

**The Covenant of Love leads to the Blessed Trinity
Mary leads us in the Holy Spirit to Christ and the Father
(Illustrated in Texts from “Heavenwards”)**

JBr (1952) Das Lebensgeheimnis Schoenstatt I, 87-100

The Covenant Partners

[87] The Blessed Mother and Schoenstatt appear on the scene as covenant partners. The Blessed Mother promised to take up her abode in Schoenstatt, to draw youthful hearts to herself from there, and through her school of education to make Schoenstatt children the bearers of a great movement of renewal. Schoenstatt's members promised to give themselves completely to the Blessed Mother, to willingly and obediently allow her to educate them to be her instruments, so that she could use and consume them to bring about the renewal of the world.

The Blessed Mother wanted youthful, that is, malleable hearts that can be enkindled for all that is great, and that are joyfully ready to sacrifice themselves. The official and permanent helpmate and associate of the Lord in his entire work of redemption, the kind, powerful and wise educator of peoples, the great *Antidiabolicum* [opponent of the devil], the *acies bene ordinata*¹, can only use such people as her instruments in a revolutionary and turbulent time, a time that flees from God and is possessed by the devil. [88] All who join her and give themselves to her, all “whom she attracts to herself”², retain an eternally youthful soul even if their bodies are exhausted and their powers fail them.

It is not difficult to draw a conclusion from the first fact, which we have briefly described and substantiated. The way is pointed out to us by the sayings of Sallust³ and Anaximenes⁴: “*Omne regnum iisdem mediis continetur, quibus conditum est*”, and: “*per quas causas res nascitur, per easdem et dissolvi oportet*”⁵. These are sayings that have proved their wisdom for millennia. They forcefully impress on us the

¹ A well-ordered army (Song of Songs 6,9). In the Breviary, the antiphon for the Magnificat and Benedictus on 15 August applies this title to Mary.

² Cf. Schoenstatt: Founding Documents, 27.

³ Ca. 86-35 BC, *Gaius Sallustius Crispus*, Roman Historian and Politician.

⁴ Anaximenes of Miletus, ca. 550 BC – a pre-Socratic philosopher.

⁵ Every kingdom is maintained by the same means by which it arose, and, A work is dissolved by the same forces through which it was brought to life.

admonition of the poet: "Conquer what you have inherited from your fathers in order to possess it" ⁶.

This pointer is directed mainly to the Centre⁷ and Presidium⁸. They should see it as their favourite task for the leaders and followers to cultivate with great care the belief and conviction that exceedingly rich divine powers have broken into Schoenstatt's history, and then to connect it with the covenant of love.

The covenant of love as Schoenstatt's leading idea

Not just the history of the whole Movement and the individual formations, not just the rich inner life of the individual members, but also almost all the prayers in "Heavenwards" draw our attention to the fact that this covenant has become and remained the distinctive, original and fundamental form of our existence, the brightly shining and stirring configuration and goal for mind, will and heart, and the fundamental strength for the whole person in every situation. It must always remain what it has been and is – the fundamental form, the configuration and goal, and the fundamental strength [of the Movement]. Otherwise the Family will collapse, or at least lose the richness of its fruitfulness and attraction.

The idea of the covenant of love with the Blessed Mother has been alive in the Marian Sodalities from the first in the form of the *contractus bilateralis gratuitus* [reciprocal, freely willed contract]. We took it from there, but, unlike what was done in the Sodalities, we made it the dominant leading idea, or – as we have already said – the fundamental form of our existence, our configuration and goal, and our fundamental strength. We gave it an original content, developed it creatively, and moulded it into a well-ordered educational system. Here, too, those words apply: That is how it must remain. Conquer what you have inherited from your fathers in order to possess it!

Those who constantly use "Heavenwards", with its abstract ideas and austere, imageless language, as their meditation book, will grow so deeply into the world of the covenant that they will soon feel at home there, like a fish in water. It will have become their very personal way of life, their most characteristic attitude of soul, which essentially influences all decisions and tangibly marks all they do. [70] This is how strongly all the prayers have been inspired by it. Sometimes it happens directly, sometimes indirectly. Please note that to our way of thinking, being an "instrument" implies the same thing as "covenant of love". The word appears on numberless occasions, quite apart from the fact that we have a special "Instrument's Mass", an "Instrument's Hymn", an "Instrument's Way of the Cross" and an "Instrument's Rosary".

