

SCHOOENSTATT NEWS

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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CONTENTS

1. [WELCOMING OUR FATHER IN OUR MIDST](#)
2. [NOTICE OF FR. EVANS DEATH](#)
3. [AN INCREDIBLE PICTURE OF POPE FRANCIS](#)
4. [SCHOENSTATT SPRING DINNER DANCE](#)
5. [SCHOENSTATT SHRINE DEVELOPMENT RAFFLE](#)
6. [IMPORTANT SHRINE INFORMATION](#)



WELCOMING OUR FATHER IN OUR MIDST

Father John Evans

Tonight, I want to share thoughts on welcoming Father into our midst in the image of the Bronze Statue to be blessed and unveiled. As I was reminded by David, it's not an unveiling; it's taking the tarp off.

I want to put the thoughts under two quotes from scripture. The first is taken from St. John (Jn. 20:19) when St. Thomas wouldn't believe our Lord was risen from the dead until he put his fingers in the wounds and his hands in his side. The next time Jesus appeared to them and he acknowledged: "My Lord and My God." And then so beautifully Our Lord said to him: "you believe because you see me. Happy are those who have never seen me and yet believe." The other from St. Luke (Lk. 1:45) are the gospel words attributed to our Mother and Queen: "Blessed is she who believed that the promises made her by the Lord will be fulfilled."

For me, when considering the welcoming of the father statue, those two thoughts go clinging in my heart all the time. It's not only that I find it hard to give a dogmatic lecture on what the father statue means, what its purpose is to all of us – that's not me! In welcoming the Father statue, I have simply to look at, why do we do it? Or rather what does the father statue mean to all of us? What does it mean to you? What does it mean to me? I find it hard, as I am not intimately and actively involved in the whole Schoenstatt family and do not have the contact with everyone, to say what does it really mean to you. You have to express that over this weekend. I can only place before you, without wanting to put myself forward or taking any personal credit, what it means for me, how I came to grips with it and why, in Divine Providence, I was landed as chairman of our Committee to make sure it was done and erected.

For that the first thing I have to look at is my own history in the light of Divine Providence – it certainly wasn't my choice to become a Pallottine and a priest. I wanted to join the Air Force and be a fighter pilot and had the opportunity to do so. But, in the last year at school you needed Latin to become a priest. It is true that I had thought of becoming a priest and the Pallottines had told me even if you don't pass Latin, we'll take you. But for me that was NO, I have to pass Latin if I am to be a priest. And the first and only time in my life that I passed the Latin exam was in the matriculation exams the last year at school. So after that I said, Yah, someone is telling me something. The Air Force is gone. Providentially, the Father had spoken and so I joined the Pallottines whom I had known since I was a child. But once I was there studying, I learned to love and reverence Pallotti's vision. Very soon for me, the wonderful vision he had for the catholic apostolate could only be realised in and through Schoenstatt, and

these two so went together. For me, I couldn't have stayed in the Pallottines without the agreement from my Novice Master (late Provincial) that I could make my Profession on the condition of the unity of Pallotti and Schoenstatt. In that way, Divine Providence led me into a covenant of love with our Mother Thrice Admirable and in that covenant of love, I was able to help to build the first shrine in Melbourne whose Jubilee we celebrated this year. And to me to be attached to our Father was both a logical and organic process – the instrument or our Mother and Queen and the Father of the Schoenstatt Family had to be accepted. I'd learned that from my roots back home in the family. You always have to have a love and honour to your parents. That always stood by me in every decision. Even in decisions that my parents said they would not have made. But, if you make a decision, you wear it and we will stand with you because you have to learn to stand on your own two feet and live the decisions you've made. In that way, to me to follow Schoenstatt, to follow our Mother and Queen and to be attached to our Father was not an intellectual thing, it was love. I couldn't imagine belonging to Schoenstatt without loving the Father and Founder whom God himself chose.

