

THE GRACE OF BEING AT HOME

COVENANT SPIRITUALITY

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 dear Blessed Mother wants to teach us to be COVENANT PEOPLE who faithfully live their Baptismal Promises with a joyful spirit of Hospitality, Prayer and Practical Faith in Divine Providence. She wants for us to be open to God, to talk with Him, to listen to what He wants to tell us, and to be His trusting children at home with Him in His Heart.**

IN THE SPIRIT OF COVENANT:

“A covenant is an agreement made between two parties who freely promise loyalty to each other and loyalty to all that the agreement includes. Common interests, shared tasks, mutual responsibilities and benefits unite the covenant partners. Holy Scripture is the magnificent story of salvation seen as a covenant which God made with His people in the ancient past and which He continues to offer to His people until the end of time.

In the Old Testament God made a covenant with Adam and Eve, with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and many others. God’s covenant in the New Testament was begun at the hour of the Annunciation when Mary said her yes to giving birth to Christ who was to restore God’s covenant with Israel by establishing a new and everlasting covenant. This new covenant was sealed in the blood of Christ, through His death on the cross and His glorious resurrection. It was perfected in the Spirit on Pentecost.

Through the sacrament of Baptism, the Church invites us to enter into this redemptive covenant. Our baptismal covenant is the foundation and source of our Christian life. It is confirmed, strengthened, and perfected through the sacraments, through God’s grace, freely and generously given, and through our prayers, good deeds, and our sincere striving for holiness.

Schoenstatt offers the **covenant of love** with Mary as yet another help to live our baptismal covenant as fully as possible. Mary was a perfect partner in the covenant; she never retrieved her yes to God in the covenant. By making the covenant with her, we learn how to master the art of a life out of a covenant spirituality.” (SCHOENSTATT, AN INTRODUCTION)

We turn to our Blessed Mother and in her school we learn how to be ideal covenant partners. To help us live as COVENANT PEOPLE, the Blessed Mother promises that she is “pleased to dwell with us and distribute gifts and graces in abundance” if we act upon her requests:

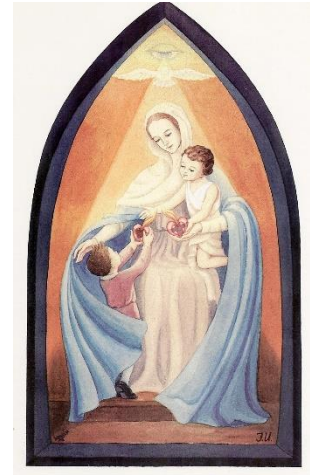
1) “Prove first by your deeds that you really love me”

The Blessed Mother wants for us to be **great believers**, to give our yes to the Father’s holy will for our lives. She requests generous deeds of love for God, for her, for others done in the fulfillment of the Father’s holy will and with a spirit of openness and hospitality. To serve the Father’s holy will, we need to love Him. To love the Father, we need to know about Him, His Attributes, His Master Plan of Love for us, His Divine Providence and Provision for our lives. As we gain a better understanding of God, we too can respond to Him as the Blessed Mother did with unconditional faith, love, trust, and childlike surrender of mind, heart, and will. May God grant us the grace to be **great believers** through the intercession of our Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt and Queen of the Three Graces on the Move!

Read and reflect on God’s Attributes taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church - paragraphs 210-231. (See below)

2) “Pray fervently” This request motivates us to frequently lift our mind, heart, and will to God in moments of prayer. May God grant us the grace to be **great seekers of the Lord and to secure a life of ardent prayer.**

Read and reflect on the Grace of Home from the first three days of **THE COURAGE OF FAITH NOVENA**. Pray these first three days of this Novena with Father Kentenich who was completely at home in Our Lady, to whom she gave a home in the Shrine, and who became a home for many.



3) Being a Home for Others – Not only do we experience the grace of being at home in God's heart, in Mary's heart in the Shrine and in our Place of Honor and draw strength from it, we also receive the grace of **being a Home for Others**. We become **peaceful** persons because we trust in God's loving plan for us. Others in turn can trust us. We become **confident, secure** in the fact that we are loved, so it is easier for us to step outside ourselves and our selfishness in order to focus on loving others. If we are truly at home in God's world and Mary's heart, there **won't be any pretense or fear in us**. People will be comfortable around us because they will sense the grace of being at home and they will be lifted heavenward. Every era needs people who see the aim of their lives in making God present to others – by their unfailing hope, their unaffected kindness, their silent endurance. Such people are a gift from God. He gives this gift to every age. Father Kentenich, the Father and Founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, is just such a person. We can learn from him how to be a **Home for Others**.

THROUGH THIS ENCOUNTER, with thanksgiving and gratitude, let us pray to be open. Let us pray to receive the **GRACE OF BEING AT HOME** which the Blessed Mother wants to intercede for us. Let us pray for the grace to continue living the Spirit of Hospitality, Prayer, and Practical Faith in Divine Providence as our Blessed Mother has taught us and to be **COVENANT PEOPLE** who faithfully live our Baptismal Promises and that we can become a Home for Others as Father Kentenich was & is.

FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

A GOD MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS

210 After Israel's sin, when the people had turned away from God to worship the golden calf, God hears Moses' prayer of intercession and agrees to walk in the midst of an unfaithful people, thus demonstrating his love.¹⁸ When Moses asks to see his glory, God responds "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name 'the LORD' [YHWH]."¹⁹ Then the LORD passes before Moses and proclaims, "YHWH, YHWH, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"; Moses then confesses that the LORD is a forgiving God.²⁰

211 The divine name, "I Am" or "He Is", expresses God's faithfulness: despite the faithlessness of men's sin and the punishment it deserves, he keeps "steadfast love for thousands".²¹ By going so far as to give up his own Son for us, God reveals that he is "rich in mercy".²² By giving his life to free us from sin, Jesus reveals that he himself bears the divine name: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will realize that "I AM"."²³

GOD ALONE IS

212 Over the centuries, Israel's faith was able to manifest and deepen realization of the riches contained in the revelation of the divine name. God is unique; there are no other gods besides him.²⁴ He transcends the world and history. He made heaven and earth: "They will perish, but you endure; they will all wear out like a garment. . . .but you are the same, and your years have no end."²⁵ In God "there is no variation or shadow due to change."²⁶ God is "HE WHO IS", from everlasting to everlasting, and as such remains ever faithful to himself and to his promises.

213 The revelation of the ineffable name "I AM WHO AM" contains then the truth that God alone IS. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and following it the Church's Tradition, understood the divine name in this sense: God is the fullness of Being and of every perfection, without origin and without end. All creatures receive all that they are and have from him; but he alone is his very being, and he is of himself everything that he is.

III. GOD, "HE WHO IS", IS TRUTH AND LOVE

214 God, "HE WHO IS", revealed himself to Israel as the one "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness".²⁷ These two terms express summarily the riches of the divine name. In all his works God displays, not only his kindness, goodness, grace and steadfast love, but also his trustworthiness, constancy, faithfulness and truth. "I give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness."²⁸ He is the Truth, for "God is light and in him there is no darkness"; "God is love", as the apostle John teaches.²⁹

GOD IS TRUTH

215 "The sum of your word is truth; and every one of your righteous ordinances endures forever."³⁰ "And now, O LORD God, you are God, and your words are true";³¹ this is why God's promises always come true.³² God is Truth itself, whose words cannot deceive. This is why one can abandon oneself in full trust to the truth and faithfulness of his word in all things. The beginning of sin and of man's fall was due to a lie of the tempter who induced doubt of God's word, kindness and faithfulness.

216 God's truth is his wisdom, which commands the whole created order and governs the world.³³ God, who alone made heaven and earth, can alone impart true knowledge of every created thing in relation to himself.³⁴

217 God is also truthful when he reveals himself - the teaching that comes from God is "true instruction".³⁵ When he sends his Son into the world it will be "to bear witness to the truth".³⁶ "We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true."³⁷

GOD IS LOVE

218 In the course of its history, Israel was able to discover that God had only one reason to reveal himself to them, a single motive for choosing them from among all peoples as his special possession: his sheer gratuitous love.³⁸ And thanks to the prophets Israel understood that it was again out of love that God never stopped saving them and pardoning their unfaithfulness and sins.³⁹

219 God's love for Israel is compared to a father's love for his son. His love for his people is stronger than a mother's for her children. God loves his people more than a bridegroom his beloved; his love will be victorious over even the worst infidelities and will extend to his most precious gift: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."⁴⁰

220 God's love is "everlasting":⁴¹ "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you."⁴² Through Jeremiah, God declares to his people, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."⁴³
221 But St. John goes even further when he affirms that "God is love":⁴⁴ God's very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret:⁴⁵ God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange.

IV. THE IMPLICATIONS OF FAITH IN ONE GOD

222 Believing in God, the only One, and loving him with all our being has enormous consequences for our whole life.

223 *It means coming to know God's greatness and majesty:* "Behold, God is great, and we know him not."⁴⁶ Therefore, we must "serve God first".⁴⁷

224 *It means living in thanksgiving:* if God is the only One, everything we are and have comes from him: "What have you that you did not receive?"⁴⁸ "What shall I render to the LORD for all his bounty to me?"⁴⁹

225 *It means knowing the unity and true dignity of all men:* everyone is made in the image and likeness of God.⁵⁰

226 *It means making good use of created things:* faith in God, the only One, leads us to use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to him, and to detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from him:

My Lord and my God, take from me everything that distances me from you.

My Lord and my God, give me everything that brings me closer to you.

My Lord and my God, detach me from myself to give my all to you

227 *It means trusting God in every circumstance, even in adversity.* A prayer of St. Teresa of Jesus wonderfully expresses this trust:

Let nothing trouble you / Let nothing frighten you

Everything passes / God never changes

Patience / Obtains all

Whoever has God / Wants for nothing

God alone is enough

IN BRIEF

228 "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD. . ." (*Dt* 6:4; *Mk* 12:29). "The supreme being must be unique, without equal. . . If God is not one, he is not God" (Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.*, 1, 3, 5: PL 2, 274).

229 Faith in God leads us to turn to him alone as our first origin and our ultimate goal, and neither to prefer anything to him nor to substitute anything for him.

230 Even when he reveals himself, God remains a mystery beyond words: "If you understood him, it would not be God" (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 52, 6, 16: PL 38, 360 and *Sermo* 117, 3, 5: PL 38, 663).

231 The God of our faith has revealed himself as HE WHO IS; and he has made himself known as "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (*Ex* 34:6). God's very being is Truth and Love.