⁶ Cf. Goethe, Faust, Part I, Scene Night, p.23, translated by John R. Williams, Wordsworth Classics, 1999: "What we inherit from our fathers should/ Be ours to have and hold, to use it as we would."

⁷ Of the Movement at Schoenstatt.

⁸ The central body of the Movement made up of representatives of the Institutes, Federations and the Leader of the Movement (Bewegungsleiter), who represents the other sections of the Movement. Its task is to interpret the *mens fundatoris* for the Movement and to guide developments.

In view of such a fullness of expressions of life we are justified in speaking of an Instrument's Spirituality pulsating through "Heavenwards".

In addition it should be noted that the Blank Cheque and Inscriptio are perfect forms of the covenant of love. It is another proof of how deeply the idea of the covenant is anchored in our little prayer book, so that it can become second nature to the worshippers. Finally, allow me to point out that all important actions are connected with it, whether these are the insignificant things of everyday life, or extraordinary situations. Morning and evening prayers, and the creative pauses during the day, which are given heart and soul when we pray the Office Hours, are all in harmony with it.

The "Morning Consecration" reflects quite naturally on the fundamental attitude created by the covenant of love:

"When we look at our own abilities
we lose all hope and trust;
we reach out to you, Mother,
and beg for rich gifts of love.

[91]
You will always be faithful
to the covenant you made with us,
and richly bedewed with graces,
even in storms and dangers.

You will send us the vocations
who will pledge themselves with us for your kingdom.
You will send us work and rich blessing,
adding your great power to our weakness." [HW15]

The day closes with the same attitude:

"Mother, inscribe us into your heart,
lead us with you heavenwards:
we faithfully renew the covenant
we once made with you." [HW 106]

Each Office Hour confesses:

"We want to mirror ourselves in your picture
and again confirm our covenant of love.
Make us, your instruments, become like you in every way,
and through us build your Schoenstatt realm everywhere." [HW 47]

The "Shepherd's Prayer" for the flock in great spiritual need, dispels all worries with the thought that the covenant of love they have entered into mediates powerful graces:

“They have made a covenant with you.
May it remain firm as though forged from steel.
Then I know they are in safe and faithful care,
and need not fear the wild rage of the deluge.

[92] You will bring them all victoriously home
to the Father, so that they can sing hymns to the Lamb.
I firmly believe that none will be destroyed
who are faithful to their covenant of love.

In them you want to bless Schoenstatt
and tell everyone who encounters it
that you have chosen it to be your instrument,
and lead it upwards to the heights of the Inscriptio.

Therefore I again inscribe all whom I love
into your heart with blood and fire,
and fearlessly walk the path through life
that the Father in his wisdom has foreseen.

If he wants to choose my life as a pledge:
I will gladly place it at his disposal.
In return let those who consecrate themselves
to you and Schoenstatt be eternally with the Trinity.” [HW 138-139]

Allow me to repeat: It must remain in future the way it has been until now. Conquer what you have inherited from your fathers in order to possess it!

As will be proved later – when a third fact is mentioned – everything in Schoenstatt has developed according to the “law of the open door”⁹. This is true both of the outward forms and all the other elements of our spirituality. From this you will understand that, because we live in an apocalyptic era, we have – without planning it intentionally - assimilated the whole supernatural world from an apocalyptic point of view.

This is the image of the Father, Christ and Mary depicted in the Book of Revelation. In union with the angels and saints they battle against the ancient dragon for human souls, and to govern the world. This can be found in every detail in the prayers.

They depict the Blessed Mother as the great sign in the heavens of time [cf. Rev 12,1]. The fundamental and original image of the Bible shines out to us – the Virgin-Mother. It has been enriched with the precious trousseau of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption into heaven, and wears the crown of royal dignity and sovereign

⁹ Cf.: *Schlüssel zum Verständnis Schoenstatts* [Key to Understanding Schoenstatt], in: *Texte zum Verständnis Schoenstatts*, Vallendar-Schoenstatt (Patris Verlag) 1974, 149-228.

power over heaven and earth. As the Co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix of Grace she is exalted over all that happens in the world and time, in closest, inseparable union with the Redeemer of the world. As a result the Christ-bearer becomes the bearer of the sacrifice, the preparer of the sacrifice, the servant of the sacrifice, the bringer of the sacrifice, and distributor of the fruits of the sacrifice. That is why we call her the official and permanent associate and helpmate of the Lord in his entire work of redemption.

