

Fr. Joseph Kentenich

Letters to Various Sodalists

Excerpts from

unpublished correspondence of 1915-16

translated by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus, 2006

1915

Letter to a Sodalist, July 1915 [1](#)

N.c.P.p.

b.V.M. [2](#)

Dernbach [3](#), July 1915 [4](#)

My dear young friend,

My health unfortunately allows me to write only a few lines in answer to your kind letter. I am happy that you have remained faithful to your resolutions and help to increase our capital of grace. Aren't the difficult circumstances at home a welcome opportunity to do apostolate? It's a pity that at the moment I do not have the strength to let you know how other sodalists make use of such opportunities.

Sad news! Heinrich [5](#) has fallen in battle – there are already two sodalists with our heavenly Mother. Are you praying a little for the first sodalist [6](#) and working on your self-sanctification with him in mind?

If you would like to continue asking our *Mater ter admirabilis* to help me regain my strength, I wouldn't mind.

Greet your parents warmly for me.

Heartfelt sodality greetings and my priestly blessing.

With sincere love,

J. Kentenich

1917

Letter to a Sodalist, February 10, 1917 [1](#)

N.c.P.p. Schoenstatt, 10. 2. 17

b.V.M.

My dear young friend,

You already know what made me happiest about what you sent: the little inconspicuous note. I respect your will power. Our MTA will doubtlessly think highly of it, particularly later when you are in more difficult situations.

So you, too, are dried out. It's good that you are using the right remedy: spiritual Communion and spiritual reading. Another means: a

holiday in Schoenstatt with the MTA. When may I expect you? Until then I take your place by the MTA in the little shrine.

If your pastor doesn't make any contacts for you with a priest in Karlsruhe, then take the initiative yourself and go in search of one. There's nothing like doing things yourself! An ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory. Once you are out of boot camp you will have more free time.

In Hagen they're beginning to organize the troops. Dedek [8](#) is in Magdeburg. He met with the worst conditions of all, but he's holding his ground. How are things going with your urge for organization? Wouldn't you first like to get in touch with your former presiding officer? (Name and address follow.)

Something else that will be of interest to you: Yesterday Will [9](#) was declared fit for active duty (traveling troop). He is going home on Monday. Will the 99ers soon be called up for duty?

Until we have the joy of seeing each other again!

Very heartfelt Sodality greetings and my priestly blessing.

With sincere love,

J. Kentenich

P.S. Wilwers [10](#) is in French captivity!

FOOTNOTES

[1](#):

As found in the displays of the Father Kentenich House in Schoenstatt, Germany. See *An Encounter with Father Joseph Kentenich: Guide to the Father Kentenich House on Mount Schoenstatt* (Vallendar-Schoenstatt, 1988), p. 33.

[2:](#)

Nos cum prole pia / benedicat Virgo Maria (Virgin Mary, bless us with your holy Child), popular greeting used in the Marian Sodality organization of the early 20th century. See Fr. Jonathan Niehaus, *New Vision and Life: The Founding of Schoenstatt* (second edition, Waukesha, 2004), p. 193.

[3:](#)

Fr. Kantenich spent all of July and August in St. Joseph's Hospital in Dernbach in the Westerwald region east of Schoenstatt. He was recovering from another severe lapse in his poor health.

[4:](#)

From when the news of Heinrich's death arrived to Fr. Kantenich, we know that the letter must be written after July 17.

[5:](#)

Sebastian Heinrich (b. 1893 in Niederumelsdorf) was killed in action on the Eastern Front (in Galicia) on June 20, 1915. He was the second Schoenstatt sodalist to die in the war.

[6:](#)

Bernhard Kaufmann (born 1889 in Beberstedt), was killed in action on April 23, 1915. Both Heinrich and Kaufmann were classmates of Joseph Fischer and from the original group of sodalists who made their consecration April 19, 1914.

7:

An Encounter with Father Joseph Kentenich: Guide to the Father Kentenich House on Mount Schoenstatt , p. 43.

8:

Paul Dedek (1898-1924), born in Bernburg.

9:

Johann Will, born 1896 in Arnstein in Oberfranken.

10:

Nicholas Wilwers (1897-1979), born in Irrhausen in the Eifel.