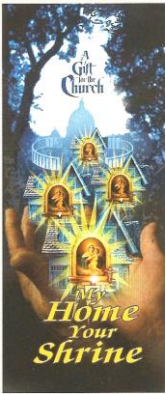


EXPECTATIONS OF THE HOME SHRINE

MY HOME, A SHRINE (pages 33-46)



We invite the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt, to come into our home and transform it into a little shrine. We want her to become a part of our family and fulfill in our family the mission which God entrusted to her. We need her and expect great things from her. We trust in her faithfulness that the promises of her covenant with us will be fulfilled and become fruitful in our life. We have already experienced her special activity in the daughter shrines and hope that she will care for us in a similar manner in our home shrines.

1. The Blessed Mother promises to fulfill her Covenant Promises in our Home Shrines. (Following taken from Sister Marie Day's DVD Presentation 2 - My Home, A Shrine)

(1) It will please me to dwell in your midst:

She will be with us as friend and mother.

She will work for us.

She will intercede for us.

(2) I will distribute gifts, graces, and favors in abundance:

Gifts: something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation.

Graces: unmerited divine assistance given us for our regeneration or sanctification. The Blessed Mother is the Mediatrix of all graces.

Favors: an act performed out of kindness beyond what is due or usual, to treat gently, favorable regard for someone, over generous treatment.

(3) I will draw from here youthful hearts to follow me:

The young whom she will protect from the evil of the world.

The childlike who are dependent and trusting in God.

She will intercede the gift of childlikeness for us from the Holy Spirit (dependence on God).

(4) I will educate them:

Her Task in Schoenstatt is **Educator** (she helps us reach the holiness God wants for us)

Her Power to educate you and them in high ideals: From the Cross, Jesus commissioned His mother to educate us as Mother of Christendom.

Her Ability to educate:

Passive ability – let it be done; fiat attitude; allowed herself

God educated and prepared her through her life experiences to be Educator and Co-Redemptrix especially when she stood under the cross of her Son.

Active ability

She has a brilliant fundamental attitude of love for us as a Mother.

She has comprehensive and certain knowledge of her Son to form you and them into His image.

She has insight into God's plan for you and them; obstacles to overcome.

She knows the snares of the devil and lures of the world. She is the adversary of the devil and crushes his head.

Her Courage to educate:

She is not frightened by the difficulty to educate.

She knows that the mean of purification and transformation is the School of Cross & Suffering.

(5) To be useful instruments:

To have the attitude of an instrument – ready and willing to be used. An example is Mother Teresa who said that she was a pencil in the hand of God.

Six characteristics of an instrument:

Total detachment from myself

Total attached to God's wish and will – to be a feather in God's hand

Outspoken readiness to be used by God to save souls through prayers, suffering, something active

Outspoken apparition of God & Mary – Christ lives in me (outcome of the 1st two characteristics)

Inner freedom and security – free from what takes us away from God; resting in the hands of God

Abundant fruitfulness of God working through us

(6) In my hands

Her hands are sheltering, protecting, molding, motherly, kind. She takes us in her hands and molds us into an image of her Son. Anything in her hands is more holy, more worthy.

These promises are a key to true, inner peace and happiness in life. Since the Blessed Mother will always remain faithful to her word and fulfill all her promises, we no longer need to worry anxiously or fear the tempest of our time. We are not left alone in our daily struggles as long as we fulfill our part of the covenant.

2. The Blessed Mother promises to work miracles of grace in our Home Shrines.

The most frequent and urgent prayer that the Blessed Mother is likely to hear in the home shrine is the cry for help and guidance, for strength and courage to live a good and holy life in our challenging and constantly changing world. And so, we reach out to her and beg her to transform us into a person who is pleasing to God.

a. Formation of the new Christian person

We should be convinced that the Blessed Mother will perform miracles of grace for our family and for each individual person as well. *"We have come here and have made a covenant with the Blessed Mother. We are willing to be formed and educated by her. Mary considers it her obligation to accept this willingness and to transform us, to perform miracles of grace. From the outset we were told: in our shrines, we do not expect to witness miracles in the physical order, but miracles of the change of heart"* (The Home Shrine page 46).

b. A most important apostolate

These miracles of the change of heart have a great effect not only upon our own lives, but also upon the lives of those around us. *"It is a great consolation for us to know that in this place of grace, miracles for educators and children silently occur. In our hectic and busy world, it is great to have a home where we as Catholic parents along with our children can stand firmly together united as members of the one, holy Church"* (Nuestro Santuario del Hogar).

