

VISIT #8, THE SECOND REQUEST OF THE COVENANT OF LOVE

“INCREASE YOUR STRIVING TO THE HIGHEST DEGREE”



IN THE SPIRIT OF COVENANT SPIRITUALITY:

(From THE THREE PILLARS pages 133-134):

We read in the First Founding Document from Father Joseph Kentenich: “Not simply the great and greater, but the greatest heights ought to be the object of our increased effort.”

Therefore: Increase your striving to the highest degree. This means:

The covenant incites us to make great efforts, to work hard, to do the best we possibly can to reach our goal: the renewal of the world and the Church. (Besides renewing ourselves, we want the covenant to give us a burning fire within us to work to renew the Church and world). **Every aspect of our life** needs to be perfected. (This includes our professional life and our home life as well as our spiritual life and prayer life).

1. The object of our highest striving and greatest efforts is **the fulfillment of God’s will**, the realization of all the values and priorities which are founded in God and upon which He built His kingdom. It seems that only with **heroic efforts** can we **discover and maintain God’s values** in this secularized time when the law of convenience and pleasure, of permissiveness and adaptation to common opinion, largely the course of life. (It takes courage to see and do God’s will instead of our own will/opinion or the world’s will/opinion and to go against the current of what is convenient, pleasurable, popular).

2. It takes much research, inquiry and a great deal of prayer **to find the truth**, and tremendous **fortitude and grace to live according to its precepts**, to proclaim it to those who are also searching and to defend it before those who oppose it.

3. It takes much courage to make our own decision, to adhere to it and to fulfill it even when we stand in opposition to the opinion of the majority. (ex. families limiting activities to be more together).

4. It takes much determination to persevere to the end, to **overcome weariness**, especially when the results of our efforts are not so obvious. (We get up and keep trying because every effort is contributing to the renewal of ourselves as well as the Church and world).

5. It takes much strength to fight temptations and to offer up the daily sacrifices and renunciations that our life demands of us. (living a sacrificial life, a disciplined life).

6. We need to make a great effort to maintain a positive attitude, filled with the spirit of victory, especially when we receive so little support in the darkness which envelops us. (We see the good, we are satisfied, we fight against negativism because the Blessed Mother brings victory into a covenant life with her. A child of Mary will never perish).

7. It takes a tremendously great faith to discover the loving will of God behind all events and circumstances of life, to find his loving Father hand which wants to lead us to eternal happiness. (Voice of Time – God speaks to us through events. We respond with unconditional confidence).

Our faithful fulfillment of God’s demand and wishes each day will prevent us from losing sight of the great goal of world renewal and inspire us ever anew to increase our striving to the highest degree for its realization.

THROUGH THIS ENCOUNTER, with thanksgiving and gratitude, let us pray to be open to our Blessed Mother's request that we **"increase our striving to the highest degree"**. Let us pray to receive this grace which she is offering us so that we can grow in **COVENANT SPIRITUALITY** with her and the Triune God through her motherly education and intercession.

REFLECTION:

The Blessed Mother is asking us to shape our thinking and acting according to God's Truth, Values, Priorities upon which He built His Kingdom for the renewal of the Church and world. This Demand is built on the First, "Prove first by your deeds that you really love me." Now we can put into practice our response to God's will: surrender of mind, heart and will; firm trust; no worries; childlikeness before God.

I ASK MYSELF: Do I live by God's Truth, Values, and Priorities?

COMMIT:

1) To discover and maintain God's Values – some possible areas to consider:

The Ten Commandments, The Precepts of the Church, The Teaching of the Church on Moral Issues relevant today, Scripture Study, Daily Mass Readings.

2) To discover Truth and live Truth with fortitude (mental & emotional strength in facing difficulty).

3) To live God's Values with courage (state of mind & spirit to face difficulty without fear).

4) To persevere in weariness.

5) To offer daily sacrifices & renunciations for strength to fight temptations.

6) To maintain a positive attitude filled with the spirit of victory.

7) To live great faith by discovering the loving will of God behind all events & circumstances.

PRAY:

We pray with Father Kentenich: 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 me 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. (The Courage of Faith Novena page 47)