We should not find it difficult to re-discover in the prayers the compressed individual features of our picture of Mary, which we have indicated. In order to mention one example, let me refer to the prayer “After the Angelus” [HW 56-57].

[94] In the process, let us not forget that the prayers do not just show us a towering and distant goal we are striving for with great longing; they are at the same time the expression of joyful possession. They really depict the actual life of the whole Family. Of course, this does not mean that all the members can call the same degree of the Marian spirit their own; that is far off. I repeat: Things must always remain as they have been. Conquer what you have inherited from your fathers, in order to possess it!

The covenant with Mary leads us to Christ

It can be proved that in the history of the Family teaching and life have emphasized two elements very strongly: The inner two-in-oneness between love for Christ and Mary – without on that account wanting to blur the boundary between the two – and the movement in Jesus and Mary under the influence of the Holy Spirit towards the Father.

This inner two-in-oneness has been a central objective for the Family from the first. It stands to reason because of the “law of the open door”. The foundation took place at a time when mechanistic thinking felt it had to separate our Lord from his Mother in practical piety, and to keep them apart. Think of our battles with the liturgical tendencies and the youth movement, think of our controversies with Protestant influences and idealistic aberrations in German thinking. Call to mind the main motive for the present situation¹⁰.

[95] If you keep all this in mind, you will understand what we are trying to say when we explain that St Isidor’s motto: *ut sim servus filii, appeto servitutem genetricis* [In order to serve the Son, I aspire to be a servant of the Mother of God] has proved true in the fullest sense in the life of our Family and souls. Fervent love of Mary has, to use a saying of Pius X, allowed the “*intellectualis Christi cognitio*” to mature to become “*vitalis*”¹¹. For us she is, to quote the same Pope, in very truth the easiest, surest and shortest way to fervent love of Christ and being gripped with love for the

¹⁰ The founder’s exile from his work.

¹¹ Encyclical “*Ad diem illum*” (2.2.1904): “*vitalis Christi notitia*” – an intellectual knowledge of Christ matures to become a vital knowledge (AAS 36, 452).

Father¹². That is how it has been from the beginning; this is how it must remain. Conquer what you have inherited from your fathers in order to possess it!

Think of the two prayers that originated in the first years of our Family history: “Mother Thrice Admirable ...” and “Mother with your Child divine ...”. The first indicates the purpose of love for Mary: “That the world renewed by you/ may pay your Son the homage due.”¹³ The second begins and ends with pointing to the inner two-in-one-ness. It starts: “Mother with your Child divine ...” and ends with the conviction: “Mother and Child united in love will restore it [our country] with grace from above.”¹⁴

[96] The same thought can be followed like a central idea through the many prayers in “Heavenwards”. They indicate that life has been underpinned by prayer in the past years. Let me add a classic passage:

“On your difficult way of the Cross your permanent helpmate
in the redemption of souls may not be missing:
The Father placed her at your side
as once he joined Adam and Eve.

An sea of suffering surged in both hearts –
yet nothing could remove the decision
to stand unswervingly to the Father’s will
and go the way of suffering together.

Since then as often as the fires of hell raged
you have wanted to use the crusher of the serpent;
you want to restrain the beast that opens wide its jaws
by means of a Woman’s words.

Together with her you want to save souls,
and like her chain them to the Father’s will:
She is and remains the lure and magnet

¹² “For can anyone fail to see that there is no surer and more direct road than by Mary, for uniting all mankind in Christ and obtaining through Him the perfect adoption of sons, that we may be holy and immaculate in the sight of God”, from: Papal Teachings – Our Lady, St Paul Editions, 1961, p.168.

¹³ Mother Thrice Admirable, Mother of Grace,
teach us your enemies to face,
notwithstanding their number and might,
spreading your love in earth’s dark night,
that the world renewed by you
may pay your Son the homage due.

¹⁴ Mother with your Child divine
make our country wholly thine.
Help that it will never cease
to follow you and gain God’s peace.
Mother and Child united in love
Will restore it with grace from above.

which our hearts cannot easily withstand.' [HW 85]

Or:

“The minds that overlook Mary,
who, according to the Father’s plan, should always stand beside you,
have not understood the wealth of your work,
its whole strength, its full light.” [HW 85]

[97] Or:

“O holy Cross, I fall down in adoration before you
and sing you fervent songs of thanksgiving and love:
On you our Lord completed his work
that made us children of God.

