

THE GRACE OF BEING AT HOME

FAITH IN DIVINE PROVIDENCE

BECAUSE WE NEED AND WANT TO BE LOVED, The Blessed Mother intercedes for us **THE GRACE OF BEING AT HOME** with God in His Heart, to be at home with her in her heart. She wants to take care of the needs of all those she encounters just as she did in the home of her cousin Elizabeth. **Our Blessed Mother wants to help us be the Father's trusting children and to have Practical Faith in His Divine Providence and Provision for us in our daily lives.**

IN THE SPIRIT OF PRACTICAL FAITH IN DIVINE PROVIDENCE:

We find our home in God's heart through Mary heart! Her heart, so one with her Son, is always overflowing with riches, leading us to our eternal home in God. Because she herself is so at home in God, Mary will help us feel at home in God and to trust in **HIS DIVINE PROVIDENCE**. As Mother of the Church given to us by Jesus on the cross, she helps us feel at home within the Church and her teachings. If we truly feel at home in God, the doubtful and desperate moments in our lives will diminish. Our trust in God's providential care for us will be increased and our faith will be strengthened so that we can learn to see God's guiding hand behind the joyful and painful events of our daily lives.

PRACTICAL FAITH IN DIVINE PROVIDENCE - Father Joseph Kentenich, the founder of Schoenstatt, was of the conviction that the sovereign God governs the world and that He gently invites us to comply with His ways. Father Kentenich always searched for God's will as it is revealed to us through things, events, people and our own conscience. He believed that God is always **OPENING DOORS** for us through which we must walk courageously if we want to live a life in accordance with His plan. Father Kentenich acknowledged, however, that very often these doors are small and obscure, and that they do not admit a full view of what lies behind them. The history of the Schoenstatt Family is a history of God opening doors and of our founder not by-passing any of them. The first years of Schoenstatt's history gives many proofs of the **LAW OF THE OPEN DOOR**:

1. A great goal ahead – an open door. When Father Kentenich was very young, he already clearly recognized his life's task to form a new person in a new community as an answer to the needs of modern times. In 1910, Father Kentenich was ordained a priest and entered the society of the Pallottine Fathers who had just opened a new mission in Schoenstatt, Germany.

2. Appointment as spiritual director – an open door. Father Kentenich was appointed by his superiors as the third spiritual director of the young seminarians who would be available to the boys at all times and who would be in charge of educating their young, revolutionary hearts.

3. Need for education and formation – an open door. Father Kentenich's great task was to deal with a revolting youth, educate them and lead them to the priesthood. He designed a program of education and presented it to the boys October 27, 1912, "Under the protection of Mary, we want to learn to educate ourselves to become strong, free, priestly personalities."

4. Enthusiasm for the missions – an open door. Father Kentenich discovered that most of the boys were highly enthused for the missions. In January 1913, he promoted the founding of a mission club in the seminary. This challenged the boys to direct their energies and talents toward building up the Kingdom of God.

5. Growth on a religious level – an open door. Father Kentenich received a Marian Sodality magazine with an article describing three means for fostering the spiritual growth of youth: spiritual guidance, self-education and consecration to Mary. He considered these ideas to be hints from God and suggested to some of the more religiously inclined students that they work toward organizing a Marian Sodality. The boys founded the Marian Sodality on April 19, 1914.

6. The chapel of St. Michael as a meeting room – an open door. The boys were allowed to renovate and take over the former cemetery chapel dedicated to St. Michael before their summer vacation of 1914.

7. Possibility of a pilgrimage place – an open door. During the summer, Father Kentenich found a newspaper clipping which described the origin of the pilgrimage place in Valle di Pompeii, Italy built in honor of the Blessed Mother. At the end of summer 1914, the devastating First World War broke out. Father Kentenich groped even

more intensely for God's will: "Couldn't we, too, create a pilgrimage place of Mary in these distressing times of world war? Could this possibly be intended by God?"

8. The founding hour of Schoenstatt – an open door. After a long inner struggle Father Kentenich went through the door which was opened just a chink and decided to share his favorite idea with the Marian Sodality at their first meeting in the newly renovated chapel on October 18, 1914: "I would like to make this place a pilgrimage place, a place of grace... and urge our Mother and Queen to erect her throne here in a special way to distribute her treasures and to work miracles of grace." After he sensed that his words had caught fire in the boys' hearts, he proceeded to explain how perhaps it could be done: "This Sodality chapel shall become for us the cradle of sanctity... Our heroic striving for sanctity will draw our heavenly Mother to us by gentle force, making this abode the place of her special activity."

