

Covenant of Love

Group Outlines from Schoenstatt

The Covenant is our Powerhouse # 8

The Covenant is our Powerhouse

When people visit the Shrine, or pray there, or join a Schoenstatt Group – what is our hope and our prayer? That they experience a Covenant – a union between heaven and earth; between the Lord and us.

Schoenstatt lives and draws strength from the Covenant of Love with Mary, the Mother Thrice Admirable.

If we want to maintain God's healing presence, grace, blessing and the fullness of life and vibrancy, then we have to remain faithful to that Covenant and make it our main concern, and our favourite interest. Schoenstatt's charism as at its beginnings, will be its unique strength and source of life now.

The Shrine is a "monument" to a firmly held faith: Mary made a Covenant with this Shrine and she united herself to the Shrine – to be present and active. In the Shrine we encounter Mary as the Mother and Companion of the Lord, who wants to form human hearts into icons of Christ.

Mary is the Mother who listens and understands; she is the first and faithful disciple who can show us what it means to follow Jesus and live his Gospel.

The Shrine is a monument to an invitation from God to renew our Covenant with him – our Baptismal Covenant. We renew this same Covenant with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. That is the "newness", that is the surprising factor, the unexpected revelation.

This is "God's Doing"

The Shrine and the Covenant make sense, when you can say with conviction: "This is God's doing – God has been active here; he wanted this all to happen!" This certainty is at the heart of what a shrine is, or what holy ground is – this is God's work, not human endeavour or achievement. How do we know this? How can we be sure? St Paul talks about the "open door". When ordinary people try to discover God's

Plan and will for them, God opens a door and invites them to walk through it. He leads us and reveals his Plan to us step by step. We only need the love and courage to walk through this door and then God will offer us another door. This is a biblical way to describe how we can try and describe practical faith in Divine Providence. In the Covenant of Love we strive to discover God's Plan for us and once we have discovered it, do our best to realize it.

Another reason for trusting that this is God's work is the "creative result" in Schoenstatt. Look what has happened, look at the growth since the first Covenant was made? In other words, the results are not only positive but they go beyond expectations.

Theologians have often tried to work out the "signs" that God is present and that this is his work and initiative. They often speak of three key elements, which are the signs of God's intervention:

1. People with lots of limitations
2. are faced with serious difficulties and obstacles, but
3. nevertheless achieve something great, that lasts and bears fruit for others.

Then you come to what is called a "certitudo moralis" – a moral certainty that the Lord is present and active here.

Questions for Reflection

1. Have a look at how Schoenstatt grew in England, and in your own group? Do you think that the three key elements if God's special activity are at work? Give your reasons.
2. How has God lead you to the Covenant of Love? Can you name the "open door"?

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