

## Life Groups in Schoenstatt

The Schoenstatt group is not simply a group of good friends, nor a circle of intellectuals who engage in ideological speculation. Neither is it a mere business team, book review, nor a self sanctity club. We want our groups to know how to cultivate friendliness, a proper formation, and active and serious work in their self education. All this creates an organic unity. Our groups are called to be a community of grace, of life, of ideals that later on, can act as yeast in their environment.

When we speak of a "life group" we refer to small, select, leadership circles getting together to work on their spiritual education and formation. When we say " life group," we are talking about both the internal (personal or individual) and the external (openly shared or combined) work done by small groups. **Internal** work refers to efforts devoted to the spiritual formation of the person (e.g., everyday sanctity) or their personality. **External** work includes service projects, apostolic work, parish work, or any other endeavor that, coming from the group, affects the life of the church or the community. These distinctions reflect how we work toward forming the **new man** (internal) and the **new community** (external).

In the Schoenstatt group there are five fundamental characteristics. The group is:

- A fraternal community
- A covenant community
- A community of ideals
- A community of spiritual education and growth
- A community of apostolic action

The mentors as well as the leaders of the groups should always have these five pillars in mind. The weakness in one or more of them would lead to a lack of fruitfulness, and the pedagogical work can bear poor results. For any evaluation of their work, the mentors and leaders must ask themselves how they promoted these five characteristics.

Each characteristic is intimately linked to the other since the group is an organic unit.