

VISIT #4, THE FOURTH PROMISE OF THE COVENANT OF LOVE

“I WILL EDUCATE THEM”



IN THE SPIRIT OF COVENANT SPIRITUALITY:

(From THE THREE PILLARS pages 66-77):

Education of Followers of Christ

The Blessed Mother wants to educate youthful hearts to become what God intended them to be. She will educate us so that we will recognize the purpose of our life, our potential and responsibilities. **She will inspire us to work hard on ourselves**, to use all our capabilities in a God - pleasing way, and to remove all that hinders the good from shining forth. By her example, by her own life of faith, by her constant motherly care for us, she teaches and educates us, showing us the way, we must walk if we want to become true followers of Christ. As a mother she keeps watch that we never stray away from the path even if it becomes treacherous and inconvenient. **We must allow her to fulfill her task in us**. As the great educator, her great task from Schoenstatt is to form us into another Christ, into the image of her divine Son.

Education of the Youth

Mary promises to educate our youth too, especially in these trying times. Wherever direct parental influence falls short, her educational influence must take over and do what human powers and wisdom alone cannot accomplish. This is her promise as our covenant partner. She can and will do much if she receives the cooperation from her human partner in the covenant.... Ultimately, the newest educational skills, psychological insights and professional help cannot solve every problem or eliminate all the difficulties in our day. We must turn to the best educator, the most perfect and most skilled educator and allow her to fulfill her task in us and around us.

Our Self-Education

“But even when she takes over the primary task as educator, she must rely on our cooperation and our self-education. This is a law in the kingdom of God.” (Father Joseph Kentenich)

Schoenstatt offers a practical and systematic method of personality formation that has become a way of life for many people. **This method of self-education and formation includes the personal ideal, the special resolution (Particular Examination), and the spiritual daily order**. These tools have the purpose of developing the good in us, of helping us overcome weaknesses, and of providing stability and discipline in our striving for holiness.

Personal Ideal and Mission

We all have been given a personal mission in life, an ideal to shine before us to motivate us to do great things in our everyday life and to make us the salt and leaven of the earth... As we discover our own uniqueness, we will realize all its potentials and even envision this very uniqueness in all its perfection and greatness... **Our personal ideal makes us strong, firm, free personalities and guards us from the mass mentality of our time**. It gives new meaning to all our thoughts and actions as we see clearly our unique contribution to the renewal of the world... We must keep our personal ideal alive if we want it to have a star shining brightly before us, giving us courage in joyful and sad times, guiding us in our decision making and rendering all we do and say fruitful for the apostolate.

Special Resolution (Particular Examination)

Because we often fall so short of the ideal we need to work on ourselves... The special resolution is indispensable if we want to make progress in our Christian living because it focuses on one point at a time... We choose just one special point on our list of things that need to be improved, check ourselves repeatedly and consciously, and – from time to time – make a progress report for ourselves on how we are doing... The special resolution is simple and down to earth so that it can be carried out... The special resolution is meant to be practical and should meet a present spiritual need. It should be applicable to the ever-changing circumstances and different situations in our lives. It should be a definite point, expressed clearly, precisely and concretely, not in general terms... **We try to tackle first those points which disturb God and others most or which cause us the greatest difficulties at the moment**.

In working with our special resolution, we try to imitate St. Paul who said: “In him who is the source of my strength I have strength for everything” (Phil. 4:13). **While making a genuine effort, we must also trust completely in God’s strength and grace and know that in him we can do all things**. The special resolution is not a one-sided spiritual fitness exercise with the emphasis on our own efforts. It also involves trust in God and loving cooperation with his grace... In this way we live the motto of the covenant, “Nothing without you, nothing without us”.

The Spiritual Daily Order

From its earliest days, Schoenstatt recognized the value of keeping a spiritual daily order... The spiritual daily order is an important tool on our journey to holiness because it helps us develop a spiritual lifestyle and maintain a certain stability in our spiritual life... We are accustomed to following plans, such as a syllabus in school or a blueprint for construction, in order to achieve a goal or to make progress in any sphere of life. **If we want to grow in our spiritual life we also have to follow a plan, a spiritual daily order**. Such a plan prioritizes our day in accordance with God’s wish; it safeguards our covenant commitment, helps us overcome the strong tendency to over-estimate the value of earthly things and to become too attached to them as if they were our gods...

The points we put on our agenda correspond to our spiritual needs. They might include our prayer times in the morning and at night, a spiritual reading, and a few moments of quiet reflection. We might also find it necessary at times to include some other points on our daily order which will indirectly enhance our living in the presence of God, such as a charitable thought, word or action. The renewal of our personal ideal and our special resolution are to be part of the spiritual daily order. **The spiritual daily order is checked once a day, either mentally or in writing**. Making a note of our success or failure helps us get to know ourselves better, to be more focused in our striving, less superficial and forgetful, and more independent of our moods.

Schoenstatt’s Methods of Self-Education urge us on in loyalty and perseverance to take the small step necessary for holiness. But we also trust firmly in the special love and care of our covenant partner and allow her to educate and form us to be willing and useful instruments in her hands for the renewal of the world in Christ. These methods of self-education do not only assist us in our striving for holiness but they also guarantee our faithful adherence to the teachings of our Catholic Church. They secure active participation in the prayer life of the Church and regular reception of the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation as indispensable means to grow in God’s grace. Our active involvement in the apostolic works of the Church is our way to share with others the spiritual riches we’ve received.

