

The Talk of the 31st of May

(as translated in J. Niehaus, *The 31st of May*)

My dear Sisters [1](#):

(1) There is something of home in the air tonight. It may even seem to us as if angels were in our midst, calling out to us: "Take off your shoes, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Ex 3,5). Yes, it is holy, and it wants to become holier—holy ground. Holy ground because the Blessed Mother has chosen this little place for herself; holy ground because this little piece of earth is where saints canonized and uncanonized shall be allowed to prosper, grow, and become fruitful for years and decades and centuries to come; and finally holy ground because here is where holy, i.e. sanctifying tasks will be placed on weak human shoulders.

a. Old Schoenstatt and New

(2) It is a historical fact that Schoenstatt has come to us. Old Schoenstatt has come to New Schoenstatt. Starting today, I think, it will be our task to help New Schoenstatt find its way back from here to Old Schoenstatt. The stream of graces which has swept from there to here in the fullness of the Third Founding Document—and continues to flow unabated—wants to return to its source bringing countless blessings.

That could be the deepest meaning of today's celebration. It is a happy gift and, at the same time, a heavy load.

(3) We have gathered here in the still of the night to solemnly present Our Lady with the work we have written for her together. I say it is a work we have written together. While I was writing day and night, you were in the background, imploring for me the Holy Spirit in our Cenacle. You did not tire of increasing your sacrifices for the same intention. Above all, you made every effort to seriously live the Inscriptio in your daily lives.

(4) With this solemn presentation we take upon ourselves a burden which human shoulders, left to themselves, are unable to carry. But we also expect a great blessing for the Western World, especially for our home country. It was there that we gave our "yes" to being sent out as instruments in the hand of our Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt to help realize the plans of Divine Wisdom and Love here. We have tried to do all we could.

(5) Is it not a return gift, an acknowledgment, an honor for us, when we assume that she wants to use us, starting today, in order to gain a greater influence in the shaping of the Church's fate in the Western World? When we hear the word "Western World", we always think first, of course, of Germany.

b. The Covenant Partners Are Here Tonight

(6) May I put into words what we feel in our souls? May I express what is alive in our hearts? We have come to give and to receive. We exchange with our dear Blessed Mother

our entire helplessness,

our entire readiness to help,

and our loyal helpfulness.

We give her our helplessness and she gives us her helplessness. We give her our readiness to help and she gives us her readiness to help. We give her our loyal helpfulness and she gives us her loyal helpfulness.

(7) This parallel immediately reminds us of the central thought which always moves us, constantly drives us on, and instills an unshakable calm in every difficulty: the covenant of love. Now, too, it is foremost in our minds, providing an answer to all our questions. Now, too, the covenant partners who have been together for as long as we can remember are standing across from one another in our place of grace. What are the requests they have to make?

c. Our Helplessness—Our Gift to the MTA

(8) What we bring, what we give is our helplessness.

- It is a financial helplessness. Take a moment to think about that. This is directed especially to those of us who bear the burden of financial responsibility...

- It is a physical helplessness. When we say to ourselves: On our weak shoulders rest the foundations upon which a world, a new world is supposed to be built...

- What do we give Our Lady? We come with full hands: With our financial helplessness, our physical helplessness, and our spiritual helplessness as well... We offer this helplessness to the Blessed Mother with all our hearts!

- What we probably all feel most deeply is our moral helplessness... It is the same for all of us without exception: The closer we come to God, the more we also sense the darkness of our souls. Thus we offer our dear Blessed Mother our entire helplessness.

- And finally [we offer] our spiritual helplessness. How often do we feel so cold and helpless in the face of God. We want to be fire-brands glowing for Christ and the Divine! There is a deep meaning behind this. On the one hand, our deep longing, and on the other hand, we are anything but what one could compare to a ball of fire. So we have come and now give Our Lady our multifaceted helplessness.

d. Our Mission: the Western World Needs Healing

(9) I have already indicated how great the task is which we have as a little family here in Chile. But the occasion itself which draws us here

tonight also indicates that God has given us a great task for the whole world, especially for Europe, for the Western World. Which task is it? To expose and heal the root and ultimate germ of the disease which afflicts the Western soul: mechanistic thinking.

