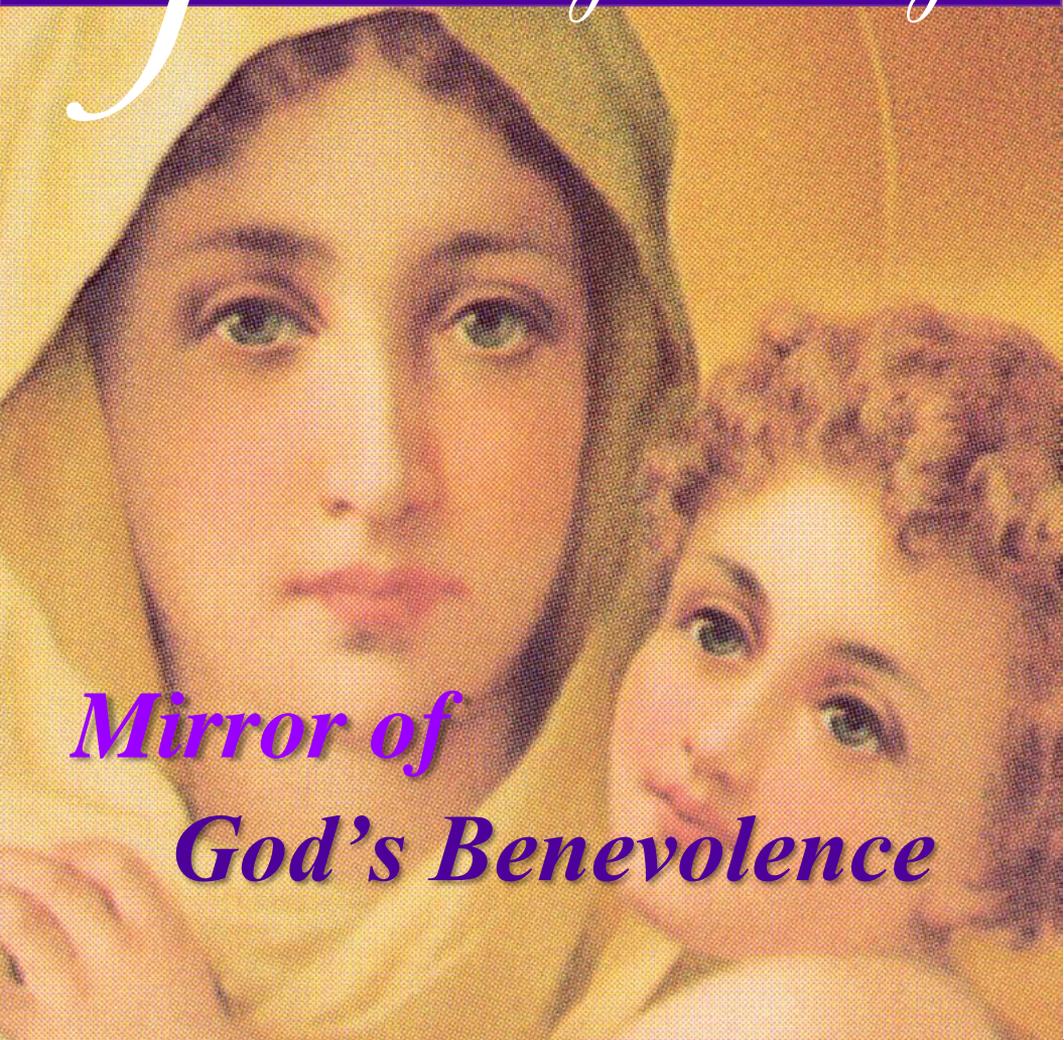


IMPULSES

March 2017

*for Daily Living*



*Mirror of  
God's Benevolence*



Secretariat Father Joseph Kentenich

# Mirror of God's Benevolence

## A Kind Glance

A novel tells the following incident: A pastor in a rural area was visiting a man who was near death and who had not practiced his faith for many years. He wanted to urge him to be anointed. To no avail. The pastor was discouraged when he left the sickroom, but he waited. The nurse went in. After fifteen minutes, she came out and asked the priest to anoint the patient. He was ready now.

Much astonished the priest entered the room and anointed the dying man. But before he left he wanted to know why the patient had changed his mind. He asked, "What did she tell you?" The man answered: "Nothing; she only looked at me."

Merciful eyes can accomplish much more than words and arguments. They reach the depth of the human soul that often has become mysterious and unknown, even to the person himself. Merciful eyes can change others because God's glance is translucent through them.

