

# IMPULSE

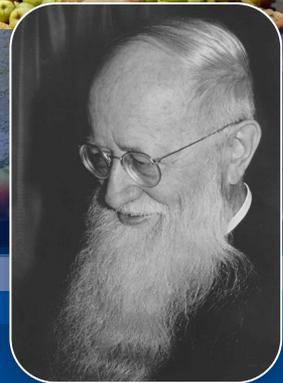
4|2021

## *for Daily Living*



Fotos: M. M. Zell, J. Neuenhofer

## *Gratitude - The Key to Happiness*



Secretariat  
Father Joseph Kentenich

# Gratitude - The Key to Happiness

"Grateful people are happy people," goes a proverb. Every year, the celebration of Thanksgiving invites us to be grateful. Many churches decorate with the harvests of field and garden. In Schoenstatt, too, such decorations in the shrines and chapels can be admired. These symbols of the harvest are at the same time a reminder of all the other good gifts we have received in the course of the year.

However – as some will ask in view of the past few months – can we really be thankful from deep within in the face of the problems we have experienced this year through pandemic, natural disasters, terror, and violence?

Yes, it's true that our lives always include the difficult experiences. In a certain way, our earth remains a "vale of tears," as was often said in the past. That is a fact.

But it's equally true that everyone who has learned to discover the small and large gifts that each day holds, carries a key to happiness in his pocket, and knows how to gratefully rejoice in them.

Not losing sight of the good, even in the midst of difficulties, is a Christian art of living, a source of strength and joy.

Holy Scripture reports that the apostle Paul and his companion Silas rejoiced when they were beaten with

rods and thrown into prison. Then it says: "About midnight, while Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns as the prisoners listened..." (Acts 16:25) They were able to praise and give thanks because they felt God's nearness and love, even in this emergency situation.

Let's also think of Father Kentenich: Shortly after his liberation from the Dachau concentration camp, he amazingly tells his listeners: "What moves our hearts? Gratitude! ... Gratitude is the basic attitude of Christianity, because God's love and power has revealed itself very wonderfully." (April 20, 1945) In the midst of the cruelties of the concentration camp, he experienced God's protection and the care of the Blessed Mother in many ways – even

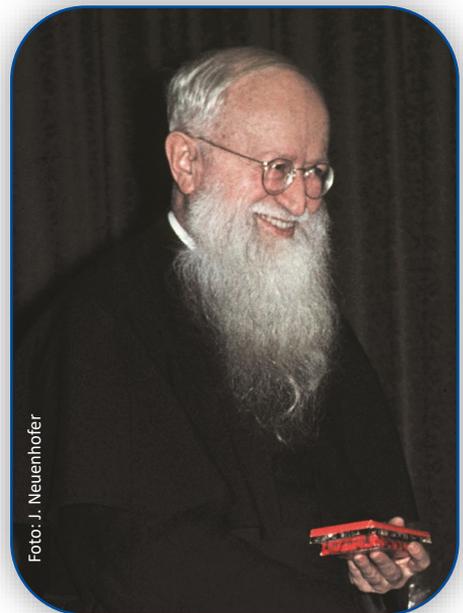


Foto: J. Neuenhofer

when it was only a pair of wooden shoes or an old coat that someone brought him when the cold became unbearable. For everything, he gave thanks from the bottom of his heart.

Even during the severe disasters that we are now experiencing, there are moments of gratitude, of happiness. For instance, a man from Ahrweiler, Germany experienced such a moment during the tragedy. He had been missing his wedding ring since the night of the flood and then found it again in the mud a few meters away from his house. In the midst of the garbage and dirt, his wife slipped his wedding ring on his finger again, just like the day they took their vows. With a quivering voice he says: "I thank the Lord that I have such a wife! With her I will make it, we will all make it, we won't sink, we won't end up in the mud!"

Sometimes God makes things difficult for us. But he doesn't abandon us. He gives us rays of hope. He points us to what is really important.

***"Our lives become bright when you learn to give thanks for the smallest thing."***

*Friedrich von Bodelschwingh*

### ***Father Kentenich invites us to ask:***

*"How much God has given me as Creator, as Father, as Sustainer, and Governor of the world! What am I without him!*

*Doesn't a healthy heart have to be driven by its own accord to engage repeatedly in acts of gratitude?*

*Let us look at the life of the Savior. How often did the Savior thank the Heavenly Father! If we ask the Liturgy and Holy Scripture – how often are we called upon to give thanks again and again!*

*As such, it's simply the right thing to do to repeatedly say thank you, especially in the holy Eucharist and through the holy Eucharist."*

### **Suggestions for our lives:**

- *Each evening, try to discover at least one good gift from God and give thanks for it.*
- *Be more attentive to the good that others do for me and gladly express a thank you. Give others such small moments of happiness.*
- *Reflect: Were there difficult situations that, in retrospect, have had a positive effect after all? I matured internally, I grew in the face of challenges, I learned something new, an unexpected solution emerged ... Can I also give thanks for that?*

## *Always Grateful – Father Joseph Kentenich*

Those who met Father Kentenich during his lifetime experienced his great gratitude. For every small gift, for every service, no matter how small, that was given to him and his work, he expressed his gratitude. His thanks came from the bottom of his heart. Often, he spontaneously looked for a gift in return. He gave generously. He gave the best and most beautiful first. He made many visitors happy with this.