God gives me good reason to believe that in this regard he has placed a heavy load on the shoulders of the family. The law of the open door has convinced me of it... But those with a mission must remain faithful to it and justly apply themselves towards its realization.

e. My Personal Struggle With Mechanistic Thinking

(10) Helplessness! When I think back on how all of this came about—all of it is a tremendously great gift which God gave me: organic thinking as opposed to mechanistic thinking. That was my personal struggle as a youth. He permitted me to go through the same struggle which is shaking the very foundations of Western civilization today. God gave me a clear mind so that I could bear this struggle of faith over many years. What saved my faith was a deep, unaffected love of Mary. As a matter of fact, love of Mary always leads to organic thinking.

The battles came to an end when I was ordained a priest and could begin to produce and shape and form the world I carried within me. My endless intellectual circling was healed by normal, everyday life. That is why I grasp the modern soul so well and what is wreaking such havoc in the Western World. To whom do I owe all this? This is a great gift, doubtlessly received from the Blessed Mother. So it was that I could

abundantly experience in my own life not only the disease but also the cure.

f. A Prophet's Mission Includes a Prophet's Fate

(11) Schoenstatt has a manifest mission for the Western World, especially for the country of its origin. It is a mission to counter collectivism, which is now progressing with such force that it leaves all rivals far behind, a wall that can only be breached if the said bacillus can be eradicated and overcome...

(12) You too, in your own way, can help carry this burden and task given to the family. But we must expect that noble hearts will be hurt by what is written here, that it will arouse violent indignation and instigate hard and hardest counter-measures against us. We should not be surprised if it welds influential men into a united front of opposition against me and the family. Humanly speaking, we must finally be ready to accept that the attempt may fail entirely. And still, we cannot consider ourselves absolved from the need to risk everything. Whoever has a mission must fulfill it, even if it leads into the darkest and deepest abyss, even when it requires one death leap after another. A prophet's mission always includes a prophet's fate.

(13) We see Western civilization falling into ruins and believe that we are called from here to embark on the work of saving and salvaging, of construction and expansion. We believe that we must offer ourselves as instruments for a countercurrent which must flow back to the

countries from which the nations here once received their culture and from which we too have received countless blessings...

(14) Hence we summon our courage to join St. Paul in saying: Non possum non praedicare—"I cannot do otherwise than preach" (cf 1 Cor 9,16). You can sense how helpless we are in the face of such a gigantic task. We feel like David facing Goliath (cf 1 Sam 17). In my mind is the death leap which I had to dare in 1942 [2](#), and I am aware that it is being repeated right now. If we could not count on Our Lady's readiness to help, we could never dare to take such a perilous step.

g. Mary Needs Us as Her Instruments

(15) On the other hand, if you understand what I am trying to say, I think I can rightly add: The situation does not only leave me, does not only leave us, but also leaves the Blessed Mother helpless. She is, of course, the interceding omnipotence at the throne of God, but according to the plan of Eternal Love she is dependent on willing and docile human instruments. As the [Second] Founding Document states, she has taken on the task of especially showing herself from our shrine in Germany as the One who overcomes the collectivistic heresies [3](#). Because of this—to use a metaphor—she is longingly in search of instruments who are willing to help her in this task.

(16) What other choice do we have than to place ourselves unreservedly at her disposal in the spirit of our consecration and fulfill

her wish that we renew the total giving of ourselves to her and entrust to her the responsibility for the great work in which we— dependent on her and for her mission—are allowed to co-operate, co-suffer, and co-sacrifice, and for which we pray.

