to the benefit of others. Everyone yearns for this in the depth of his heart because part of being human means having the desire to achieve something in this world, to be active. We are ambassadors, coming with hands and hearts filled with gifts to share.

I ask myself:

What can I do especially well? How can I put this talent to more and better use for the benefit of others? Do I have still unused talents, inclinations? What can I do to activate them? Allow yourself and others the joy of discovery!

The supernatural points of departure – Just as we are born into natural life and into being-in-the-world, endowed with everything we need to fulfill our tasks, so too are we born into the supernatural life. **Baptism is the hour of birth of the child of God, who from then on belongs to a supernatural family, the Family of God.** We become members of the Body of Christ and with that we share responsibility for this body, for its health and well-being. If I am “healthy”, the whole body is healthy, and really only then. If one member suffers, then every other member is challenged to help alleviate this sickness or at least to bring balance.



Our founder says: “Through Baptism a person participates in the divine life, in the life of Christ. That means: this participation in the life of Christ is at the same time a participation in his life’s task. Christ’s purpose was the redemption of the world, the world apostolate. **Therefore, every Christian has the ability and the obligation to make the Savior’s task of the renewal of the world his or her own.** What is laid down as a seed in the sanctified soul through Baptism, will be more strongly developed through Confirmation, the knighting of the Christian. Christ breathes warrior strength and warrior courage into the soul so that she will engage herself strongly and boldly, in spite of all difficulties, for the mission of Christ. Hence, duty and ability for the apostolate are also supernaturally laid down in our soul” (J. Kentenich, 1927).



Perhaps we should sometimes live more consciously out of the grace of Confirmation, that is, we should live more consciously with the Holy Spirit, so that our capability for the apostolate – in all the ways the apostolate can be carried out – will come more strongly to a breakthrough in our nature.

I ask myself:

Where do I experience that I belong to a natural family of God (diocesan family, parish family, Schoenstatt family)?

What can I contribute to the Church being experienced as a family?

How does my co-responsibility for the Church show itself?

How can I be more active, live more consciously out of the graces flowing to me through the Sacraments? (use of sacramentals, holy water, making the sign of the cross, prayer to the Holy Spirit, etc.)

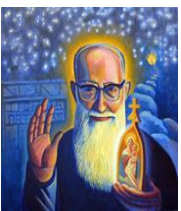
II. EDUCATED TO BE APOSTLES



Living the Covenant of Love - The Love of Christ urges us on. But the love of the Blessed Mother also urges us. How many members of Schoenstatt are carried by the awareness – and that makes them deeply joyful – that they are specially endowed by God and the Blessed Mother. Some of us will say: the greatest gift God has given me is that I have found the way to Schoenstatt, that I have learned to love the Blessed Mother and the Shrine, that there is a community to which I belong, which carries me and which I may help carry through my being and life, through my sacrifices and prayers, that I have found direction and support. Schoenstatt urges me to share what I have received.

“**Schoenstatt can help every person** to find himself and his mission within human society, eventually to reach his eternal goal. The more a person opens himself to the influence, to the education of the Blessed Mother and the graces from the shrine, the faster and greater his progress will be. Whoever looks to our founder and father will not only be able to master his own life but also be able to give to many others advice and help, support, light and guide on the journey. Through Schoenstatt and the covenant of love faith is strengthened, hope increased, love deepened, the three capital virtues and the gift of Baptism are unfolded and applied” (from a letter).

III. USED AND SENT AS APOSTLES



The call to Schoenstatt is indeed always a special vocation to the apostolate because we have made a covenant of love with the Blessed Mother. Whoever unites with the Blessed Mother will be drawn into service by her, will be drawn into her mission. **The Queen of Apostles** needs people who help her to spread the Kingdom of her Son. That is accomplished through the manifold forms of the shrine: **through the original shrine, the daughter shrine, the home shrine, the heart shrine, the pilgrim shrine.** Where the shrine is and is alive, there is the Christ and Father Kingdom also, at least in its beginning stage.

The founding generation was deeply convinced of this: if we succeed in drawing the Mother of God down to the shrine, then a movement of renewal will break forth from this shrine into the world and Church. What has proven true for the first shrine, the original shrine, is valid also for every other form of Schoenstatt shrine. **The shrine conquers the world.** But it takes people to prepare the shrine from which Our Lady can work, again and again, everywhere.

And if I am at a total loss as to how and where I can do something for the apostolate – with my weaknesses, limitations and the unfavorable circumstances I face – there is always the capital of grace, to be highly estimated as the great opportunity. We can consider the diligent gathering of contributions for the capital of grace as one of the most important means of the apostolate. What is most important, above all, is that graces

be mediated and “passed on”. **To give many “contributions” into the hands of the Blessed Mother** that she can distribute them is an apostolic activity in which we all can still grow. Everyday life gives us many opportunities for it. Let us take advantage of them!

“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” (J. Kentenich). **To erect her throne here...Here!** That is here, where I stand, there the Mother of God wants to work as the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt.

