

## **I go on pilgrimage in Covenant solidarity to our Original Shrine**

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SPAIN, Fr. José María García.

### **Candlemas, Presentation of the Lord in the Temple 2013.**

**Dear Friends,**

**While we were preparing for Candlemas, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple, we received the official news from the General Presidium informing us about the official negotiations with the Pallottine Fathers on the transfer of the Original Shrine to the Schoenstatt Family. At best the negotiations have been blocked and at the moment there is no solution in sight which would allow us to take over the Original Shrine and the Old House where the original life of our Schoenstatt Family developed. All the hopes and expectations of the past months appear to come to nothing, and we have to fear that at the Jubilee of our Covenant of Love our house will still not be “our” house.**

As children of the Covenant, the question asked of us is...what is God’s will, what are God and Blessed Mother offering us through this situation? It would seem that they are calling our attention to something that we have lost sight of to some extent throughout this entire process.

### **Commitment in solidarity**

Spontaneously I remember what Father said to us upon returning from exile in Milwaukee. He was grateful for all the “diplomatic” work that had been undertaken so that he could return, but he was especially grateful for all the radical commitment of his Family through the capital of grace, and he explicitly mentioned people who had given their all to the last for his return.

That commitment in solidarity is the fundamental force of our Family and the sign of identity in the Covenant. As a sign of his gratitude and appreciation he gave the Unity Cross to someone who could be considered a representative of this commitment. Since then the original Unity Cross has been in the Stuttgart Shrine.

### **There is only one capital with which we can buy it**

If the Original Shrine, home of the entire international Schoenstatt Family, has to be the property of our Family, we probably have to “purchase it” with the same "capital" which moved the Blessed Virgin to establish herself in the abandoned cemetery chapel of St. Michael, and which secured the liberation of our Father and Founder.

We are interested in the Original Shrine not only as a place to put up our signs and symbols, but so that we ourselves can become living signs of what we proclaim as a Family and as a Movement. Our “only” means to do this is by offering contributions to the capital of grace with which we can move Blessed Mother to show that She is the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt.

Even though the direct negotiations and diplomacy are not our task – but the task of experts, I suppose – it is very much our task to demonstrate vitally and apostolically that this small place is our common home, and our source of specific graces without which we cannot exist or act. Without the Original Shrine we can neither be Father’s Family nor as an apostolic Movement at the service of Church and society.

### **With the attitude of poor pilgrims**



The Candlemas feast is also a sign of what these new times are offering us. It can set its stamp on an appropriate attitude in us – it is the attitude that already characterized the Conference 2014. It is the attitude of the Holy Family, the attitude of poor and humble pilgrims who are on pilgrimage to the Temple of the Father to present to him what was most precious to them: their Child. The offering they made for the ransom of the Child was that of the poor, two pigeons. We are preparing for our own Candlemas feast in 2014, and as an international Family united in solidarity we are preparing our offering of the poor, our projects of a Covenant Culture. They mean very little or nothing to a world like ours which is accustomed to the spectacular, but an authentic and genuine offering so that the divine Child, the Sign of the Covenant, can reach everyone. Only the “old prophets of the place,” Simeon and Anna, could recognize those poor pilgrims and proclaim what they represented.

## **Covenant solidarity for a covenant culture**

Dear friends, I think that with the frustrating and harsh end to this period of negotiations we are offered an opportunity to be more aware and consistent in accepting in truth and humility the task of being a Family of pilgrims who are on the way in Covenant solidarity to the Temple in order to offer themselves to the Lord and the Blessed Mother, to be founded anew from the original forces, and thus be able to celebrate the Jubilee of the Foundation. In the founding era of the Family, the Covenant was lived in mutual solidarity in the battlefields and trenches...in the exile period, it was lived in solidarity with Father and as Family on the battlefields of the Church and our own Family. Today we are invited to live Covenant solidarity in the fields of the New Evangelization, and to create a Covenant Culture, which is no less radical commitment to the spiritual conquest of our living Shrine, of our Original Shrine by a missionary and pilgrim Family.

Perhaps it is time to tell the Blessed Mother once more and in the spirit of our 2014 pilgrimage prayer: "I go on pilgrimage in Covenant solidarity to our Original Shrine, and ask You to establish yourself there anew with your Family."

I have no doubt that we are experiencing an hour of grace in line with what Blessed Mother and Father initiated with Conference 2014.

Greetings from the Shrine in Madrid, *fr. José María*