

Covenant of Love

Group Outlines from Schoenstatt

Exchange Of Hearts # 9

Exchange of Hearts

The easiest and the most beautiful way to describe the Covenant of Love is by using the words of Schoenstatt's Founder, Father Kentenich: The Covenant of Love with the Mother Thrice Admirable is *an exchange of hearts*.

The "heart" in Christian spirituality has always meant the whole person – our very core, our very essence, our very centre. When we give someone our heart, then we give them everything – our past, present and future. We hold nothing back for ourselves. When we give the Blessed Mother our heart, then we give her everyone and everything that is in our hearts. We give her our interests and concerns; we give her our possessions and our striving.

In the Covenant we say *four* things – motivated by love - to Our Lady. Let's look briefly at each one:

1. *I give you my life*. The Covenant is a mutual agreement that demands all of us. We don't just give a part, we surrender our entire lives. *Everything I am and have is yours* – this is our gift of love. We give our freedom, our personal history, our senses and our thoughts, we give our understanding and our heart's desires, we give our burning love, our possessions, even our last drop of blood. We offer our MTA our joys and sorrows. Nothing will be too hard for us, because we give her it all.

2. *I love you*. When we love someone and are loved by someone, we feel energized. There is nothing we cannot do, nothing we cannot achieve. Love transforms us. The first and greatest motivation in our lives of the Covenant should be love. What we do should be motivated by love, what we are should be motivated by love. If we do or say anything that is not an act of love, then it cannot be God's will for us. Love changes our lives.

3. *I need you*. We should have the courage to ask Our Lady for everything we need, and for the needs of our loved ones. Jesus told his disciples to be bold

in prayer and to persevere when we need something that is very important to us. Our Blessed Mother will never be outdone in generosity. She will intercede for us and she will do anything to bring us closer to Christ, so that we can be his presence in the world. Our Lady will always give us so much more, than we could ever hope to give her back in return. Sometimes we can even come with empty hands.

4. *Your love changes the world*. What world do we want to change? First of all, the world in our own heart. We ask our Blessed Mother to give us the grace and strength to do the things that we can't do by our own efforts. Secondly, her love changes the world of our family and our home. In our Home Shrine, she forms us in the faith and helps us to keep the message of Jesus alive. And thirdly, her love renews the Church. As the Mother of the Church, she implores for us the power and fire of the Holy Spirit.

We can say these four things to our Mother and Queen, but in the Covenant of Love, she says the same four things *to us*. She gives us her life: her life with Christ, her experience of the Spirit, her discipleship. She tells us that she loves us and will never let us down. She also needs us to build up a better world – the kingdom of her Son. And she says to us: Your love changes the world – when we truly love our neighbour, we change things. *"Nothing without you, Mother of God – nothing without us, your children!"*

Questions for Reflection

1. What would you like to say to the Blessed Mother in the Covenant?
2. What do you think she would like to hear you say?
3. What do you hope she is saying to you?
4. Activity: Listen to the song "Love changes everything".

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