CONCLUSION

We are there for the Church so that the Church, through convinced laity, can be the soul of the world. In the “Catechism of the Catholic Church” this important service of the laity is indicated with the following words:

“Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or grouped in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth. This duty is more pressing when it is only through them that men can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Their activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it” (900).



Let us therefore again and again be inspired, enthused, set on fire by the thought: I am needed, and others ask for help in what I can do – and I can do a great deal. The Schoenstatt girls’ youth has expressed this open, joyful apostolic attitude in the stanzas of a song by Gertrude Wackerbauer: **“Find what sets you on fire! Draw deeply from what you can do! “Nothing without you – nothing without me!” Life in abundance for you!”**

THROUGH THIS ENCOUNTER, with thanksgiving and gratitude, let us pray to be open. Let us pray to receive the **GRACE OF APOSTOLIC FRUITFULNESS** which the Blessed Mother wants to intercede for us from the Holy Spirit so we can become **useful instruments in her hands** formed and educated by the **Three Graces of the Shrine** and, under her protection and guidance, fulfill our personal mission in life – to become the saints who cradle the future of the Church, the apostles for our times who are called, formed and sent from the Shrine to serve and evangelize - to help grow the Church and build up the Kingdom of God.

1) PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

(prayed by Father Kentenich during his sermon on Pentecost Sunday, 1965 in the parish of St. Michael, Milwaukee. Cardinal Mercier (1851-1926)

Holy Spirit, you are the soul of my soul. I humbly adore you. Enlighten me, strengthen me, guide me, comfort me. Reveal your wishes to me as far as this is in accordance with the will of the Eternal Father. Show me what Eternal Love wants of me. Show me what I should do. Show me what I should suffer. Show me what I should humbly and thoughtfully accept, bear and endure. Holy Spirit, show me your will and the will of the Father, for I want my whole life to be nothing else than

a continuous, and everlasting yes to the wishes, to the will of God, the Eternal Father. Amen.

We pray with Father Kentenich (day nine of the Courage of Faith Novena)

Holy Spirit, I ask you: Tear me out of my laziness and self-satisfaction and help me to be open for the inspirations of our age. Give me an intuitive feeling for what is good and a wide-awake mind to discover evil and fight it in every way. Grant us the courage to stand up as a matter of course for truth and goodness whenever the opportunity arises, for it is possible to change the world if we would only start to change ourselves at long last. Amen.

2. From the Statues

The Apostolic League demands of its members **persevering apostolic activity in their walk of life**, subject to the responsible pastoral leader (pastor, parish priest, chaplain, etc.) (see Appendix)

“**Walk of life**” is meant here in the broad sense of the word: the areas of life determined by my profession and vocation, for instance, as father or mother in my family, as daughter, son, brother, or sister, etc. as someone with a unique responsibility in a given area.

“**Persevering**” apostolic activity means I carry it out, first of all, in my place in life in each phase of life and at all times. Motivated by love, I use every opportunity. In everything I am carried by the conviction: the Blessed Mother will and can use me as an instrument.

A principal field of apostolate – and that is true for every Christian, but especially for us as members of Schoenstatt – is my parish. As Schoenstatt members we would not fulfil our mission and shirk our responsibility if we performed all kinds of apostolic deeds but disregarded our own pastor and parish life. We belong to a parish and see how we can provide responsible cooperation. The pastor must know that his Schoenstatt members are excellent people on whom he can depend.

Possibilities for direct Schoenstatt Apostolate:

- ✚ to acknowledge Schoenstatt; to tell what Schoenstatt means for me and all that it has given to me
- ✚ to give testimony to Schoenstatt through the home shrine, work shrine or vocation
- ✚ to draw others’ attention to community days, to take them along to Schoenstatt events
- ✚ to promote pilgrimages to Schoenstatt, to invite to covenant days
- ✚ to recruit new group members
- ✚ **to promote the apostolate of the pilgrim shrine**
- ✚ to open a way for the Blessed Mother in the MTA picture by distributing her pictures
- ✚ distributing Schoenstatt literature, giving it as a gift
- ✚ to offer Novenas to Father Kentenich, helping to spread the literature from Father Kentenich Secretariate
- ✚ to promote the Schoenstatt mission, especially Schoenstatt activities

In addition to the examples of specific Schoenstatt apostolates, there are also the many Possibilities of Apostolate which the Church puts before the eyes of the faithful. The “Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People” of Vatican Council II lists apostolates of being as well as apostolates of action (see pages 236-238 for completed lists):

- ✚ Apostolate in the parish, diocese, and universal Church
- ✚ Apostolate in and for the family
- ✚ Apostolate for the youth
- ✚ Apostolate at work, leisure, and in every aspect of social life
- ✚ Apostolate on the national and international level

This compilation shows that there are almost endless possibilities for being apostolically active. But it is not the number of activities that counts. That could too easily lead to mere activity without a soul. It was a concern of our father and founder that we be apostles in our state of life and immediate surroundings. For example, as a father or mother one’s family should be the first apostolate. Everthing that concerns the family must be foremost in my heart. It is there that I must work, even if it is especially difficult for me. The place where I work or study is also the place of my apostolate, in most cases as difficult as it is rich.

Mother, send me out on my mission!