

Dear Schoenstatt Family Members,

Following is the final Snippet relating to the Father Symbol.

For the next two months the Father Symbol is in Australia, visiting Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, with a short “detour” to New Zealand during May.

I want to thank very specially Father Denis Foley for all the work that he put into the text for these “Snippets”. If you have found them helpful in gaining a deeper insight into the meaning and significance of this Schoenstatt symbol, then I am delighted.

May your experience of the visit of the Father Symbol bring you closer to the Heavenly Father, to our Blessed Mother and her Son, and to our father and founder, Father Kentenich, and may it bring you many graces and blessings.

United in our Covenant,

Shirley Hall & Sr. Georgina Heger

(On behalf of the CIT)

Schoenstatt Father Symbol – Information Snippet No. 9

Our Schoenstatt Father Symbol is a reminder to us of

the fatherly protection and guidance of God for his children.

Introduction: A father is not only a source of life. He, with his wife, is also a **protector of life**.** There are a number of ways that Jesus describes the protection of God in St. John, chapter 14:1-10. I offer you only one of these which is connected to praying, “*you ask anything in my name, I will do it.*” (John 14:7)



** In Pope Francis’ Homily at the Inauguration of his Petrine Ministry (on the Feast of St. Joseph 19.3.2013) he pointed to the task of being a **protector**, showing St. Joseph as an example. He asked, “How does Joseph exercise his role as protector? Discreetly, humbly and silently, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity, even when he finds it hard to understand...”

Pope Francis elaborated on his role as protector, but also extended this role to all of us.

Further in his homily he said,

“Let us be “protectors” of creation, protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment... But to be “protectors”, we also have to keep watch over ourselves! Let us not forget that hatred, envy and pride defile our lives! Being protectors, then, also means keeping watch over our emotions, over our hearts, because they are the seat of good and evil intentions: intentions that build up and tear down! We must not be afraid of goodness or even tenderness!” (Pope Francis, 19.3.2013)

Reflection: Father Kentenich always strove to carry out the plan of God for himself and his Schoenstatt Family. There are many examples where he showed the aspect of firmness in his life, when he believed that this was something that God wanted him to do. Some people have even described him as stubborn. Two examples of this are:

Firstly, his decision not to take the human way offered him when he had the possibility of not being sent to the concentration camp. He did this because he believed this was what God wanted him to do in building up Schoenstatt even in the concentration camp.



Secondly, some years later he was challenged by the Church authorities whom he was convinced had a different understanding of his position as father to the Schoenstatt Family. These Church leaders thought Father Kentenich was taking away from the glory of God. They did not grasp that his understanding was mirroring the example of Jesus, as Jesus expressed in John 14:28:

“You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, **because the Father is greater than I.**”

As a result of his trust in the power of God and Our Lady, and his firm conviction that this was what God wanted him to do, he freely took upon himself 14 years of

exile in America.

Spiritual Preparation: You might like to place yourself spiritually in the Shrine or with your Pilgrim Mother and reflect on how Father Kentenich protected the Schoenstatt Family with his firm convictions of trust in God's loving plan, with the help of Our Mother Thrice Admirable and his understanding of God's merciful love.

You might also recall for yourself some examples of the firmness Father Kentenich showed in his life.

Practical Resolution: In which circumstances should I perhaps be firmer in my decisions and carry them out more courageously?

"A little mercy makes the world less cold and more just. We need to rightly understand this mercy of God, this merciful Father, who has a lot of patience..." (Pope Francis) Where can I be merciful and patient to others?

Prayer: As we prepare for the visit of the Father Symbol, and in union with our Schoenstatt Family here in Australia, we pray our pilgrimage prayer for 2014:

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable,
with great joy we are on pilgrimage to your shrine.

The faith of our Father and Founder Fr Kentenich inspired you to set up your home in Schoenstatt. In the shadow of this shrine a family was born, a new spiritual way within the Church, a charisma in the midst of our time.

We want to fill the capital of grace with our gifts; with our gratitude and repentance, with our surrender and longing.

With every step we take on our pilgrim way we ask you: Enkindle in us anew the fire of love for you, for Father Kentenich and for our family.

Mother, give us the strength to spread a covenant culture in our world today and educate us to be your true missionaries for this century.



Your covenant - our mission!