...The Blessed Mother is helpless. She cannot do it alone. It is an honor for us to be allowed to help her...

h. Our Confidence

(17) The Blessed Mother has a great task in the Western World. After she has now given me such insights, she also asks of me that I place it all back into her hands. That is what is so beautiful, so great, and brings us together once more: We bring Our Lady our helplessness and she gives us her helplessness, but also her readiness to help. What does she demand of us in return? That we acknowledge our helplessness...

(18) She comes to us as the Great Educator. She offers us her educational skill, power, and strength. When God blesses us in just a few years with an adoration branch here at this shrine, then we will be able to expect even more. If we seek the kingdom of God, all other things will be given us besides (cf Mt 6,33)...

(19) The Blessed Mother remains faithful. You need not worry. Although faithfulness is generally hard to find, Mary is the Virgin most faithful. She loves us even when we approach her with soiled clothes

and even after we may have turned our backs on her. She will remain faithful to us. Her loyalty will only end when she has us in heaven.

i. A Decisive Hour in History

(20) We stand at a decisive hour in our family's history. If we fail to break down the wall [of mechanistic thinking], the Blessed Mother will transfer the mission for Germany from the home front and attempt her rescue from our daughter shrines. She will remain faithful to the covenant. If parts of our family do not answer faithfulness with faithfulness because of cowardice and weakness, we may then assume that their mission will revert to us.

(21) Two thoughts should accompany us into the battle, two words standing as guiding stars over our lives. The first is: *Tua res agitur, clarifica te!* It is your mission, your task—glorify yourself and your work! The second is: *Mater perfectam habebit curam!* [Mother will take perfect care!] The Blessed Mother will glorify herself in a perfect manner! If we try to promote her chariot of victory wherever we can, she will take it upon herself to care for us and her Schoenstatt work and victoriously lead it through all battles, just as she did in the past years of persecution.

To the extent that human weakness permits, we must remain true to the words, *Mors sola!* —Death alone! Only by death will we allow ourselves to be separated from one another, separated from the work, and separated from the shrine.

(22) It is as if we were now just beginning to live, as if everything we had experienced until now were part of a prehistory. Now is when the real history begins, the history of New Schoenstatt, as in Schoenstatt in 1914-15.

(23) How happy may we be that all of us together may be this founding generation! We all want to plant ourselves and our being and living into the soil of the shrine... We, too, want to die, not physically, but by taking the planting of ourselves into the foundations of the shrine seriously, the planting of the strength of our life and love into the shrine. We want to be the supporting pillars.

j. Conclusion

(24) The Blessed Mother has given us each other. We want to remain faithful to each other—in one another, with one another, and for one another in the heart of God. If we would not find each other there, how terrible that would be! Do not think that because we are going to God we are departing from each other. I do not want to be just a signpost. No, we are going this way together! That will be true through all eternity! How mistaken it would be to think we are only signposts. We are together to mutually enkindle our enthusiasm and faithfulness. We belong together for time and eternity. Even in eternity we will be with one another. Heaven is an in-one-another-ness of love from one to the other, an eternal in-one-another-ness of love. And in and with one another we will then see our dear Blessed Mother and the Triune God.

(25) A little bit of this has already been given to us. It is a pledge and surety of what the Blessed Mother still intends to do as she forms us into a Cenacle community and a Cenacle province, guided by a love which is genuine, strong, and conquers all things.

Nos cum prole pia...

FOOTNOTES

[1:](#)

Joseph Kentenich, talk of May 31, 1949. Shorthand manuscript as published in *Texte zum 31. Mai 1949*, p. 5-13. The Spanish text in *Legado profético* (Bellavista, 1993), p. 63-73, is somewhat more complete and has been consulted for this English translation.

[2:](#)

Fr. Kentenich's decision of January 20, 1942 that it was God's will for him to place nothing in the way of his pending transport from the Koblenz prison of the Gestapo to a Nazi concentration camp.

[3:](#)

Cf. Second Founding Document (October 18, 1939), No. 79-90; in *Schoenstatt—The Founding Documents* (Waukesha, 1993), p. 68-72.