

IMPULSE

4/2019

for Daily Living



Father Kentenich -
Educator with heart and Passion



Secretariat Father Joseph Kentenich

“Joseph Kentenich

A Life on the Edge of the Volcano”

Reading Sample 2 **Educator with Heart and Passion**

After all external and internal difficulties, the day of Joseph Kentenich's ordination to the priesthood was July 8, 1910 – the fulfillment of an ardently longed for, hard-won in all directions – dream of a lifetime. The day was also a very special highlight of his life. ... Seen from the outside, it was inconspicuous. The Pallottine Bishop, Heinrich Vieter, Apostolic Vicar in Cameroon and on home leave, ordained the eight candidates to the priesthood in the house chapel of the Limburg mission center that was filled with so many guests that they found just enough places. Joseph's mother had given her son a list of suggestions as to whom he might want to invite, and he had chosen some relatives, his vacation friend and second cousin, Peter Hessler with his father and, of course, Father Savels. The grandmother had unfortunately died a year before, as well as Aunt Sibilla, the eldest sister of his mother. The

relatives were impressed by the great modern building, the spacious premises, which even were illuminated with electric light – which they didn't even have at home.

And then, of course, the ordination itself! It touched his mother deeply when she saw the young men, including her Joseph, lying stretched out on the floor.

“Adsum! Here I am, I am ready,” they heard him answer clearly. Josef's mother and his cousin Henriette stayed in Limburg a whole week, especially because the celebration of Joseph's first holy Mass took place two days later. They enjoyed their time with him. What was going on inside him could hardly be perceived. Henriette was the first one who noticed a change in Joseph. Admittedly he looked just as serious and thin exteriorly as he used to. But even though he was newly ordained, he radiated a kind of priestly fatherliness that gave her the courage to go to confession to him a few



With Bishop Vieter on the day of ordination. Father Kentenich on the far right of the picture.

weeks later. She entrusted something very personal to him, and although he was five years younger, she experienced a maturity and empathy in him that made it easy for her to speak freely. For a long time, she had dragged this mental burden around with her, but she found no priest to whom she could have said it openly. In her thank-you letter to her "brotherly" cousin, she wrote: "Even if I'm not quite calm yet, you have helped me a great deal and were able to comfort me." Henriette thought of how kindly and lovingly he had responded to everything, quite differently from many priests she knew. Of course, she didn't tell her aunt why she went to Limburg and what made her so happy. The young priest simply understood human weaknesses and boundary experiences. He knew enough about the inner distress of an exaggerated fear of sin. This empathy and understanding had already shown in his exam papers in which the students should debate and judge moral-theological cases for later confessional practice.

After his ordination, the new priest helped out on Sundays in parishes across the Hunsrück area up and down the Rhine, even though his studies were still not finished. After ordination, he had another year of study ahead of him. His previous studies on educational and theological knowledge had been extraordinarily profitable, but the actual conclusion was not until the summer of 1911. Until then, he again enjoyed the lectures of Father Franz Berendt, who was just as committed to topics of Marxism as to other socio-political topics including the current women's issue. The lectures

of this Pallottine, who was impartial and knowledgeable of many modern currents, was somehow liberating for Joseph Kentenich.

With great zeal, the young priest prepared his sermons for the various parishes as he developed certain preferences: the Eucharist with more frequent reception of Holy Communion; mission communities like Marian sodalities; self-education; and, of course, Mary. Whether in prison, in the hospital, or in parish churches of the Eifel or along the Mosel or Rhine Rivers, whether in Young Women's Associations or religious orders, he always preached simply, understandably, and realistically. He tried to adapt as much as possible to the listeners and their situations. It was particularly important to him to try to connect with one central value: love. Even if he used conventional terminology, he connected it with various thoughts and intentions. In proclaiming the faith, he suddenly experienced himself as confident and secure. Because of the experience of his own serious doubts of faith, he became an enthusiastic missionary of faith and love. He was a



pastor with heart and soul and sought –like his favorite saint, Francis de Sales – to address precisely the people that he had in front of him, to convince them through clear arguments and human empathy, not by thundering threatening sermons. He presented theological content in simple images and made it easier to understand. When hearing confessions on Saturdays, he especially liked to see those who came rarely, who, as he later jokingly told his students, "came along, heavily laden with old junk that seemed to make the confessional break." He made it a practice not to go to or leave any village without a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in the church.

When he completed his studies and because his health wasn't at its best, the superiors decided not to send him to Africa. In addition, due to concerns prior to his perpetual profession, it was decided that in spite of his talents by no means send him to a university for further study. However, his pedagogical bent had not escaped attention. So, he was sent to Ehrenbreitstein as a Latin and German teacher for their vocations. At the same time, he should continue to help out in the parishes of the area.

