

# 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. **She says to us in her Covenant of Love, “Then from here (the Shrine) I will draw youthful hearts to myself and educate them to become useful instruments in my hands.” (Schoenstatt, The Founding Documents)**

## IN THE SPIRIT OF BEING AN INSTRUMENT IN MARY’S HANDS

“Essential to Schoenstatt’s spirituality is the cultivation of our attitude and life as **instruments of God**. This is what is called **‘instrument piety’** or the spirit of **‘instrumentality’**... In reality, it is a very simple thing: in the covenant of love (with the MTA), I express my willingness and desire to be an instrument of God. Through my apostolate (work for the Church) and service to family, friends, Church and world, I cultivate a lifestyle of actively building up the kingdom.” (200 Questions about Schoenstatt)

“In the covenant of love, the Blessed Mother wants to educate us that we may be prepared for a great task to become **useful instruments** in building God’s Kingdom in our families, at our places of work, within our parishes. To be such a **useful instrument** we need to possess six characteristics that our Mother Thrice Admirable will help to unfold in our lives:

**1) Total Detachment** from self and the snares of the inordinate self-will. Where self-serving motives are in play, the instrument loses its dependence on God and fails to let himself be willingly guided and led to all the tasks and goals God has foreseen and wishes to use him for. This means we must learn to “act against”, not to just “go with the flow” of our drives and instincts on the inside or of fashions and trends on the outside, but to practice a healthy resistance to the natural tendency of earthly attachments to enslave instead of to elevate. This does not mean that earthly attachments should be scorned, but rather kept in their proper balance.

**2) Total Attachment** - We let go of all the inordinate drives of our self-will and of all the egoism of our heart to give ourselves entirely to God and his wishes as they are manifested to us in the wish and will of the Church, our superiors, etc. This includes and demands the gift of self, in being and attitude, to God and the deeply rooted awareness of being dependent on his grace and strength. For as St. Paul’s says, “I can do all things in him who gives me strength” (Phil 4,13). The free instrument is rooted in prayer and the reception of the sacraments for they are the source of the perfect instrument’s unshakable certitude of victory. We see the words of Our Lord in the light of **instrumentality**: “The One who sent me is with me. He will never abandon me, for I always do what pleased him...” (Jn 8,29).

### **3) Outspoken Readiness to Used by God**

This characteristic of instrument piety is a high degree of readiness to be used by God, or, a tireless drive to win over souls. It is God’s desire that all people be happy, and so Our Lord died for us all. But he who created and redeemed us without us does not want to sanctify us without our cooperation. Christianity is a religion of redemption. Christ is the Redeemer of the world, but for the redemption of each individual he requires our individual cooperation. He needs instruments that he can send out, just as he was sent forth by the Father, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Jn20,21).

### **4) Outspoken Character of Being an Apparition of God and Mary**

Anyone who lives and strives to be a perfect instrument in God’s hand, i.e. anyone who seriously tries to gain a total detachment from self and a total attachment to God, God’s will, and God’s strength, as well as a high degree of readiness to be used for God’s goals, will sooner or later find that the fourth characteristic of instrument piety has begun to grow of its own accord: **the outspoken “parousia” or “apparition” character**. God increasingly takes shape, as it were, in anyone who lives in God’s world as much as a perfect instrument does and in communion with him. We become an apparition of God in the world, or, to use the formula more familiar to us, an apparition of Mary. Our Lord could fully say of himself, “Anyone who sees me, sees the Father” (Jn 14.9). So it is that the perfect, purely human instrument can also say of himself (though admittedly in a very limited and figurative manner): Anyone who sees me will be able to see in me God, Christ, and Mary.

### **5) Inner Freedom and Multifaceted Security** – Resting in God’s hands

Perfect security and the inner freedom of the children of God, both from inordinate desires and too many anxieties and worries.

### **6) Abundant Fruitfulness**

The instrument in the hand of God desires only one thing: to make room and allow room to be made for God and God’s fruitfulness. Hence the earnest struggle for a perfect letting go of self, because our inordinate self-will is the obstacle to God and his effectiveness. Detachment from self opens us to God coming in and working through us.” (The Three Pillars)

**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** and, under her protection and guidance, fulfill our personal mission in life – to become the saints who cradle the future of the Church.

**1) Read and reflect on the six characteristics of a useful instrument:**

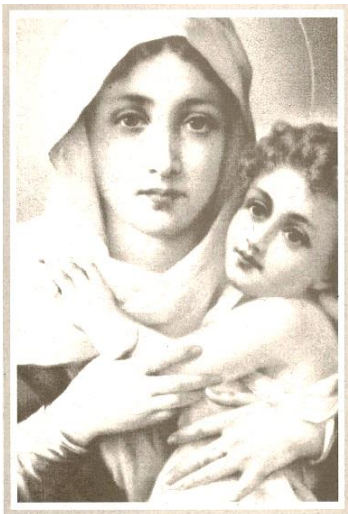
- Are my self-will, drives, and instincts in proper balance? Freely choose 1 small sacrifice or act of self-discipline every day this month and offer it as a contribution to Our Lady's Capital of Grace.
- Am I a free instrument rooted in prayer and the reception of the sacraments?
- Am I ready to be sent out to be used by God to win over souls?
- Do I live in God's world and am I in communion with Him. Would others see in me God, Christ, and Mary? Do I live as a child of God?
- Am I resting securely in God's hands? Do I have faith in God's Providence in my life?
- Do I desire to make room and allow room to be made for God and God's fruitfulness in my life?

**2) Read and reflect with Deacon John Pozzobon – [A HERO TODAY NOVENA](#):**

**Day 4** – Sacrifice and Idealism, Hero for the Poor

**Day 5** – Trials and Testing, Heroic Contributions to the Capital of Grace

**Day 6** – Love Conquers All, Heroic Love for the Blessed Mother



**“IN MY HANDS”**

As our loving Mother, the Blessed Mother forms and molds us **in her hands** through her promises into “another-Christ” so that the words of St. Paul become a reality in each of us: “...yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me...” (Gal. 2:20)

In Holy Scripture hands have become the symbol of protection, power, possession, confidence and trust. It is our great longing to be secure in God's hands, to be well cared for and to leave matters in his hands. As the Mother of God, Mary always offers us her guiding and helping hand whenever we need it. When we are safe in her hand no evil power will harm us, confuse us, or take hold of us. With her hand to guide us we will never stray away from the path of Christ.

What a great promise our covenant partner gives us: to keep us safe in her hands, to place all our worries and concerns into her hands; she will take perfect care. And with her hands she will mold us into true followers of Christ and use us to build his kingdom. Secure in her hands, no ungodly power will lay its hand on us. (The Three Pillars pgs 87 & 88)

Focusing on the Blessed Mother's hands, I ask myself:

- Am I attached to them?
- Do I feel protected, guided, molded by them?
- What could be more urgent than constant help and strength for every moment of my life, on my journey homeward to the Father?
- What could be more helpful than to place myself into the powerful, transforming, sheltering hands of our Blessed Mother my covenant partner so that she can educate and use me for the kingdom of God?