## The Call for a Kind Heart

If kindness is shown only out of natural appreciation, you soon reach limitations. A student told us about her internship in a home: "Many children and youths here think that they are airheads and often express that they don't know why they are on earth. They think that they are just a burden for all whom they meet."

In how many partnerships do people quickly become "superfluous" because they show human eccentricities, that is, they do not meet all expectations, or somebody else has become more interesting.

To see a person with the eyes of God changes the value judgment: The person is always more than his possibilities or impossibilities. He is the beloved counterpart of God. When a person recognizes that he is embraced by God's merciful eyes, he sees what he really is.

## A Liberating Experience

A woman faced a difficult situation in her life: Her second child was just a few months old when she realized that her husband had a relationship with another woman. She increasingly lost trust in others. Filled with pain and disappointment she often took long walks in nature. Then she discovered a Schoenstatt Shrine. When she entered and looked at the picture of grace she suddenly noticed: Mary is looking at me. "It was an open gaze, but I couldn't stand it. I changed my place – she was still looking at me. But I couldn't leave." She was alone in the shrine for some time before she left. Later, she returned. She brought her pain to the Mother of God and told her everything. Gradually she grew calm. In the shrine one day, she found an invitation to a meeting, and she decided to attend. She became acquainted with other women and felt that they understood her. "I felt that I was alive again and not a nobody... Something within me was freed."

Father Kentenich repeatedly described what this woman felt as a special grace of the Schoenstatt Shrine. We experience the benevolence and mercy of God our Father when we encounter the Mother of God. Her presence heals wounds, dissolves spiritual resentment.

Mary makes God experiential for us as the “father figure, the father figure



positively looking at us, a father figure that cannot help loving us unspeakably much.”

### **To Be Benevolent Because of a Merciful Heart**

As Christians we are called to make God experiential to human beings: You are the beloved counterpart of God – not because of your qualities, but because you are precious for him and valuable. He, after all, created you unique and individual.

The covenant of love with Mary provides the necessary strength to recognize who you really are. It even becomes possible to reach people who do not seem to be open toward us.

Here, the life of Father Kantenich is also a shining testimony. Even at times when he could not speak about God, he proclaimed God’s kindness through the strength of his own brotherliness. When he was incarcerated in the concentration camp in Dachau by the National Socialists he exemplified this. His block warden, Hugo Guttmann, a convinced Communist, talked about Church and priests disparagingly. But he soon noticed that Father Kantenich was different. He observed that Father Kantenich never emptied his bowl but always left something for another prisoner. He said: “I like this man. If I want to give some special food to him, he

refuses and asks me to give it to somebody else. At the time of enormous hunger every prisoner, also every priest, accepted what was given to him secretly. But Father Kantenich said: ‘Give it to somebody who is hungrier.’”

A priest who was imprisoned at the same time and belonged to the Schoenstatt Movement said: “He had open eyes everywhere ... When I was sick with pyrexia and was in bed all alone, Father Kantenich came to me with a cup of soup and very amiably gave it to me. He energetically helped members and non-members of the Schoenstatt Movement at the time of the dysentery epidemic. And he himself suffered from dysentery. I notice it when I later worked with him. Father Kantenich never talked about it. He mastered his sick days quietly.”

Father Kantenich not only modeled what it means to help with a merciful heart – he also pointed out again and again what gave him the strength to do that: the union with the Mother of God, the covenant of love with her.

**To know a mother, to have a mother, and be aware of her activity means to be sheltered.**

J. Kantenich



## *Always only God*

A year from now we will observe the fiftieth anniversary of Father Kentenich's day of death. Church history teaches that fifty years after the death of a founder is a decisive time. Father Kentenich knew about that and therefore he prepared his foundation for it. Fifty years is a time of challenges, but also holds dangers.

A challenge: When – faithful to the basic powers of Schoenstatt – a renewal and stabilization in the spirit of the founder is successful then the post-founder era may even be a time when a deeper contemplation of the message of the founder may begin.

On the other hand, the danger exists that God's mandate to the founder will pale and therefore the attempt is no longer made to take it in vigorously and to realize it enthusiastically. Therefore, it remains a continuous task to study Father Kentenich over and over again. His message is manifold, but ultimately only one: The issue is to proclaim God and to connect us with God.

