

INTRODUCTION TO THE COVENANT OF LOVE



Our dear Blessed Mother wants to teach us to be COVENANT PEOPLE who faithfully live our Baptismal Promises. She wants for us to be open to God, to talk with Him, to listen to what He wants to tell us, and to be His trusting children at home with Him in His Heart.

IN THE SPIRIT OF COVENANT:

A covenant is an agreement made between two parties who freely promise loyalty to each other and loyalty to all that the agreement includes. Common interests, shared tasks, mutual responsibilities and benefits unite the covenant partners. Holy Scripture is the magnificent story of salvation seen as a covenant which God made with His people in the ancient past and which He continues to offer to His people until the end of time.

In the Old Testament God made a covenant with Adam and Eve, with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and many others. God's covenant in the New Testament was begun at the hour of the Annunciation when Mary said her yes to giving birth to Christ who was to restore God's covenant with Israel by establishing a new and everlasting covenant. This new covenant was sealed in the blood of Christ, through His death on the cross and His glorious resurrection. It was perfected in the Spirit on Pentecost.

Through the sacrament of Baptism, the Church invites us to enter into this redemptive covenant. Our baptismal covenant is the foundation and source of our Christian life. It is confirmed, strengthened, and perfected through the sacraments, through God's grace, freely and generously given, and through our prayers, good deeds, and our sincere striving for holiness.

Schoenstatt offers the **COVENANT OF LOVE** with Mary as yet another help to live our baptismal covenant as fully as possible. Mary was a perfect partner in the covenant; she never retrieved her yes to God in the covenant. By making the covenant with her, we learn how to master the art of a life out of a covenant spirituality. (SCHOENSTATT, AN INTRODUCTION)

We turn to our Blessed Mother and in her school, we learn how to be ideal covenant partners. To help us live as COVENANT PEOPLE, the Blessed Mother gives us six PROMISES that she will unfold for us if we act upon her six REQUESTS:

Promises of the Covenant of Love:

- 1st Promise:** "It will please me to dwell in your midst"
- 2nd Promise:** "And distribute favors, gifts, and graces in abundance"
- 3rd Promise:** "I will draw from here youthful hearts to follow me"
- 4th Promise:** "I will educate them"
- 5th Promise:** "To be useful instruments"
- 6th Promise:** "In my hands"

Requests of the Covenant of Love:

- 1st Request:** "Prove first by your deeds that you really love me"
- 2nd Request:** "Increase your striving to the highest degree"
- 3rd Request:** "This sanctification I demand of you"
- 4th Request:** "Diligently bring me contributions to the Capital of Grace"
- 5th Request:** "Fulfill your duties faithfully"
- 6th Request:** "Pray fervently"

THROUGH THIS ENCOUNTER, with thanksgiving and gratitude, let us pray to be open. Let us pray to receive the grace to be COVENANT PEOPLE who faithfully live our Baptismal Promises.

REFLECTION:

Let us remember Jesus' last words about Mary in the Bible: "Behold, your mother" (John 19:27). He speaks those words to the beloved disciple just before he dies, entrusting him into a special relationship with Mary as his mother. The beloved disciple represents all faithful disciples of the Lord and all Christians are given Mary as their spiritual mother.

Prayerfully ponder this scene and imagine that you are the beloved disciple standing next to Mary under the cross of Christ. Picture Jesus speaking these words now specifically to you, "Behold, your mother." Jesus is giving you Mary, his own mother, as your spiritual mother. What would you say to Jesus in response to this great gift? What would you say to Mary?

COMMIT:

Over the next 12 Visits of Mary's Picture of Grace, we will be studying Mary's Promises and Requests of her Schoenstatt Covenant of Love from the book THE THREE PILLARS. By applying what we learn, we will be able to welcome Mary more fully into our daily lives and develop a more intimate relationship with her, knowing that she, in her maternal love for us, constantly looks out for our needs and ardently prays for them to her Son, Jesus.

PRAY:

Spend a few moments thanking Mary for her maternal care. Pray the Hail Mary slowly and carefully, paying attention to the words in light of all we talked about in the above reflection.

NOTE: You will need a copy of THE THREE PILLARS book to accompany the Visit Notes for the PROMISES and REQUESTS of the Covenant of Love. A copy can be purchased from the SCHOENSTATT MOVEMENT OFFICE at (262) 522-4300 or check with the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate Missionary coordinating the visits of the Pilgrim Mother Shrine in your area .

NOTHING WITHOUT YOU, BLESSED MOTHER, NOTHING WITHOUT US!