

IMPULSES *for Daily Living*

01/2017



God's Surprises

Foto: Fotolia



Secretariat Father Joseph Kentenich

Discover God's Surprises

Father Kentenich spoke about God's blessings. The mercy of God becomes experiential for us in many things that he gives to us throughout the day. It is decisive that we develop a feeling for them and that we learn to accept them as "personal" gifts for this.

Surprises of God's love

A young woman together with others was imprisoned in a totalitarian state because of her religious activity. They knew Father Kentenich and had learned from him to believe firmly and simply in God's fatherly love. They also did not lose this faith in the harsh situation of incarceration. To the contrary, they drew strength from it to withstand unbroken the tortures of the communistic authorities.

The woman said later that in prison she had learned the rare art to concentrate on little things and to see them as surprises from God. She said: "I had to go to prison to learn this art. Formerly I had only responded to great things. My life was a matter of course. Everything was obvious." But prison changed her perspective; she learned to discover little things: They saw only gray walls in prison. On one day, she saw a bird. "From then on, I love birds." At another time when she with 900 other prisoners was led around in the yard – only gray walls; gray takes all joy away – she saw a piece of green grass. It was very beautiful. There you learn to appreciate things." There

were no door handles in prison. "From then on, each door handle ... a gift" each door handle 'is for me a sign of freedom."

Tiny trifles. But she said: "Each trifle is love; traces of God's love are everywhere." She added: "Only if we notice the little things can we develop happily."

To be present when God wants to give a gift

A circle of young women met in the evening. They have a special way to enrich one another without much cost: Each one tells what was beautiful for her in recent days. One student said, "For me it is always especially beautiful to look at the play of colors in nature. I live near a lake. Sometimes I simply sit there admiring the play of colors, how the shade of the water changes through the course of the sun, how trees are reflected in the water, how the wind ripples the water. Recently the sun came through after heavy rain and a beautiful rainbow was seen. I was astonished at how much can be done with light and water. I was fascinated: How great the person must be who can make something so wonderful from such simple things. And I looked at the rainbow, and suddenly there awakened in me a great joy for this God who can do something so wonderful from something very simple."

To see where God wants to bestow blessings through us

We experience the love of God not only through blessings he bestows on us. They are often blessings that he is giving through us, that enrich us. Sometimes something that looks like an annoying incident is God's invitation to do something good for others. Here is an experience from a day in December: After a day's outing, two young women were on the return trip by train. Suddenly unrest in their open coach. The ticket inspector explained to an Iraqi woman with three girls that could not use the train because the ticket was made out for the day after tomorrow. In spite of her petition – the ticket had been paid for – the woman had to buy a new ticket. That seemed to be the end of the story. The mother with the three girls exited the car at the same place as the two women. They walked as quickly as they could to the connecting train. Unfortunately, they were one minute late. The train had just left. The two women called home that they had to be picked up. The mother with the three girls came towards them. They found out that they were a refugee family. The woman had spent all her money for the extra ticket she had to buy in the train. They had to travel 2 more hours to their destination. At the train station they also refused to change the date of the existing ticket. Now she needed thirty € more to buy a new ticket. The youngest daughter, about 8 years old, was visibly exhausted and hungry.

The two women did not hesitate. They gave the mother some money to buy something to eat, and gave them some sweets they had in their handbags. The mother and the three girls were very grateful.

When the two women were in the car that brought them home, one of them said: "Do you know now why we had to miss the train?" The other woman understood immediately and both were



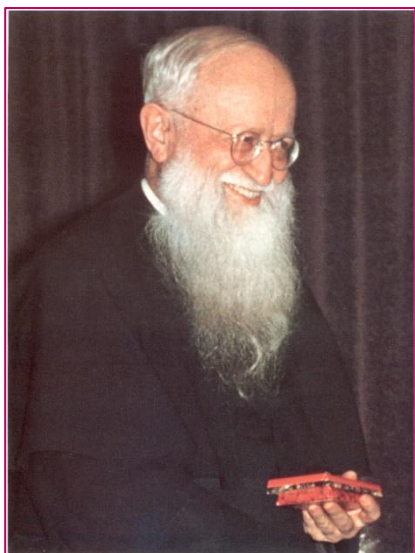
happy about the experience. Whoever does a good deed with an open heart also becomes richer.