And also providentially, I happened to be the first Australian born together with my Course brothers in our Victoria Patris in Sion Course who offered our lives, our future and our priesthood, as the price to be paid for the victory of our Father's position within the Schoenstatt Family, in the Church, in society, in the world. We were young and I believe we knew the risk as we jumped into the Father's hands. It only took a few months for the axe to fall and we were all torn apart. We believed and still believe that our Father and Founder is a great prophet for our age. God has given him to us to lead the church into the newest age and the great doctor of the church for all times to come. At that stage, I had never met our Father – that came only 8 years after I was ordained – but I loved him and, with our Course together, we are prepared to offer everything for him. At that stage, my Pallottine Superiors couldn't understand why and how I could do this. How could I put my priesthood, my life, everything on the line for this man whom I had never ever met? I said to them: 'Well, I have a problem the other way. I cannot understand how others had lived with our father, worked with him, followed him, enter into the covenant of love, and then did not stand loyal to him when he, our Mother, the Schoenstatt Family needed them. They all left him except that wonderful circle that stood by our Father - the 'Treue Kreis.' That I couldn't comprehend. Years later when we were with our Father, when we brought that point up and we asked him how could that have happened for they were loyal, they had done so much, they had written so many books, done so many courses and our Father simply answered: "They followed with their head. You young ones followed with your hearts." He told us that, at that time after our consecration and dedication to free him, and the things that happened after which we went through, that was the catalyst that started the whole return from exile.

I suppose for me that summed up the daily living in the covenant of love all in and through the Shrine and the undying faith in the new spring time in the church, in the world through Schoenstatt which is led by the charismatic Father of Schoenstatt for all times. This helps to sum up my deep and thorough love for him – not as something that I did but a wonderful grace given. Our Father also once added that it was also a wonderful grace to be accepted, to be able to stand by him. With only human resources, it was not possible but a wonderful grace was given. I suppose too, it was a very organic growth at times for in following our Father there has been a few hiccups. That's why I always understand when Jesus looked at the apostles and shook his head sometimes – they loved deeply and were loyal, but also very human.

This reminds me of a story I heard on the wireless just recently. A mother invited some people to dinner and, as mothers would know, there is always a lot of hard work until everything's ready. The visitors arrived and they all sat down for dinner. Then she said to her 6 year old daughter: "You say a prayer now, dear." The little 6 year old said, "Mum..... I don't know what

to say.” Her mum turned to her: “Just say what mommy says.” So she bowed her head and said “God why did I have to invite these people for dinner!” Very human!

I’m sure that Our Lord was often disappointed in his apostles. They couldn’t understand, they couldn’t comprehend but they loved him. I am sure our Father and Founder would have said the same about each of us often. Why then? But they love me; hence they are my sons and daughters.

To me one of the greatest dreams in life was fulfilled when I first met our Father, listened to him, joked with him, was even trusted enough to chauffeur him and was accepted by him and then to have retreats under him, under his guidance. To me as a young student and a priest such things were a dream I never ever thought would happen. But it did. Our first meeting I have mentioned to others before. When I first met our Father face to face, ten years after we had made our consecration – I had written to him a couple of letters but then it wasn’t possible for him to answer. When I walked into the room where he was he came straight over and simply said: “Do you still hold what you wrote ten years ago?” Not only the question but he enumerated what I had written to him point by point. I simply said “yes.” Gee! That was good. Then he asked me the very simple question – “Am I too German?” This was one of the points I had put in the letter. Nothing against present company, but, for me, too many things in Schoenstatt were too stiff and too formal, they were too German and it needed to flow with different cultures and different races. So he simply said “Am I too German?” I said to him, “No you’re universal. You’ll fit in wherever you are because you love us just as we are.” And so too, I personally experienced him in that way and he accepted and acknowledged the unique mission of each individual person and each individual nation.

For ourselves in Australia, we’re not just an Anglo Saxon background, we are not just the British background, and we are not an American background. Our Australian people are a unique breed, we are formed from many backgrounds, formed from many countries, cultures, the land itself has formed us, the climate has formed us and our short and long history has formed who we are. We are all impregnated by the environment we are in. Our position in the world, just where our nation is and the nature we live in. All that is part of forming specifically who we are. Some years ago, some Italian people in the Parish had been here ten years in Australia. They decided to sell up everything and go back to Italy and I said to them, “Buy a return ticket, just in case. You can always get a refund on the 2nd half if you don’t come back.” No Father, we’ve made up our minds to go back to the old country where we came from and live there. So I wished them well as they bought a one way ticket. Six months later I got a letter from them and they said: “Father, why didn’t we follow your advice. In the ten years we’ve been in Australia we didn’t realise we have become different people, we no longer fit in back here but we can’t afford the trip anymore to come home.” That is part of that wonderful reality that the society, our history, our environment simply mould and form the people that we are, all colours, all kinds, all backgrounds. I do not want to upset our British visitors this weekend. At times I have been asked: Father, do you come from England? No. Your ancestors? No, no, they come from Ireland and most of them came from Ireland. But the Evans part came from Wales. I answer I’m Welsh and Irish mixed together. But you know it is strange how some people view their heritage. Recently we had a family reunion in Melbourne. I’m part of a family generation that descended from my great, great grandparents who migrated out to Australia. One of his sons went one way and the other went another way. So a lot of them had never met each other. And the reunion was remarkable. At the reunion, the ones on the other side, all the memorabilia that they have was everything from the past. From our side, we have a bit from the past but everything is looking to the future and I said to one: “You know you have to learn we have roots in the past. But who we are, where we are going, out of those roots, that’s what counts.” All from the other side wanted to see the great, great grandfather’s gold pocket watch that had been handed down to me. It was very antique and valuable – a beautiful watch that kept good time. When they asked they said, “It’s in his will