Father Kentenich, just 25 years old, gathered his few belongings and moved into his new quarters below the fortress on the Rhine. In one of the two rear courtyard buildings, he took over as classroom teacher for the third course and from the beginning began to use new pedagogical methods. Maybe it was his own experiences that motivated him, perhaps also everything that he took in wherever opportunity presented itself, since he had read and absorbed pedagogical

literature. But perhaps he was born with it: the ability to lead people, to help them develop their personal growth, especially young people. One thing was clear, to him even before he started his first lesson: "I am more than just their teacher, I'm an educator too."

Based on this conviction, he designed a list of personal intentions and principles for his teaching. He realized very soon that he could be an educator for the boys only if he understood the evolution of the times and if he was able to gain a deeper insight into their inner spiritual condition. During his first teaching exercises, not least because of his own early experiences, it became ever clearer to him: People today must be educated differently, find their way to God and to themselves differently.

He stood at his desk before the students for the first time and welcomed them in a friendly way and with a mischievous smile.

The otherwise serious corners of his mouth revealed a smile: "We want to work together now. I'll ask a lot of you. But you may also ask the utmost of me. And so, I'm sure we'll become good friends this year." The boys liked the partnership style. Soon they were enthusiastic about his way of teaching. So with time a special sympathy developed for "the new guy" who always wore the "berretta a little bit bold on the back of the head," but also walked along with a buoyant and solid step.

When they enthusiastically told about their Latin or German lessons at recess or during a hike, the students of the other classes look

almost jealous. As soon as they saw the young Father in the hallway or going across the courtyard, a peculiar change took place in them: eagerness to succeed on the high bar or on the gymnastic bar increased, jumps became higher and further, sporting exercises more elastic. The boys appreciated the warm and natural way he responded to them, and he obviously made an effort, "not to have favorites." He included that in the series of his resolutions. He took his humor along to Ehrenbreitstein as well as the tendency to single out one or the other student, to tease or kid him, and so in his diary-like notes he admonished himself to be more "dignified, serious." "Climb down to them, but in such a way that you're still above them!"

When he gave tests, the young teacher left the classroom to build the students' confidence and promote their "moral independence."

By reducing control and supervision, he awakened in return the boys' decisions:

No one wanted to disappoint the trust given to them. There really wasn't any cheating.

Father Kolb, who in the meantime had become provincial superior, didn't miss the opportunity to observe the young priest's teaching in Ehrenbreitstein. He sat in the back of the classroom during exciting hours, when the teacher invited remarkably independent thinking, a kind of "contest of the mind" and at the same time promoted genuine solidarity in the students. In this way Father Kentenich fostered a climate of reciprocal trust. Obviously, he

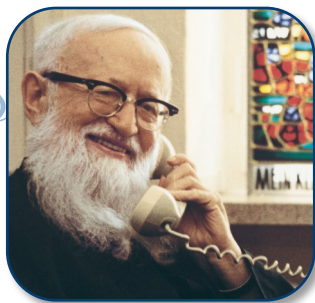


succeeded in mobilizing the inner strength of the boys and at the same time the response of each person individually.

Source:
Dorothea Schlickman
JOSEPH KENTENICH
A LIFE ON THE EDGE OF THE VOLCANO



He Helps



Place to Study

One of my children applied for admission at a university along with a workplace. The situation was like this: With over 3000 applicants, the chance of a favorable outcome was very slim. During the time of application, of the interview, and the entrance tests, I prayed to Father Kentenich all the time. May he intervene if it was the right thing for my child. It's hard to believe: My daughter passed everything with top marks and was accepted. A thousand thanks, Father Kentenich. Without you it would have been impossible.

M. G., January 2019

Help with Studies

It wasn't easy for our son to study. Often there were difficult situations. In my distress I repeatedly prayed to Father Kentenich and asked the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary for their prayers. Today, I would like to inform you that our son received his bachelor's degree. Many thanks for your help!

M. Z., February 2019

Apprenticeship Place

My daughter was applying for an apprenticeship as an industrial clerk. It was her greatest wish to get a job with a big company nearby. There were many applicants for the position and a strict selection procedure. In this concern I prayed fervently to Father Kentenich and to the Blessed Mother. With great gratitude I would now like to inform you that among the many applicants my daughter received the position. From the bottom of my heart I want to say thank you. I'm convinced that Father Kentenich and our dear Blessed Mother helped.

S. F., February 2019

Got Back What Was Lost

A Sister of Mary once told me: "I go to Father Kentenich with everything I need. You should try it sometime." Skeptically, I gave it a try because after all, an answer to prayer isn't a commercial business, but a gift of mercy. In the following situation I sent a quick prayer to Father Kentenich: It was Monday morning. I had just returned from a weekend trip and when I went shopping, I noticed I didn't have a credit card in my wallet. Feverishly, I was wondering where to find the credit card and realized that the last time I used it was four days ago. It was at a local grocery store. I drove to the wholesale market where I used it. I inquired with a saleswoman whether my credit card had been found. The head of the department took me with her to the office, opened the vault and gave me my credit card with reassuring words. Gratefully I took it and sent a prayer to heaven: "Yes, it's true, you really are helping."