Reserves for meager times

If we make it a habit to notice daily at least one blessing we receive from God, then the certainty that God wants the best for us will gradually but also very profoundly enter our feeling for life. After some years our hearts will remember "very many trifles, a very long chain of blessings and mercies" (J. Kantenich). If God then asks something difficult from us these experiences will help us to also trust him now. Let us start still today to notice the small surprises of God's love – with bright joy, with an alert yes.

Gifted by Father Kentenich

During his life time, Father Kentenich was often experienced as the giver of gifts. He gifted abundantly and that in many ways. He knew how to give joy, to enrich



others. To children he gave chocolate and sweets that were available at that moment. For all, whether young or old, he had open ears, listened to them, took individuals in and, if necessary, also gave chocolate or a bottle of wine. Above all he gave to all who came to him his interest, his benevolence, his good advice, his priestly blessing, his prayer, yes, his heart. Whoever had a conversation with Father Kentenich felt enriched. Joy about that was obvious so that others sometimes felt jealous and wished to have the same experience. Somebody said once, "When I have a

conversation with Father Kentenich, I am filled with joy so that I think spontaneously: How much does the world cost?

Some examples from persons who experienced Father Kentenich when he was alive:

A good word for everyone

A blind woman, a member of the Schoenstatt movement, wrote:

On September 9 (1968) I was sitting in the garden of Marienau (house of priests and guests), Schönstatt, sitting on a bench in the sun. When it got too hot, I walked toward the brook that runs through the garden. The gurgling water was my orientation. I stopped for a while, unexpectedly a gentleman addressed me, and we had the following conversation:

"Do you want to take a walk?" "I cannot do that because of my eyes. I am only looking for some shade." "How did you manage life?" "I went to a School for the Blind; I had a profession, and apart from that, I managed my situation." "What profession did you have?" "I was" "Was that possible?" "Yes." "Do you want to participate in the retreat here now?" I answered in the affirmative and asked: "Do you also live in Marienau?" "No, I am only for a few hours here and am saying the rosary here in the garden – I am Father Kentenich." Actually I should also have introduced myself, but I did not think of it. It just slipped out: "Is that so?"

"Yes, and God sent me to you to get you out of here." Father Kentenich led me to a bench in the shade and again talked about my work. I explained that I was 68 years old and had retired from my work. "I am 83 years old." "Seen from this angle, I am still young." "Can you certainly still do something?" "I knit for children who have Hansen's disease." Father Kentenich said: "God gives it to one person this way, to another one differently." He kindly said good bye.

How come that Father Kentenich knows me?

In 1950 I traveled with my recently deceased uncle, his friend and the friend's wife to Schoenstatt to participate in the Pedagogical Schooling that was conducted by Father Kentenich. They did not belong to a Schoenstatt formation but were very religious and were open for Schoenstatt's world of value. The talks were given in the Pilgrims' Church (now Pallotti church) where the three found places in the back. It was doubtful that Father Kentenich would have seen them. But during the recess, Father Kentenich came to the friend of my uncle who then already was very sick, and he talked to him. Neither my uncle nor his wife understood what Father Kentenich said to their friend. But it must have been a deep experience for the man, because afterwards he said in astonishment: How did Father Kentenich get to know me anyway?" His wife said in a letter about twenty years later that they often talked about this encounter. But her husband

took Father Kentenich's words to eternity.

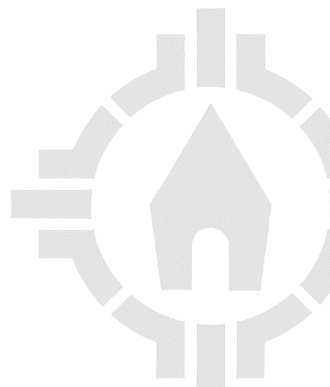
That is how we experienced him

The following happened to me: For thirteen years I had heard much about Father Kentenich and also read about him. I also had seen picture of him. But I did not know him personally. It seemed to me that he was a great man; he looked very serious on the pictures. Therefore it was subconsciously my basic attitude: He is an important personality with a great mission. I am unimportant next to him; I am nobody.

When I met him after his exile, what a joyful surprise!

This great person had a heart; he loved; he had empathy, he can also take little things, little concerns into his heart – he can also be joyful. It dawned on me how wonderfully great that was: On one hand, to have a great mission, standing in divine light, and on the other hand: to be open for people, for all their different needs and concerns that he took in throughout the day ...