that it was handed down and it would have ended up with you.” And I said “Ah!, it didn’t stand the heat of Christmas!” One of the many things that was lost and so I said: “Well, let’s close the door on certain parts of history.” But I think that’s a reality of who we are. I am sure we will hear of that over the weekend.

But now to another point – Did our Father Statue Committee do it’s job well? How did we go? Did we work under budget or over budget? Did we trust our Schoenstatt Family too much or too little? So far our Schoenstatt has donated and lent a total of \$35,500. \$19,000 of that is in donations We have covered nearly all expenses and still have a credit of \$2,500. To me that is a wonderful and generous effort. Naturally we still need to repay the loans. But I am sure that you will make that possible.

To me such generosity is a wonderful sign of God’s providence. Many told us that we could not expect our Schoenstatt Family in Australia to meet such a cost. Good, we’ve just gone over budget. I never dreamed that a thing like the concrete would cost so much; but I think when you see it, it’s worth it. But the concrete path, as it is, is all worth it and will be an asset. I thought the concreting would be just above \$1,000, but it jumped to just over \$6,500. But it is a wonderful job and well done and I think a reasonable cost. One of our Committee twisted the arm and told the tradesman to keep sharpening that pencil and keep cutting back so his profit was at the lowest possible. So everyone had been wonderful and I think it’s one of those congratulations we need to give to the whole family.

Last night, I wanted to relax and I watched the film called “Patch Adams”. Anyone seen it? Yeah good I hope you all liked it. I found it a wonderful film and something which reminded me of what it means to be able to be yourself, to follow your dream and vision and if you believe in the way God has lead you, you will always have a wonderful end. And to me, when we welcome the Father Statue, deep down there is a question we need to ask ourselves. After watching the film last night, I asked myself: “Was it an easy journey to follow our Father?” I have to answer No, it hasn’t been an easy journey. In fact, when I looked back I don’t think I’ve ever been able to do what I planned to do, what I desired to do. Just as it would nearly come about, something else has always got in the way and our Father and Mother always organised it that way. And I asked myself: “Well was it a blessed journey?” And I have to answer: “Yes it’s been a very blessed journey with a lot of wonderful inner peace, calm, grace and love. And a journey that allowed one always to get glimpses of the fulfilment of the vision that our Father and Founder shared with us and made us part of – it goes hand in hand together, the joy and suffering, not always easy but a wonderfully blessed journey.”

I have heard some people say our Father is out of date, the Vatican Council, renewal of the church has been undertaken and he is overtaken. They say he’s got nothing left to do! But ask yourself a simple question: “Has the renewal of the church in our day overtaken the mission and vision of our Father and the mission of our Mother and Queen?” I hold: No! More than ever, we need a living practical faith in Divine Providence, in our people and in the church. More than ever, we need a genuine freedom to be whom God has called us to be. More than ever we need true Fatherhood in the church that is not a question of control. More than ever, we need new persons in the new community. I think if we are realists in our world, none of that has really been accomplished. There’s been much lip service, but not much reality. A priest I know at a meeting some years ago was proclaiming how much we have to give the laity the right to be themselves, how much leadership we have to hand over to them. And I looked in wonderment as I knew him and I knew his parish reasonably well. The parish was regimented and he was the one who made all the decisions. That was his Parish, it sounded good but in reality it wasn’t happening. I don’t say that as a judgment on him. As part of an age we grew up in and tried to grow out of, it’s not easy to let go of all that. The mission of our Father and Founder is still the vision and mission that he asks us to carry and realize.