Father indeed received many gifts. They didn't last long with him. He gave many of them to others. But not just superficially. Always with deliberation. He received each gift with joy. He appreciated the giver and the gift and always saw the symbolic value of a gift behind its intrinsic value. And just as he himself showed his gratitude, he also encouraged others to give thanks for attentions and to express this through a visible or spiritual gift.

### *Testimonies about him illustrate his gratitude:*

When Father Kentenich visited Brazil in 1947, he traveled with a Roman diplomatic passport from the Holy See because simple passports were not yet available. I met him at the airport in Rio de Janeiro and traveled with him to Porto Alegre, also by plane. In Porto Alegre we were guests of the Sisters of Providence.

While we were being served dinner there, the phone rang and I was called

by the port police. I was told that the gentleman I had picked up had lost his wallet on the plane and that I should ask him about it. Quite dismayed, I said, "Father, you lost your wallet!" "That's not possible," he replied in surprise, but quickly checked all the pockets – and indeed the wallet was missing.

I confirmed it through the phone. After fifteen minutes, the port police arrived and handed over the wallet with the money and the precious diplomatic passport.

Father had indescribable joy at the Blessed Mother's concern and kept saying, "Just think, if I would have lost the passport! What should I have done! But Our Lady always takes care." I had to tip the men, who had handed everything over so faithfully, quite well and translate Father's heartfelt words of thanks.

I briefly told them who Father was, that he had been in the Dachau concentration camp and was now on a world tour. The men were quite moved by his personality and asked for a photo.

Father Kentenich always marveled at how the Blessed Mother took care of everything.



Once again, the final exams were approaching at the Pedagogical College in Koblenz. The students were extremely excited because it

was said that this time the exam would be especially difficult. One of the students, in her distress, asked another if she knew of a Marian shrine nearby; she wanted to make a pilgrimage. "Yes, there's one near Vallendar. I'll go with you." So, the day before the exam, the two went on pilgrimage to the Schoenstatt Shrine. It seems that an event had just ended there. A priest with a white beard also came out of the shrine. He looked at both of them so kindly that they spontaneously approached him, lamented their great distress concerning the exam, and asked him to pray for them. Then he replied, "Go in there to the Blessed Mother and give thanks for passing your exams well!"

Puzzled by this strange answer, but also already noticeably relieved, the two followed the advice. The next day, in the midst of great excitement, they were so calm and serene that everyone was amazed, and their exam was indeed good. Later, in a photograph, one of them recognized the priest to whom they had spoken. It was Father Kentenich.

When Father Kentenich was waiting at the prison gate in Koblenz for transport to Dachau on March 9, 1942, he didn't refrain from personally thanking the prison guards he met there for all their work and effort. The guards had probably never experienced anything like it.

Father Josef Fischer, who was in

Dachau concentration camp with Father Kentenich, once said that in Dachau the latter made it a point to write, out of gratitude, a verse or a poem for the sender of all the letters, messages and parcels he received. During the week, Father Fischer had to write down all the names of those who had sent parcels, letters, or messages to Father Kentenich. Sunday was then writing Sunday, and he had all the names read to him. He took the respective person completely into himself and in gratitude for all the attentions received, he dictated to his scribes a verse or a poem very appropriate for the person in question. In this way Father wrote and gave away many hundreds of poems.

Father Kentenich's gratitude wasn't just for the people. He expressly addressed it to the Triune God and to the Blessed Mother, his covenant partner. It was a great concern for him to inspire others to be grateful as well. In the Dachau concentration camp, an environment that didn't really encourage thanksgiving, he formulated a prayer of thanksgiving that is still prayed with joy today:

*For everything, yes everything, let me give heartfelt thanks, clinging to you, Mother, with tender love. What would have become of us without you and your motherly care.*

*Because you delivered us from great need and bound us to yourself in faithful love, I will give you thanks, be grateful evermore, and dedicate myself to you with undivided love.*

*Sr. M. Adele Gertsen*

# He Helps

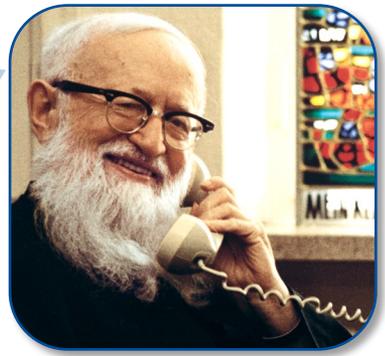
## IN SICKNESS

My son-in-law was suffering from leukemia. He is now recovered after a stem cell transplant and much prayer of novenas for the intercession of Father Kentenich. We are very grateful!