Shortly after his return home to eternity, an article that served as a kind of obituary for him had the following title:

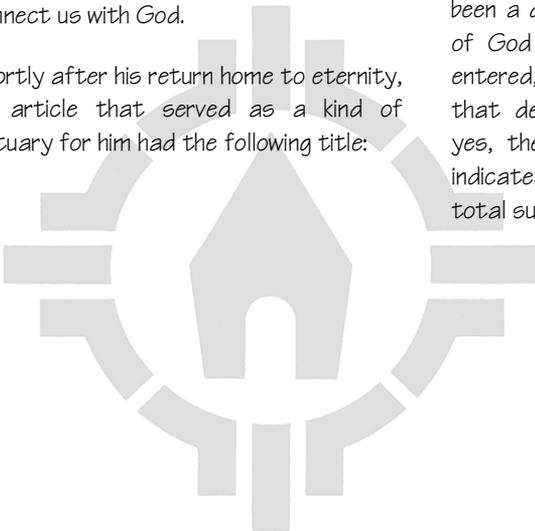
### *Always Only God*

*(At this point, the article can only be given in an abbreviated form.)*

Father Kentenich once remarked how he should be illustrated later on: The ear at the heart of God, the hand at the pulse of the time. Already one of his very first sermons revolved around the idea: *Vox temporis vox Dei* – the voice of the time is the voice of God. If we survey his whole life, we will find that actually only one idea, one line traverses it: GOD! Father Kentenich was animated by a great passion; he was totally gripped and led by it: to detect and fulfill God's wishes – at all times and at any cost. This endeavor was “the soul of his soul”, the compass of his life.

### *Prepared by God*

God prepared the founder for his vocation by giving him an abundant natural endowment and special guidance by grace. Since Father Kentenich's ninth year of life, the secret of his Marian consecration enveloped his personality. This must have been a deep relationship with the Mother of God into which he fully, consciously entered, a graced spiritual experience that decisively influenced his childhood, yes, the entire life of the founder. He indicated once that this consecration was total surrender.



### *Drawn into God's Service*

On July 8, 1910, Father Kentenich was ordained as priest in the chapel of the mission house of the Pallottines in Limburg.



Two days later, he celebrated his first solemn holy Mass. The words that he chose as his program for life are on his ordination holy card: "O my God, unite all minds in truth and all hearts in love."

His superiors first sent him as teacher of Latin to the missionary students in Ehrenbreitstein. There he immediately developed a new way of teaching. Decades later, missionaries whose hair was gray by then, said that these lessons belonged to the most beautiful hours of their schooldays. They had never experienced a class community as at that time.

Father Kolb, the provincial superior, recognized the pedagogical abilities of the new Latin teacher. In October of 1912, Father Kolb appointed him as spiritual director in the new house of studies in Schoenstatt near Vallendar. Father Kentenich encountered a particularly difficult situation among the students. There was a revolutionary atmosphere among them, opposition to superiors, and resistance to the order of the house. The office of spiritual director was new. Within a short period of time the first two spiritual directors had resigned. How would Father Kentenich handle the situation?

Things truly did change. His first talk on October 27, 1912—later called the Pre-Founding Document—already made them take notice. Father Kentenich introduced himself to the boys: "Then came my appointment as spiritual director — entirely without my doing. Hence it must be God's will. I am resigned to it, and I am determined to fulfill my duties to all of you and each of you as perfectly as possible. I now place myself completely at your disposal with all that I am and have: my knowledge and ignorance, my ability and inability, but above all, my heart."

The words that followed made the audience recognize that they were addressed as independent personalities with intrinsic value and invited to free cooperation towards a common goal: "Under the protection of Mary we want to learn to educate ourselves to become firm, free, priestly personalities."

The plan was daring. Contrary to the previous pedagogy of obligations that stressed following rules, Father Kentenich tried to apply pedagogy of freedom, trust, and magnanimity. He wanted to form attitudes that should determine and animate actions from within.

A. K.

*To be continued*



# HE HELPS

## He Helps



### FOUND ACCOMODATIONS ABROAD

My son had great difficulty in finding accommodations to study one semester in Ireland for 3 ½ months. I found recourse in prayer to the Mother of God and Father Kentenich. After one week of intensive search he was able to rent lodgings. On September 8, he traveled there. The housemates were nice and all right. With all my heart I want to thank my intercessors, the Mother of God and Father Kentenich.

G. T., September 2016

### CALM AND SERENITY AS FRUIT OF PRAYER

On May 4, I previously directed a call for help to you. The issue was a fire in our house. It simply was catastrophic: the basement, store, stairwell totally smoke-filled, wiring charred. Our house was uninhabitable and my husband was in the hospital. Thanks to your prayers and the intercession of Father Kentenich I was spiritually and morally supported and gradually could accept the situation. It brought about certain serenity in me. Our youngest son and a daughter took over the dealings with the insurance. There were many delays and it was costly in terms of time. Gradually normality returns.