As he continued he expressed that it seemed to him as if the Mother of God were speaking to all of them and had accepted their plea: "I love those who love me. Prove first by your deeds that you really love me and that you take your resolution seriously... Then it will please me to dwell in your midst and distribute graces and favors in abundance."

The following years were to prove that a divine inspiration had directed Father Kentenich at this significant hour. The talk on October 18, 1914, laid the foundation of Schoenstatt and has become the "Founding Document" of this Movement that has lasted more than 100 years.

THROUGH THIS ENCOUNTER, let us pray to be open and to receive the **GRACE OF BEING AT HOME** which the Blessed Mother wants to intercede for us. Let us continue to be people living the **SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY** and **PRAYER** as our Blessed Mother has taught us in her first two visits with us. Let us pray too to be people who live out of a **PRACTICAL FAITH IN DIVINE PROVIDENCE as Mary did:**

1) Father Kentenich always searched for God's will as it is revealed to us through things, events, people and our own conscience. **Look back in your life.** Can you identify times when God's will was revealed to you through things, events, people or your own conscience?

2) Father Kentenich believed that God is always **OPENING DOORS** for us, no matter how small or obscure they may be, through which we must walk courageously if we want to live a life in accordance with His plan.

Look back in your life. Can you identify **OPEN DOORS** from God that show God's guiding hand, **His Divine Providence and Provision** in your own life?

3) Throughout the entire history of Schoenstatt, God opened many doors which the founder walked through courageously in spite of all adversities and difficulties. It seemed that when natural circumstances closed doors that could have promised success to Schoenstatt, God would use these same doors in another way as open doors to pour abundant blessings upon Schoenstatt.

Look back in your life. Were there open doors of adversity and difficulty that you had to walk through? Were there closed doors that God used in another way as open doors to pour abundant blessings upon you?

4) Pray the following **SCHOENSTATT PRAYER TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE:**

You know the way for me, you know the time, into your hands I trustingly place mine. Your plan is perfect, born of perfect love. You know the way for me, that is enough.

5) WHAT IS SCHOENSTATT'S "METHOD OF MEDITATION"?

"A practical method for deepening the attachment to God and growing in active faith in Divine Providence is by using Schoenstatt's method of meditation. Fr. Kentenich recommended it many times. At times he called it *putting up the ladder of Divine Providence*. At other times he described it as *savoring the mercies of God*.

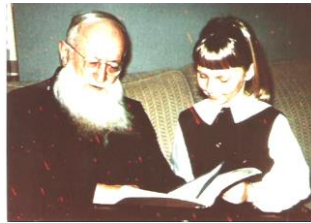
This method is quite simple. In quiet prayer I come into God's presence and look back over the last 24 hours (or recent events): What does it say to me? How did I respond to it as a sign of God? I allow the main events and emotions to pass through my soul, taking time to *resavor* or *taste them again*. I then seek the vantage point of Divine Providence ("putting up the ladder"), asking the question: "God, what are you trying to say?" One may or may not arrive at an answer at this time, but asking the question disposes the soul to see the events as being in the hands of God and His plan of love.

In a second step, I now turn to the expected events of the next 24 hours. I allow the soul time to *presavor* or *taste in advance* the likely course of the day and how it might affect me. I seek the vantage of Divine Providence again, this time with a question like: "God, what do you want to accomplish through me today?" In this way I allow my soul to breathe the clear air of knowing that whatever happens, it will be in God's hands.

Some of the fruits of this method of meditation are a greater deference to God's will and trust in God, an increase in integration of faith and life, growth in trust in God's providence, more inner fortitude and calm, and an attitude of making no decisions without entrusting them to Him." (200 QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOENSTATT)

6) Decide today to search for God's will as revealed to you through things, events, people, your own conscience and especially through **OPEN DOORS**.

Dear Blessed Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt, pray for us. We want to be God's trusting children. Grant us the Grace of Being at Home in God's Heart. Grant us the Grace of Practical Faith in Divine Providence. Amen.



FEAR NOT, PROCLAIM THE FATHER'S LOVE!