Testimonies in : "We look at him – encounters with Father Kentenich"



He Helps

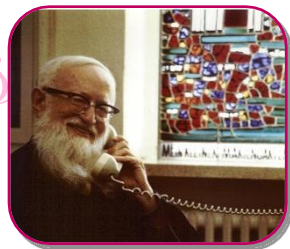
HE HELPS

A MIRACLE OF TRANSFORMATION

Our son, twenty years old, dropped his apprenticeship as industrial technician after 1 ½ years. He had met the wrong kind of friends. For three months we did not know where he was. Then he returned. He took a job working in the woods and for seasonal work in winter that paid 3.50 € per hour. Then an acquaintance gave him work but could not keep him. Then he had no motivation to look for work. He used our car without asking, asked for money from us, and was totally closed to us.

Through a pilgrimage to Schoenstatt I got to know a Sister of Mary who from then on gave me novenas to Father Kentenich and also prayed the novenas with me. Everything seemed to be dismal. Our son refused to help in any way. He spent much time in his room or he disappeared somewhere.

In August of 2015, there was a sudden change. He wrote some applications, but received only refusals. Finally he decided to finish his studies. He did not shy away from taking classes where he, at age 23, was by far the oldest. Now he studies and brings good grades home. He is satisfied with a small amount of spending money. The situation in school suggested enrolling in a private school. As parents,



we offered it to him; we would have had to pay 100.00 € per month. He refused and wanted to continue. Now he also helps us again, is diligent and modest and took up contact with a former girlfriend. He wants to regain her love by his diligence and benevolence.

In spring / summer he has his final tests that we entrust again to the intercession of Father Kentenich. We entrust our petition to him that his love will also be returned and that his partnership will last all through life.

We parents have prayed and sacrificed much to win our son over. We believe that the transformation is taking place on the intercession of Father Kentenich. We can only thank and rejoice because of this gift.

May the Mother of God of Schoenstatt and Father Kentenich answer the petitions of many people and grant us an unshakable confidence and faith in their intercession and help. *(C.S. March 2016)*

APPLICANT FOR A PLACE AT THE UNIVERSITY

I want to tell you that my daughter's application for a place at the university was granted, although only a few places were available and the outlook was not good. May God continue to hold his protecting hand over her. Thank you, Father Kentenich and Mother of God that you have shown yourselves as intercessors. *(I.T., April 2016)*

PROFESSIONAL

I have a special reason to thank: my grand daughter got the work place she wanted, a place in a large hotel in Switzerland. We say: That was Divine Providence. For a long time already I have taken all my concerns to Father Kentenich. I repeatedly tell them to him, and thus I could again experience his help. We have nine grandchildren and we entrust all of them to Father Kentenich. *(F.S., May 2016)*

FINANCIAL HELP

We were really in bad shape financially. Because I did not see any way out, I decided to go to Father Kentenich. I said to him: "Please, understand me, a nine-day novena is too long in my distress. I ask you to understand that I pray only the three-day novena."

I became calm and serene when I prayed. At the end of the third day I looked into the newspaper that I often just throw away. A 'help needed' advertisement drew my attention. I showed it to my

husband. Although he was not convinced that he could get the place he called the company. He was asked to come for an interview on the next day. My husband had all the pre-suppositions for the job. My husband was hired and is still working for this company. We are very grateful for the help of Father Kentenich and the dear Mother of God. *(R.D., May 2016)*

IN MULTIPLE ILLNESSES

The Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt and Father Kentenich have helped me and my family wonderfully.

First my husband had a heart infarct; then I fractured my vertebrae when I fell, then our son who is sick for many years also got pneumonia.

In this situation I prayed devoutly to Father Kentenich. He helped miraculously. Thank you; thank you. All are well again.

I pray that he will be soon canonized. *(E.E., May 2916)*

AS COMPANION

A big thank you that we always may have Father Kentenich as companion. Otherwise we would not master it with our children.

In gratitude I am sending a gift of money for his canonization *(M. and W., Juli 2016)*



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A Good Word

For the new Year:

"In his omnipotence God will find ways to lead me where he wants me to be.

I need only enough light from above to see the next step. I am sheltered. My life plan is prepared and will be carried out by God. That gives me sovereign calm and security.

Father Joseph Kentenich

Foto: Fotolia

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.

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