THROUGH THIS ENCOUNTER, with thanksgiving and gratitude, let us pray to be open to our Blessed Mother’s promise to educate youthful hearts who follow her. Let us pray to receive this grace which she is offering to us so that we can grow in **COVENANT SPIRITUALITY** through her motherly education and intercession.

REFLECTION:

The plan of our Special Resolution and Spiritual Daily Order alone does not suffice for our striving for sanctity; it has to be controlled in daily life so that we can orient ourselves constantly on its demands. We could say that it would be enough just to examine our conscience in the evening, but we know life too well. The act of marking a little piece of paper each night is an effective protection against forgetfulness and constant changes in mood, superficiality and vagueness in our striving. Psychology tells us that the more senses that are drawn into the act of a person, the more effective its impression becomes.

The actual control in writing is not the most important act. The growth into an attitude of true humility about the failures made visible should be more important. Mistakes are a blessing for us because they make us small before God. We also receive a clearer self-knowledge. There is usually the danger that we do not see ourselves in the right light and find excuses for many different things.

COMMIT:

1)The Personal Ideal expresses our personal mission in life and our specific way in which we live out our calling to be disciples of Christ. The Personal Ideal is the perfect image of each person as it exists in the mind of the creator. Read pages 69-72 in THE THREE PILLARS book and reflect on what your Personal Ideal and Mission might look like.

2)Pray and Discern 2 or 3 ways that you do not reflect Christ. What are you struggling with at the moment? When going to Confession, what do you confess time and time again? The **Root Vices and Remedies for Root Vices** page attached to this Visit Note offers a reflection on the seven deadly sins and their opposite virtues. This reflection is a good start and offers much food for thought. From your list of 2 or 3 ways you do not reflect Christ, pick 1 to work on for the next month or until your next Confession.

3)Using the Spiritual Daily Order Form (shown below) fill in at the top your **Special Resolution (Particular Exam)** for the point you discerned to work on. State your resolution simply, clearly, concretely (for example: I am struggling with Envy, so I decide that - I will say something positive about someone at least once a day). Under the Particular Exam enter Prayers that you might want to secure on a daily basis, reception of Sacraments you want to secure on a weekly or monthly basis. Also, you could enter a Lifestyle Discipline such as: Get up when alarm goes off; Exercise 3 times a week; Limit TV & Computer time. Every day or night, whichever you choose, check yourself and then mark your Spiritual Daily Order accordingly.

PRAY:

- ✚ Give your heroic striving to the Blessed Mother in your Shrine, your Place of Honor, so she can make it a place of grace and the place where she can unfold her special motherly activity.
- ✚ Ask the Blessed Mother for her help and to intercede the grace you need to keep your resolutions.
- ✚ Each evening give her the result of your heroic striving - whether you succeeded or failed.
NOTE: You can use a physical symbol for your offering (i.e. a bowl with special beads)
- ✚ Offer your heroic striving:
 - 1) for your own self-education and maturity in the ways of holiness;
 - 2) to intercede for someone who needs your prayers and sacrifices;
 - 3) for Our Lady's Capital of Grace

"I sanctify myself for them." Jn 17:19

"Nothing without you, nothing without us." J.K.

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Particular Exam:																															
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Root Vices

Pride

- Intolerant
- Ambitious
- Vain
- Boastful
- Disdainful
- Self Centered
- Stubborn
- Brooding over offenses
- Conceited
- Haughty
- Touchy
- Wanting no advice

Covetousness

- Deceitful
- Stingy
- Lacing in generosity
- Hoarding
- Secretive
- Ungracious even when doing a favor
- Seeking security only in things of this world

Anger

- Aversion
- Making oneself indignant
- Rage
- Fierce Silence
- Vindictive
- Impatient
- Nice to one that others may feel left out

Envy

- Makes one hateful
- Whisperings
- Detraction
- Backbiting
- Joy at others' sorrows
- Spiteful
- Bored when others are praised

Sloth

- Makes one lazy
- Tardy
- Distaste for life
- Discouragement
- Inconstant
- Moody
- Gloomy
- Dull to exhortation

Gluttony

- Think and talk about food
- Complaining about plain food
- Belting food
- Neglecting others at table
- Immoderation in wine, beer, or other alcoholic drinks
- Loudness
- Boisterous

Lust

- Curiosity about sex
- Over familiarity
- Carelessness in reading
- Not controlling imagination
- Comfort seeking
- Not open with confessor
- Not using necessary means to control flesh

Remedies for Root Vices

Pride

- True view of my dependence on God
- Preferring others to myself
- Seeking to serve others habitually
- Openness to all
- Purity of Intention
- Using my gifts with simplicity

Covetousness

- Cultivate simple tastes
- Avoid superfluities
- Desire to imitate poverty of Christ
- Seeking the kingdom of God first
- Giving others the better part habitually
- Sharing what I have with others

Anger

- Keep Christ Crucified habitually in mind
- Do little acts of charity for those who annoy you
- Live in God's presence
- Keep quiet when annoyed

Envy

- Thank God for other's gifts
- Pray for the one you envy
- Speak well of the one you envy
- Think of Eternal life

Sloth

- Faithful to prayer life
- Keep to schedule
- Do immediately what you tend to put off
- Think of eternity constantly
- Do little acts of self discipline

Gluttony

- Decide how much to take ahead of time and stick to it
- Eat or drink in God's presence
- Deny yourself something little at each meal

Lust

- Develop personal love of Our Lord
- Fly occasions
- Be hard on body
- Keep busy
- Live for others