

VISIT #5, THE FIFTH PROMISE OF THE COVENANT OF LOVE

“TO BE USEFUL INSTRUMENTS”



IN THE SPIRIT OF COVENANT SPIRITUALITY:

(From THE THREE PILLARS pages 79-86):

“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. These characteristics will help us to be light as a feather in God’s hands and the Blessed Mother will take care that we will have the graces needed to be fruitful instruments.

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” (*agere contra*), 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. Our striving to “act against” our drives and instincts is motivated by love, helps us give up selfishness, and opens us to God coming in and working through us making us abundantly fruitful. **Are my self-will, drives, and instincts in proper balance? Am I willing to practice a healthy resistance to the natural tendency of earthly attachments to enslave instead of to elevate?**

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). **Am I a free instrument rooted in prayer and the reception of the sacraments?**

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). **Am I ready to be sent out to be used by God to win over souls?**

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. **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?**

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. **Am I resting securely in God’s hands? Do I have faith in God’s Providence in my life?**

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). **Do I desire to make room and allow room to be made for God and God’s fruitfulness in my life?**

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 to be useful instruments in her hands to build God’s Kingdom in our families, at our place of work, within our parish. Let us pray to receive this grace which she is offering to us in this Promise so that we can grow in **COVENANT SPIRITUALITY** through her motherly education and intercession.

REFLECTION:

“In order to always be completely at God’s disposal as His instrument, we use every means available to strive for a **Holy Indifference** towards all created things and persons. This is possible if we practice an *agere contra* (act against) motivated by love and a positive, general predisposition for the difficult and most difficult things God may send us. This latter is found expressed and translated into practical daily life through our **Inscriptio** dedication (deeper level of the Covenant of Love), which not only speaks a yes which is patient, but even joyous to the carrying of the cross and suffering; it is even a ...practical love of the cross.” Cross and suffering is meant to transform us from our selfish and self-centered ways. Thus, with the grace of **Holy Indifference**, in our difficult moments we can proclaim with Job, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!” (JOB 1:21)

COMMIT:

- 1) Freely choose 1 small sacrifice, act of self-discipline, or good deed every day this month and offer it as a contribution to Our Lady’s Capital of Grace. This freely chosen act tames the lower animal nature, strengthens the will, and enlightens the mind.
- 2) The hardest thing about Total Detachment, the first characteristic of a useful Instrument, is to accept and embrace cross and suffering in one’s life. Read more about why God, in all goodness and love, allows suffering. See THE THREE PILLARS book pages 107-114.
- 3) Ask for the grace to change your attitude to cross and suffering that purifies us and makes us light as a feather in God’s hands.

PRAY:

THE HYMN OF THE INSTRUMENTS written by Father Joseph Kentenich in the Dachau Concentration Camp June 1944 and is included in Schoenstatt’s Prayer Book **HEAVENWARDS**:

“Mother Thrice Admirable, let us always be your instruments, lovingly giving ourselves in your service today and forever. Use us as it pleases God, entirely for your Schoenstatt world.

Take possession of our hearts and wills – they are undividedly yours. They will blindly follow your every sign and word. It is your instrument’s honor and glory to belong entirely to you.

We are ready without reserve to serve your Schoenstatt work. Send us suffering, lead us into battle; let us win the complete victory. Give us light and strengthen our courage against the guile and rage of the devil.

Let us reflect your image and walk through life entirely like you: strong and noble, simple and kind, spreading love and peace and joy. In us go through our times and make them ready for Christ.

Whether we are threatened by the world or the devil or caught in the swirl of the tempest, you will victoriously overcome every need and grant us your unlimited power. Your heart, our gateway to heaven, will always remain our safe harbor.

We will never perish as long as we faithfully remain your instruments. You will help us at all times to effectively bring forth abundant fruit. With our hand in yours let us joyfully enter the eternal Schoenstatt Land. Amen.”