

Covenant of Love

Group Outlines from Schoenstatt

Mary – Whirlpool for Christ # 15

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If we want to keep the Schoenstatt renewal alive in us and keep its spirit and life vibrant, then we have to make our loyalty to the Blessed Mother in the Shrine our main concern and priority. Our Lady has made a Covenant of Love with the Shrine and us and through this Covenant, she intercedes for us and leads us to Christ.

Schoenstatt's charisma is a Marian charisma because Mary is the quickest and easiest way to experience Christ. Jesus means everything to Mary; he means everything to us. Our lives should reflect his presence and influence. Like St Paul we too can say: *"What will separate us from the love of Christ?" (Romans 8:35)* We want to set the world on fire with the liberating love of Jesus Christ, and Mary will be our inspiration and help. When we imitate her life and example of discipleship, we make Christ the most powerful "force of gravity" in our lives – he draws us to a union with himself through an irresistible pull.

The Covenant of Love is Schoenstatt's way to take seriously and fulfil in our lives the "last will and testament" of Jesus, when he hung on the cross of Calvary: *"Behold your mother"*. We come to love Our Lady as the Mother of the Saviour, but also as his God-willed Companion in the work of salvation.

Our motivation for loving Mary is because of who she is in God's Plan. Love for Our Lady can't rest solely on needs or personal spiritual "tastes"; it has to be objectively grounded in who the Lord has called her to be – for Christ, for the Church and for each one of us. It is true that love of the Blessed Mother can have many advantages: She can be an ideal spiritual and psychological complementation for men; she can be an unbeatable inspiration for women; she can also be the best image of a redeemed humanity in history; and she can be the best way to win hearts to give their lives totally to Christ. Mary can be all these things, but at the end of the day, they cannot be the core reason for our love.

Jesus invites us in Matthew's Gospel: *"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides."* (Matthew 6:33) We search for the kingdom of God, when we seek to discover the will of the Eternal Father for us. God raised Mary above all others, he drew her so close to himself, he chose her to be his special and unique instrument and that's why we love her. The bottom line: We love Mary because it's what the Lord asks us to do and because we want to fulfil the testament of Christ from the cross, when he gave the Church his own Mother.

Saints and scholars often make a distinction when they talk about the birth of Christ. They draw our attention to two "births": His physical birth as a man and his mystical birth in the human soul. Both realities are deeply linked and

inseparable. Just as Mary brought Christ to the world in Bethlehem, she is key in bringing him to birth in our lives. The true birth of Christ in the human soul is the basic and essential act of faith. Mary has no other interests that to see Christ rise up in us. She has no other plans, she has no other agenda.

When we unite our hearts to Mary in the Covenant of Love, we find the easiest path to a real *fusion of hearts* with Christ. Father Kentenich often called Mary a "whirlpool" for Christ. Whoever gets "caught" in this "whirlpool" is drawn powerfully and irresistibly to the Lord. We need this irresistible "whirlpool" today in the life of the Church. Ideas and theories however noble and innovative will not stand the test of time. We need a Christianity that has dynamics and an inner strength, and to achieve this we need life-changing bonds to people. Only love, experienced as a personal bond between two people, transforms the human heart. The Covenant emphasises this unique relationship between Our Lady and us.

Faith today needs a knowledge of Jesus that is life-changing and life-transforming. *Knowing about Jesus* is not enough – *knowing Jesus* is what counts. A Christianity that will be fruitful in the present and future, needs to be one that lives from this experience. Love of Mary generates a personal love of Christ – and only the personal bond of love makes us spiritual people at the end of the day. We give Mary everything and she gives us everything, we surrender our lives to her and she surrenders her life to us; we promise faithfulness and she promises faithfulness. In the Covenant we create together a tangible unity, where we share the same life, mission and aims.

Mary's only aim is to educate us to be "icons of Christ"; in other words to achieve heroic holiness in our own lives and a genuine desire to be active disciples. Mary goes with us, as a Pilgrim Church, confident in hope and the Christ who conquered the world. That is why, we can still believe in renewal even when the odds are against us; that's why we can have a naïve courage like young David, in the Old Testament, approaching the giant Goliath with only a pebble and a sling (see 1 Samuel 17). Our sling and pebble is our heroic trust in Our Lady's intercession and our desire to be at her disposal for a better world no matter what it takes.

Questions for Reflection

1. Take a look at the Covenant Prayer "My Queen, my Mother". What inspires you to pray this prayer?

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