M. L., January 2019

Multiple Help

I have been connected with Father Kentenich for 45 years. In innumerable personal hardships I was allowed to experience his help again and again, even when I asked for help for those who were entrusted to me. Since March 2018, he has helped me during an extraordinarily serious illness. Months before the final diagnosis was made, I felt very ill and weak so I asked Father Kentenich to stand by me. The borderline experience I had to go through made me discouraged and helpless. Time and again I entrusted myself to Father

Kentenich and asked him to implore God for me in this serious crisis. I'm convinced that I could bear and accept my illness and the surgery in April 2018 due to this trust in him. I even overcame the late effects of this surgery with the guidance of Father Kentenich and Our Lady. Special thanks that I was spared from receiving an artificial anus. It wasn't easy for me to decide for subsequent chemotherapy because I felt very weighed down with worries about my health and I was afraid of the side effects. With Father Kentenich's help I then decided on the course of therapy and also communicated this to the physicians. This strength was also given to me by him and the Blessed Mother of Schoenstatt. The second cancer, too, which pathologists had established after surgery was then diagnosed without findings. This is what I personally consider a miracle, because I trusted that no more tumors would be detected, and no further surgery would be necessary. In deep gratitude that I'm tumor-free and can live so positively with my illness, I want you to know that I'm sure that the prayers of so many dear people helped that the surgery was successful and that it brought recovery. I have already thanked Father Kentenich in many ways at his place of death. There I feel that heaven is near.

M. H., February 2019

Shopping

I was in great need and went shopping for a particular item. I looked everywhere in the store and asked several employees, to no avail. I asked Father Kentenich and told him how important it was for me to obtain this particular item. When I went to the checkout counter to pay for my other purchases, the item was there on the close out sale rack. Thank you Father Kentenich.

CR, OH, 2019

Wish for Special Death Day

A member of our family was dying, and it was always her wish to die on a Marian feastday and to have all her children there. As she lay in hospice, I asked Father

Kentenich once again to hear this often-repeated prayer of hers. One son couldn't get a flight in until later the next day. The dying member "waited" for him and with all her children around her, she peacefully went home on her favorite Marian feastday: the Feast of the Assumption.

KF, TX, 2019

Studying

I wanted to take a necessary class for the final credits I needed to finish my studies. However, the highly demanded class was already full. I asked Father Kentenich that someone might drop the class within the first days so that I could still get in and it happened! Thank you, Father Kentenich.

SB, WI, 2019

A Flat Tire

I was running late for work and asked Father Kentenich to help me get there on time. My boss at work doesn't have much tolerance for tardiness. Driving to work I got a flat tire! Now the pressure really was on. I asked Father Kentenich for help and pulled off to the side of the road. Someone stopped immediately to help and was so quick about it that I just made it on time for work.

SS, WI, 2019

To Be Able to Keep Her Home

Herewith I would like to give thanks to the Blessed Mother and Father Kentenich and let you know, that my daughter, after a divorce, can live with the three children in the house. After many novenas our prayer was answered. There were also debts on the house. After our prayer everything was settled. That was not a matter-of-course. Thank you!

L., February 2019

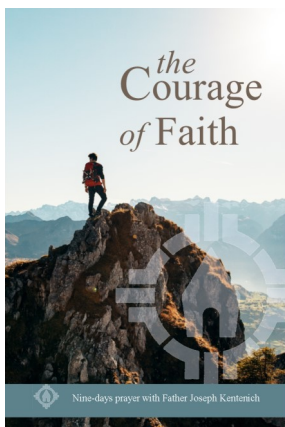
Father Joseph Kentenich

- Founder of the International Schoenstatt Movement -

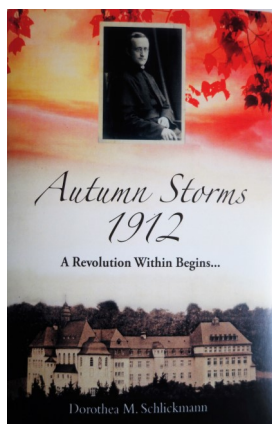
was born on November 16, 1885, in Gymnich near Cologne and died on September 15, 1968, in the Trinity Church of Berg Schoenstatt, immediately after the celebration of the Holy Mass. He is also buried in this church. His sarcophagus bears the inscription ***Dilexit ecclesiam - He loved the church.***

The **Secretariat Father Josef Kentenich** distributes information about Father Kentenich, to those who are acquainted with Schoenstatt' spirituality and pray on his intercession. You will be able to find more information and novenas from Fr. Kentenich in our centers.

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*Translated from the German
by Sr. Marihedwig Heisig

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.