c. A far greater effect

The words which our founder spoke after the dedication of a daughter shrine also apply very fittingly to our home shrines, *"Mary speaks to us in a special way here in the shrine. Do you understand what we mean by this? When we are here at this place, when we come to the shrine with deep faith and look at the Blessed Mother, then she says more to us, she speaks more tenderly, and her words have a greater effect on us here than at other places... Whenever we are in distress, she will say to Our Lord as she did at Cana: 'Lord, they have no wine.' But when she says it here in her shrine, it has a far greater effect. Have you already experienced this when you visited the shrine?"* (Novena in Preparation for the 25th Anniversary of the Schoenstatt Shrine in Madison page 14)

3. The Blessed Mother promises help in education in our Home Shrines.

One of the most important and essential responsibilities of parents is the education of their children. Vatican II confirms this task: *Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children."* (Education #3)

a. The main educator

The final responsibility for the religious education of the children is placed into the hands of the parents. Church, school and other educational institutions only serve to complement the educational work of the parents. And how often do the views and opinions of the world destroy that which the parents have built up in their children during their early childhood years? Great indeed are the tasks that are placed before the family.

Parents are offered the help of the best educator; they need only cooperate by cultivating an unshakeable trust in the Blessed Mother's power: *"Now our Mother and Queen offers to take the education of our children into her hands. This help can never be appreciated enough. And what do I say? Help! She is the one who educates. And we are those whom she allows to help her in this task"* (Nuestro Santuario del Hogar, pg. 28).

b. Our Cooperation

In her work of education, the Blessed Mother needs our cooperation. We must allow her to educate us; at the same time, we must strive to discipline ourselves. The shrine becomes her workshop for education. *"Mary will educate all who come here to her shrine, and at the same time use them as instruments so that they themselves, in their own way, can become great educators. As an educator, Mary depends on our cooperation; she demands that we educate ourselves too! This implies that when we hurry to her, we may not come with empty hands. They must be filled with contributions"* (Novena page 8-9).

THROUGH THIS ENCOUNTER, with thanksgiving and gratitude, let us pray to be open and to receive the **GRACE** to have in our homes a **HOME SHRINE, a PLACE OF GRACE** dedicated to our Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt from which she, the Mother of God, can intercede for us the three pilgrimage graces of the shrine and all the graces we need to be holy families and holy family members who can fulfill our mission in the Church.

REFLECTION: An Encounter with God and the Blessed Mother

After Father Kentenich dedicated a home shrine, the mother of the family wrote to him about her experiences: *"The Blessed Mother lives in our home as a member of the family. She has moved very close to us; it is unbelievable how close I have come to her. I am experiencing blessings that I never knew before. Sometimes I just withdraw into my home shrine and simply gaze at her picture and converse with her. This fills me with so much peace and love. These moments have become a true prayer for me."* And Father Kentenich answered her: *"How simple it seems to be able to live in the midst of this paganistic world always in union with God and to remain religiously and supernaturally orientated"* (Die Schoenstattmutter, Vol. IV, 1973, p. 106).

COMMIT: To Be Together with God and The Blessed Mother in the Home Shrine

It sounds so simple – that a plain being together can be a prayer. Yes, to be together, to just look at the picture in our home shrine and begin a conversation, to just talk and listen – this can be a very profound and rewarding prayer experience. How much peace and strength emanate forth from this sacred spot in our home! We do not need to say a certain number of prayers in order to be aware of the presence of God and the Blessed Mother in our life. The simple, restful being together can be a prayer. To look at life, at all its trivial as well as earthshaking events, from God's viewpoint and with his eyes, has become a very meaningful prayer for many.

To be able to live in God's presence in the midst of this paganistic world – this is truly a great gift of the home shrine. As we grow more and more into the supernatural world, we experience God's transforming and changing power in our lives in an ever deeper way. An old sage once said: *"Tell me whom you are with and I will tell you who you are."* When we are with God and the Blessed Mother we are securely sheltered in a Father's and Mother's love. When we live in the presence of God, our whole being slowly becomes permeated and formed by him - our words and deeds, every detail of our life.

PRAY with Father Kentenich his Home Shrine prayer:

"My room (home) is your Shrine where you work for the Father's glory. There He transforms my whole being into the Trinity's most beloved Shrine, where the sanctuary light continuously burns and the glowing fire of love never dies; where the fire of sacrifice upon sacrifice banishes all selfishness from the heart; where roses decorate the altar and lilies never cease to bloom; where paradisaal breezes waft and raise heart and mind to heaven; where the spirit of the world cannot enter as in the eternal city of Sion; where peace reigns and happiness laughs because God's angel keeps diligent watch; where Christ rules and is triumphant and leads the whole world to the Father." (Heavenwards)