So welcoming the Father Statue? **WHY?** For me personally, it’s a **debt of gratitude** to work for and have installed here at Mt. Schoenstatt a bronze statue of our Father and Founder. A debt

of gratitude to what he has given to my life, what he means for me and how much I owe him. It's also a **call to fulfilment**. The call to which we dedicated our lives to be partners in a cause of the mission of the prophet of the new church on the new shore. Whenever one sees that statue, it's a reminder he's calling us to fulfil that mission. So, a call to the fulfilment of the vision of the new man, of the new person in the new community. It is still a long way off. It is there calling, beckoning, guiding us into his home and asking us to follow.

It is a **call to love, acceptance and faith** in each person and each community according to its unique nature and mission. Our Father being there, reminds us not to dictate our ideas on others. Rather have love, acceptance and faith in each one as they are.

To me too, it's a **call to loyalty**, a loyalty that has the courage to trust and a trust that is able to give freedom to each other and to dare to go after the impossible. A challenge which is always there for each and everyone of us.

Welcome the Father Statue? Why for all of us? I think as we unveil and bless the Bronze Statue, it's up to each one of us here to ask ourselves this question on this weekend of covenant renewal. What does his statue mean to me? How does it involve in my life? How is it involved with the past, the present and the future? Where is he taking me? When we could share all that, then we would have, I'm sure, the full blessing, the spring and the presence of our Father and Founder.

Thank you and God bless you all.



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Email received from Father Prabhu —

Date: Sun, Jun 9, 2013 at 8:35 PM

Subject: death of Fr. John P Evans

Dear friends,

Greetings from Fr. Prabhu. Hereby I would like to pass onto you the very sad news of Fr. John Peter Evans passing. He passed from this mortal life today, at 1.10pm in the afternoon, at Neapean Hospital. He will now rest in the peaceful and loving arms of Our Heavenly Father. Please pray for him. As soon as the time of funeral Mass is fixed I will let you know.

United in the Covenant,

Fr. Prabhu

Schoenstatt Father

*** The talk on page 1 was given by Fr. John Evans at the unveiling of the bronze statue of Father Kentenich at the Tenth National October Conference in Mulgoa. Father Evans, as you read, passed away last week and was buried on Friday 14th June. I thought it was appropriate to rerun this talk. Father Evans was described to us by Father Ripberger (Schoenstatt Father) as 'a most loyal, faithful and true son of our Father and Founder'. He endured much yet never complained. He gave his self and life for Schoenstatt and we are the most blessed beneficiaries. 'Well done Thou good and faithful servant, enter now and receive the place that is yours'. Thank you, thank you, thank you Father Evans — Rest in Peace.



AN INCREDIBLE PICTURE OF POPE FRANCIS

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE...



**POPE FRANCIS WAS WAVING AT THE
PEOPLE AT SAINT PETER'S SQUARE
WEDNESDAY GENERAL AUDIENCE
WHEN,
INCREDIBLY,
A DOVE PERCHED ON HIS HAND!
MAKES YOU THINK... DOESN'T IT?**

Schoenstatt Spring Dinner Dance



Friday September 6th 2013
6.30 - 12.00 midnight

at
Amherst Function Centre
Cnr Warton Rd & Holmes St, Southern River

Dance to the music of **"HOT HOT HOT"**
Chinese Buffet Dinner provided, B.Y.O. Alcohol
Fun & Games, Door Prize, Tables of 10 available

Tickets \$25

Tickets Available:
Sr Georgina & John Doherty

SCHOENSTATT SHRINE DEVELOPMENT GRAND RAFFLE

The background of the raffle poster features a scenic view of the Schoenstatt Shrine, a large stone building with a tall spire, set against a backdrop of lush green trees. In the foreground, a crowd of people is gathered under a blue canopy tent, suggesting a fair or festival atmosphere.

1st Prize
2 x Return Tickets
to Europe
to the value of \$5,000
OR CASH

\$5
TICKETS

2nd Prize
\$2,000
CASH

PLUS!
10 Consolation Prizes
of Gift Vouchers
Valued at \$100 each



DRAWN 3PM, SUNDAY 03/11/2013
AT OUR SPRING FAIR IN ARMADALE

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM

Sr Georgina Hepp
083 8394 2308 Schoenstatt, Merles
9 Tully Drive, Armadale WA 6110
www.schoenstatt.org.au

Phone (08) 94 5 8888
Fax (08) 94 5 8888
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