Heartfelt thanks for your prayers!

C. H., September 2016

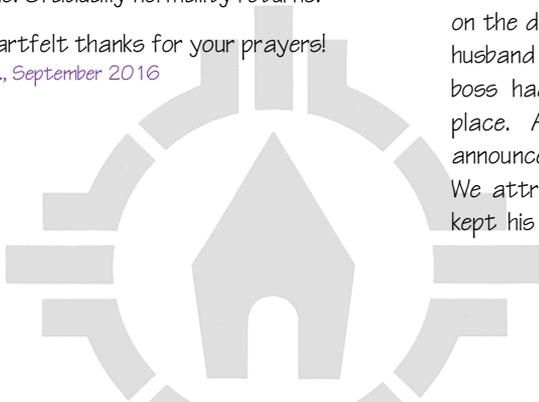
### PERSEVERANCE IN MY PROFESSION

I repeatedly had difficulties to persevere in my profession until retirement. I asked Father Kentenich again and again to help me. I promised him to publish an answer to prayers. In spite of my weakness, and as if by a miracle, I was able to work more than forty years in my profession, and I have now reached retirement. I give thanks to our dear Mother of God and to Father Kentenich for their accompaniment and intercession.

R. F., October 2016

### FOUND PLACE OF WORK

My husband received the news from his boss that he would lose his employment on July 15, 2016. I sent my petition to you and also visited the tomb of Father Kentenich in Vallendar on August 8, 2016. There I also started the novena: "Whatever happens, with Mary", which I prayed for nine weeks. Last weekend, my husband's boss came from Germany to Mexico to visit the company. Yesterday, on the day when I finished the novena, my husband came home with the news that his boss had offered him a different work place. A colleague to whom it was announce a dismissal now was dismissed. We attribute the fact that my husband kept his place of work to the prayer by



which God's mercy was bestowed on us through the intercession of the Mother of God and Father Kentenich, and we ask to publish our thanks to Father Kentenich. We want to contribute to his beatification, thank him, and make him known.

*I.S., Mexico, October 2016*

## TWO SURGERIES

Some friends and I asked the Mother of God and Father Kentenich that the surgery of my son – a lump on the thyroid that should be removed – would go well. My cousin had an aneurysm (the aorta had become thin and was inflated). The chances were 50 – 50. He had to have surgery because with any exertion the place could rupture and any help would be too late. Both had surgery on September 22, 2016. The surgery of my son went well. The lump was not malignant, but filled with fluid. A few days later he was released from the hospital. After a short time of recuperation he feels fine. I say thanks and a heartfelt “may God reward you” to all.

The surgery of my cousin took six hours. Specialists performed a successful operation. The doctors are surprised that my cousin is doing so well; of course, they don't know how much we prayed for him. As a small sign of gratitude, I will pray a novena for both who had surgery. The Mother of God and Father Kentenich always help.

*H.P., October 2016*

## A FOOT SURGERY

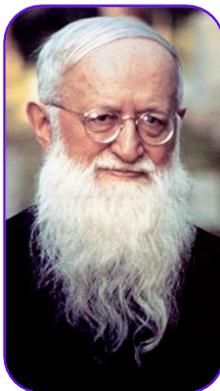
I want to thank our dear Mother of God and Father Kentenich for their intercession with God. In 2014, a large, open ulcer appeared on my foot. I had to have surgery at a specialized hospital. The doctor said immediately: “It seems to be malignant.” He had never seen anything like it. I silently thought of the Mother of God and of Father Kentenich. I pray daily to them. The report was positive and surprised the doctor. I went to Schoenstatt in gratitude.

*G. H., October 2016*



**Father Joseph Kentenich - Founder of the International Schoenstatt Movement** -was born on November 16, 1885, in Gymnich near Cologne and died on September 15, 1968, in the Trinity Church of Berg Schoenstatt, immediately after the celebration of the Holy Mass. He is also buried in this church. His sarcophagus bears the inscription **Dilexit ecclesiam - He loved the church.**

Thousands visit his tomb trusting in his intercession before God. There are increasingly more people around the world who spread his spirituality and ask his intercession.



**September 15, 1968 – September 15, 2018**  
**50th anniversary of Father Kentenich's death**

On September 15, 2017, a

**Kentenich-Year**

will be initiated in Schoenstatt and many other countries the world over.

**You will find more information about this at  
brief at: [schoenstatt.de](http://schoenstatt.de)**

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*Whenever this pamphlet directly or indirectly states that Father Kentenich is a "saint" it is always the expression of private opinion. The decision of the Church is in no way anticipated.*