I will sink you deeply into my joyful heart,
giving you all my love forever;
I have built my life’s hope
on you, the Crucified, and your Bride.

Let me carry you both to the people and win them over,
staking my life each day as I fight for you,
so that your kingdom may be victorious everywhere
and spread its borders all over the world.

Let me present the Cross and Mary’s picture
to the people as the sign of redemption,
so that what the Father’s loving plan sees as one
may never be separated.

May Schoenstatt always remain your faithful instrument,
inscribing you together into human hearts,
so that Satan’s realm may be effectively destroyed
and the Father’s honour increased in the Holy Spirit.” [HW 90]

Those who take a closer look at the images of our Lord in “Heavenwards”, and want to interpret them, should take up the Book of Revelation; they will find them all there. There are six – the High Priestly God-King, the victorious Lamb of God, the omnipotent Word of God, the all-just Judge of the world, the merciful perfecter of the world, the tender and fervently loving divine Bridegroom¹⁵.

¹⁵ Cf. the Retreat Course, “The Apocalyptic Priest” (1940), where these images of our Lord are enlarged upon.

[98] He “who sits upon the throne” (Rev 5,1) has given “the Lamb standing as if slaughtered” (Rev 5,6) an insight into the book containing the fate of the world and Church; he has given him the task to carry out his wise, loving and omnipotent plans.

This is how we can describe the fullness of the human spirit and life that has borne and imbued the history of the Family in the past. Allow me to repeat: This is how it must remain. Conquer what you have inherited from your fathers in order to possess it!

From all this it follows that as history has shown – “Heavenwards” is real life that finds expression in prayer – the covenant of love with the Blessed Mother has developed into a multi-faceted, warm and fruitful covenant with our Lord.

The covenant with Mary leads to God the Father

The same can be said of the heavenly Father. Schoenstatt cultivates a distinctively patrocentric spirituality. We will later show in greater detail how the Christ-formed and Christ-forming Woman has shown us the Father in the Holy Spirit, and the perfection, richness and depth with which she has done so.

It should be sufficient here to indicate the individual features of our picture of the Father. After what has been said, it should not surprise us when I state that it is similar to the great vision of the Father in the fourth Chapter of Revelation. What is expressed in images there has been revealed in our history as a very pithy summary of the qualities of “the One seated on the throne” (Rev 4,2) from whom all life on earth and heaven proceeds, and to who it also returns. He is the All-merciful, the All-holy, the All-just, the Almighty and All-knowing – the Lord of heaven and earth. That is why we know that we are sheltered in his presence and in his hands; we can surrender ourselves completely to him, say a heartfelt yes to his wishes and make his plans our own.

The importance of the way in which mind, will and heart have flowed towards God the Father in the past is shown by the recent picture of our daughter shrines outside Germany. You will find the “Father’s Eye” (Father Symbol) everywhere. It dominates not just the sanctuary, but the whole interior. It was put up very solemnly in the presence of the whole Movement¹⁶. This very solemn act can be seen as the end of a long, exciting and richly blessed development – a description of which does not fit in here – and the start of an incomparably more fruitful period.

Everywhere outside Germany you will find a symbol of the Blessed Trinity in connection with the picture of our Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen in the sanctuary of the shrine. It symbolises the universal nature of our spirituality. [100] It is in tune with the statement: *Per Mariam ad Jesum, per Christum in Spiritu Sancto ad Patrem*

¹⁶ The reference here is to the celebration in the shrine at Bellavista, Chile. The first “Father’s Eye”, as a symbol of God the Father, was put up some years before that in the shrine at Nueva Helvecia, Uruguay.

[through Mary to Jesus, through Christ in the Holy Spirit to the Father]. It is not just Marian, but also Christomystical, patrocentric and Spirit-centred – or, if you prefer: because it is Marian, it is distinctively Trinitarian in orientation.

You will understand, therefore, why “Heavenwards” is indiscriminate in addressing sometimes the Blessed Mother, sometimes our Lord, and sometimes the heavenly Father as covenant partners and master builders. Let me repeat: This is how it has been, it is also how it has to remain. Conquer what you have inherited from your fathers in order to possess it!