



Blessed Christmas!

Christmas 2017

Dear Coordinators, Missionaries, and Friends of the Schoenstatt Pilgrim Mother,

May our New-born King, *God-With-Us*, bring you his gifts and graces of joy and peace this Christmas and in the coming year!

As missionaries of our Mother and Queen, we identify with her in searching for a place to give birth to the Christ Child. We, too, search for the best place to bring her, her child, and the graces from our Schoenstatt Shrine.

Like St. Joseph, we carry out into the world the mystery of life and grace of Jesus and Mary. The covenant of love that they lived out of becomes an invitation to take part in the new and eternal covenant of our Lord in a deeper and renewed way. From the moment of the Annunciation ("Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord!" Lk 1:38) until Calvary (Behold your Mother! Jn 15: 14) Christ and Mary remained united in the heart of God the Father. From the moment we were baptized until today, and whenever we face new challenges, we want to remain united to our Father in heaven as well. The childlike surrender of Jesus and Mary to the plan of God is our great inspiration in daily life. As long as we continue to embrace God's plan, imitating them we will experience peace and joy in our lives, regardless of difficulties, sicknesses, and trials.

One great model of this childlike surrender and of a life out of a covenant of love with Christ and Mary is the founder of Schoenstatt, Father Joseph Kentenich (1885-1968). His *love for the Church* and his *love for the Schoenstatt family* was seen in his *dedication to the individuals*. He proved his love for God in his fatherly service to others. "Schoenstatt has grown through selfless service to the individuals," he wrote in a short message of admonition, "and it must continue to grow in the same way in the future."

May these words inspire us as we try to live out of our covenant of love with Christ and Mary in our daily struggles. Our service to the individuals who receive the image is decisive for the success and fruitfulness of our apostolate. Each one continues to search for the places, the families, the lives, that need Christ and Mary the most. Each one seeks out those who, like the people of Israel in the Old Testament, need to open wide the doors of their

hearts to the Savior. May the Christ Child bless you and your apostolic endeavors in your service to the individuals!

A word of congratulations and gratitude to those who have passed on to other missionaries in their areas the message of the workshops presented at our national convention this summer! Certainly, the Blessed Mother continues to guide us as we long to help the Church achieve its goals of the new evangelization. A word of encouragement to those states organizing their larger encounters this coming year! May our Schoenstatt Mother and Queen show you clearly the will of her Son and shed upon you the light you need! She will work miracles!

When looking ahead to the year 2018, keep in mind that next summer we won't have a national convention. This will only take place once again – and God willing – in the summer of 2019. If any of you, however, would be interested in participating in one of the pilgrimages to Schoenstatt, Germany, in July or September 2018, for the commemoration of the golden jubilee of Father Kentenich's return home to eternity, please contact us pilgrim.mta.usa@gmail.com. If anyone is interested in visiting our shrines in this memorial year of Father Kentenich in order to learn more about his life, message, and charism, you may also contact us. If you would specifically like to visit the places blessed by his presence while he lived in Milwaukee between the years 1952-1965 and learn about that historical period of his life and of Schoenstatt, you may contact us as well: 262-522-4326, pilgrim.mta.usa@gmail.com. A tour may be offered as long as you make the proper arrangements ahead of time.

The process of canonization of the Servant of God, Father Kentenich, was opened in February of 1975. Many people continue to pray through his intercession and have experienced his nearness and his intercessory power. With his threefold message of the covenant of love with Mary, of practical faith in Divine Providence, and of a personal mission given to each one by God, we welcome the Christmas season and a new year. May his life inspire all of you in this memorial year! And, may you have a blessed Christmas!

United in our mission and apostolate,

Fr. M. Habel