

The Covenant Demands – a Formation of Attitudes



Prove first by your deeds that you really love me – Our covenant partner places a much greater value on our **deeds of love** than on statements of love. Schoenstatt's teaching on the **PRACTICAL FAITH IN DIVINE PROVIDENCE** unfolds before us the treasures needed to unite our will with the will of the Father so that in our daily lives, we do prove by our deeds that we truly love the Blessed Mother and the Triune God.

I ASK MYSELF: Do I with childlike confidence and trust unite my will with the will of my heavenly Father through a practical faith in His Divine Providence in my life?

Increase your striving to the highest degree - 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?

This Sanctification I demand of you - God must again become the king and ruler of the universe in our secularized time. Only our serious striving for sanctity can transform the secular world into a sacred world and restore the sacredness of life. This is the demand of the hour; there is no other way! Together with our covenant partner, we will conquer the evil forces around us and lead the world back to God.

I ASK MYSELF: Do I bring balance and holiness into my everyday life so that I can help to transform the secular world into a sacred world and restore the sacredness of life?

Diligently bring me contributions to the capital of grace - Daily life offers abundant opportunities to realize this covenant demand. Our covenant partner does not demand much of us – only that **we take one step at a time** and begin to offer occasional contributions. The choice and the amount of our contributions are dependent on each individual. In times of need or at certain liturgical times we might want to increase our effort; whereas during ordinary and quiet times we may wish to choose something a little easier. **Each person is free to decide according to the generosity of his heart** and according to his own needs and those for whom he feels responsible. Whatever we do out of love for God, for the Blessed Mother, for our mission, can become a contribution to the capital of grace.

I ASK MYSELF: Do I bring at least one contribution to Our Lady's Capital of Grace to secure the flow of graces from the Shrine? Free-will decisions - my whole being and acting, joy and success, prayer and suffering, self-education; Fulfillment of God's will – demands of everyday living, imperfections and failures.

Fulfill your duties faithfully - The perfect performance of our duties is dependent on the decisions of our mind and will, independent of our emotions and feelings in the moment. Love shall motivate us to do not only what is necessary and demanded of us, but in addition, to constantly search for more perfect ways to carry out our duty and to do even more than is required of us. When we strive to fulfill our duties faithfully and even most faithfully, we can make a great contribution toward the renewal of our time.

I ASK MYSELF: Do I allow love to motivate me when fulfilling my duties? Do I accept that the fulfillment of individual duties is not a matter of choice or of a free-will decision in the moment, but a natural consequence of the free choices I have previously made and of my obligation in obedience to an authority?

Pray fervently - According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God, or the petition of good things from him in accord with his will. It is always the gift of God who comes to encounter man. Christian prayer is the personal and living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is infinitely good, with his Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit who dwells in their hearts." (Compendium – CCC 534. (CCC 2558-2565, 2590)

I ASK MYSELF? Do I receive the special graces of the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation to help me grow in fervent prayer? Do I use the inspirations of the devotional prayers of the Church? Do I make use of Schoenstatt's Spiritual Daily Order to secure my life of prayer? Do I have a special prayer corner or Home Shrine that reminds me to pray throughout the day?

All these covenant demands point toward the development and formation of inner attitudes which determine the value of our actions. Our aspiration toward the perfection of these attitudes will take a life-time of constant striving, taking one small step at a time. By simply beginning to work on one point, we have already accomplished much. God alone will be able to judge our accomplishments; we need only make the effort each day.

These demands address our basic attitudes which need to be transformed:

- ✚ Our life of duties, to keep our relationship to God and to others in harmony and order;
- ✚ Our life of prayer, to secure a loving union with God so that this love of God will become the motivating power of our entire life.

The other demands simply point out the degree of our striving for the highest and greatest, and the purpose and mission of our life – to achieve sanctity and place all our efforts into the capital of grace as contributions for the fruitfulness of the apostolate.

The covenant demands are timely, necessary, and applicable to the life of each person. They are simple, ordinary matters of daily life which become great when we fulfill them with love in the best way possible. Thus, we can make our life and that of others more perfect and apostolically effective, and fulfill the conditions for the covenant promises.