

# Covenant of Love

Group Outlines from Schoenstatt

Three Graces – Three Blessings # 16

## Three Graces – Three Blessings

Our Covenant lives from our contact with the Shrine. The Shrine is where we feel that we are never alone; the Shrine is where our Blessed Mother is present and active; and the Shrine is where we receive and expect grace. Grace – what is it? Grace is a totally gratuitous gift from God to us simply because he loves us – we have not earned it. He gives us this gift to set us free and save us. We cannot come close to God, we cannot receive eternal life *without* grace.

When we come as pilgrims to the Shrine, the Mother of God places three graces or blessings at our disposal: Firstly, the grace of feeling at home; secondly, the grace of a transformed life; and thirdly the grace of being sent forth on a mission. Let us look at each one in turn.

### *The Grace of Feeling at Home*

Home is not just being in a place where we feel accepted and can be ourselves. Mary wants to implore for us the Holy Spirit so that we feel secure and at home ultimately in the heart of God. When we come into the Shrine we should feel loved, protected, held close – the Shrine becomes our spiritual home – the place where we are “rooted”. It is not enough *to know* that we are passionately loved by God; we should *feel that we are loved* too. When we come to the Shrine, Mary in the Covenant, gives us this grace so that as we find a home in the heart of God, our souls can also find a life-giving home in each other. This grace is so important for the needs of our times. So many Christians today have no roots, they have no spiritual home, they don’t sense community. That is why they don’t come to Church, faith is not prominent in their lives. They do not feel held by God.

### *The Grace of a transformed life*

In the spiritual life, we often talk about *two conversions* that every Christian needs to go through: the first is the *inner transformation* of the Sacrament of Baptism, when we became members of the Body of Christ; and the second is our own

personal, new decision for Jesus Christ today. We come to the Shrine and ask for the blessing of being able to give our lives to the Lord. The second conversion is the grace of *a total self-surrender*. We pray that we can step back from our own needs, plans and agenda, and sincerely seek to discover what the Good Lord is asking from us here and now. Inner transformation happens when we truly give ourselves to the Lord.

### *The Grace of being sent forth on a Mission*

Growing in holiness doesn’t make much sense if we are not motivated to pass on our faith to others and become apostolically fruitful. *Our self-sanctification needs to serve the apostolate*. Through the miracle of Pentecost, Mary and the apostles were transformed by the Holy Spirit. They went to the whole world and brought the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone. We share in that same mission today – moral and religious renewal. We can be apostolic in our own family, in our local Parish and neighbourhood. We can live this grace through words and actions, but also through the everyday witness of a committed Christian lifestyle. Mary went “as quickly as she could” to Elizabeth to help and support her. She brought Christ into her home. Through our contact with the Shrine, we help Mary with her mission to bring the Saviour to the world.

## Questions for Reflection

1. Do you feel “at home” in the Shrine, in Schoenstatt? Give your own personal reasons or talk about a particular experience.
2. How do you know that you have spiritually grown? Do you feel that your life is being transformed? Are you willing to change your life?
3. Where could you be concretely apostolic? Talk about a “place” where this is really happening or where you would wish it to happen.

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