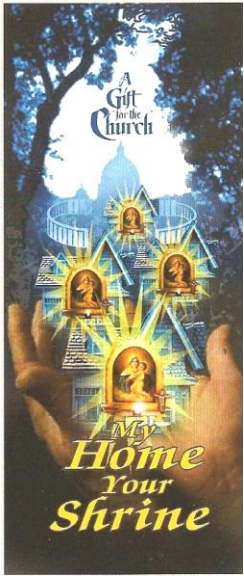


LIVING IN THE HOME SHRINE (Part 2) **MY HOME, A SHRINE (pages 116-122)**



The home is the first and most important school in life. It is here that God's laws and the true Christian values of life should be taught and lived. The family home shrine can greatly enhance this learning process and help us to integrate these Christian values more fully into our daily living.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

We recall the first commandment: "I, the Lord, am your God. . . . You shall not have other gods besides me" (Ex 20:2-3). We pray to God; we honor and praise him as the Triune God. We want our love of him to grow, to become stronger and deeper; we want to serve him in all we do. The first commandment does not seem to give us much trouble; we are not pagans who adore strange gods somewhere. And yet, how many gods might we find in our own home? Are there idols that captivate us without us even noticing them? Oftentimes these gods in disguise appear right next to the home shrine and get much more attention than we realize. Which gods are these that tend to fascinate the entire family and little by little threaten to destroy family unity, family values and all that is sacred and noble? It takes a tremendous amount of courage and discipline, a great united effort and much help from above to fight the many hidden gods of modern life – the gods of TV, music, of various addictions. The special graces from our home shrine can help us to recognize these 'modern gods' and strengthen us so that we can win the battle.

Once we have a home shrine, we might have to change our life somewhat and may have to make certain decisions in matters that we never questioned before. Father Kentenich emphasized the great influence of the home shrine upon our daily life: "See how important our home shrine is in the framework of the confusion in the world of today." Since Mary wants to be a part of all our daily activities, we should ask ourselves: Would this TV show, this type of music, this reading material, this company, this party, please her, our new family member? Does this argument, that nasty remark or this selfish action welcome her to stay in our home, or will it destroy the sacred atmosphere emanating forth from our home shrine?

Do we also remember to keep Sunday, the Lord's Day, holy and give God our prime time on this day of rest? Do we sanctify this day with activities that are pleasing to him, devoting a little more time to prayer, going to Holy Mass, to visiting, to the enjoyment of family togetherness, so that we can gain new strength for body and soul for the working days ahead?

The home shrine invites us to take a good look at the practical applications of God's commandment and his expressed wish for us so that we can continue to improve in our striving for perfection.

MORAL VALUES

The family as a domestic Church must cultivate an atmosphere of love and purity, of reverence and respect for life, in order to counteract the destructive forces that threaten it today. The home shrine radiates forth such an atmosphere. It is a constant, silent reminder for us to strive to create a healthy environment where our Christian ideals are reflected more and more in our words and deeds.

In the atmosphere of the home shrine we can more easily discover the good in others, to wish them well and to respect them in their uniqueness and originality. There we will also receive the courage to take a firm stand and defend the truth even at the risk of displeasing another person. We are obliged to speak up in important matters and defend God's laws even if some people do not care to hear about them.

In the home shrine we can also discuss our failures and transgressions and admit our guilt. If we truly search for reconciliation with each other, we will receive the strength to ask for forgiveness, to make up for our failure in whatever way it may be necessary, and to begin anew.

It is of particular importance that the family can grow together and form a strong, united community, supporting and educating each other. This growth can come about only if everyone strives to live in, with and for one another. This demands a fine sensitivity for each family member, a genuine concern for each other's needs and an openness to the inspirations of grace.

MARRIED LOVE

The love between husband and wife needs to grow continuously in order to create an ever-deeper union between the spouses. They should make a serious effort to immerse themselves deeply into the supernatural world, otherwise they will not be able to master their lives and make decisions according to God's design. In the home shrine they can receive strength to strive to understand and accept the teaching of the Church on Catholic marriage and conjugal chastity.

The home shrine is an inviting place for the couple's Schoenstatt hour. The discussions of husband and wife will be enriched by the sacred atmosphere of the home shrine; consequently, things might suddenly not be so tragic, tense, and unsurmountable anymore. In the home shrine reconciliation between spouses and between family members can find expression and heal wounds.

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, Queen and Victress 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 - The Home Shrine, Our Treasure

The home shrine is for us a means to renew the family as a whole and each of its individual members as well. It is a most fruitful means to help us gain clarity and understanding in matters related to every facet of life, to obtain new strength to fulfill the demands of everyday life, to victoriously fight the countless battles of our journey heavenwards.

The home shrine is our treasure, a most cherished possession, one that we not only want to guard and preserve, but also give on to countless many people. God and the Blessed Mother reign in our home shrine and make it a place of faith and love, of hope and consolation, a place of grace, an oasis in the desert of our modern time. From this insignificant little spot in each home, the world and Church can be renewed.

COMMIT:

Once we have a home shrine, we might have to change our life somewhat and may have to make certain decisions in matters that we never questioned before. Father Kentenich emphasized the great influence of the home shrine upon our daily life: "See how important our home shrine is in the framework of the confusion in the world of today."

What changes might we have to make in our life or decisions in matters we never questioned before in regards to:

- ✚ God's sovereignty in our lives and homes,
- ✚ Moral Values, or
- ✚ Married Love?

This month consider focusing on one of the above areas. Read and reflect on the material provided above. Ask the Blessed Mother for her help and intercession of the graces needed to make changes.

One important change would be to work toward the dedication of your home shrine with the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt. Begin today! Make this the year you invite the Blessed Mother into your home to be Mother and Educator of you and your family.

PRAY with Father Kentenich his Home Shrine Prayer from Heavenwards:

"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."