*N. W., April 2021*

My sister had an ailing hand. She could hardly move it. So, she made a pilgrimage to Schoenstatt and prayed at the tomb of Father Kentenich. With great confidence she placed her hand on the sarcophagus. Already on the bus ride home, she noticed that the pain subsided and she could use her hand again. We thank Father Kentenich for this help through his intercession. *H., May 2021*

Years ago, I had a serious intestinal disease. I was told that it was incurable. However, after a long intensive treatment of two years, it was likely cured. Now, after a long period of time, the very severe pain returned again. It seemed as if the disease had broken out again. I took refuge in Father Kentenich, and he didn't



disappoint me. Soon the pains were gone. They didn't come back again.

*M. R., May 2021*

Through the intercession of Father Kentenich, within a week our daughter received a good place for therapy in a youth ward. The disease of anorexia increased by 60% due to the Corona pandemic. Accordingly, the waiting time for a place for therapy was actually long and we were therefore in great concern. On Wednesday our daughter was allowed to have a look at the ward and one week later, as if by a miracle, she already was accepted. She is lovingly cared for. The teenagers feel very comfortable in this clinic. We can't say *thank you* enough.

*N. N., June 2021*

A mother was suddenly diagnosed with cancer and needed a major surgery. We prayed to Father Kentenich and the surgery went

surprisingly well and the cancer is in remission. Thank you, Father Kentenich!

*M. C., WI*

Due to skin cancer treatment, I had to put a special ointment on my right cheek every day for five weeks. This treatment disfigured my face with large, red, and scaly patches. When I was so disfigured and this wouldn't heal, my wife and I began to intensely pray the novena *Courage of Faith*, trusting in the intercession of Father Kentenich. By the end of the novena, the thick scaly lichen fell off and according to the dermatologist, the damaged skin will soon return to normal.

*M. K., July 2021*

In early October 2020, I was informed by my doctor that I had a large mass on my liver that I had to have checked out ASAP. My father had passed away from liver cancer some years earlier just two months after getting his diagnosis...I can honestly say that in all my life I have never prayed so fervently for God's intercession for my health. A week later my doctor informed me that the cyst on my liver was benign. I believe I am healthy today through Father Kentenich's intercession on my behalf.

*M. H., Texas*

A friend was very sick due to Covid 19. I immediately turned to Father Kentenich in praying for her and after a week she could return to her family and is doing remarkably well.

*N.P., Texas*

## IN MARITAL PROBLEMS

I would like to thank you very much for your prayers. May God reward you!

At the beginning of last year my son was in a serious marriage crisis, during which I asked for your prayers. In the meantime, the relationship has strengthened again. Both of them are making plans for the future together again. I am very grateful that everything has turned out well again. It is a good thing that we have the dear Blessed Mother and Father Kentenich.

*C. N., April 2021*

One of the mothers from a Schoenstatt group is very sick and bound to bed. The daughter was looking for help since the lady who took care of her mother died unexpectedly. We prayed to Father Kentenich and found someone to be able to take the job. Thank you, Father Kentenich.

*WI, July 2021*

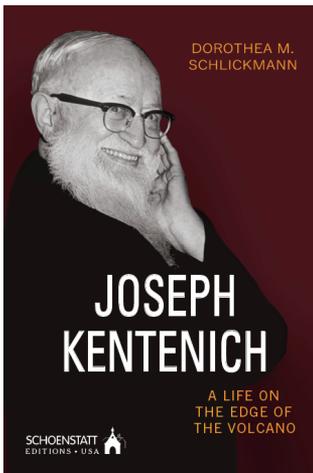
## Father Joseph Kentenich

- Founder of the International Schoenstatt Movement -

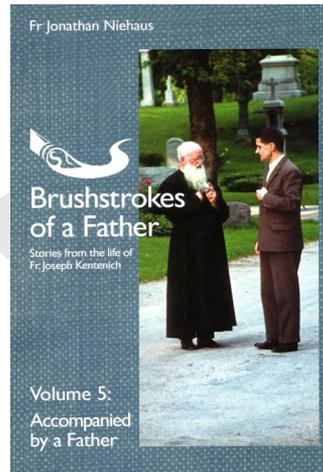
was born on November 16, 1885, in Gymnich near Cologne and died on September 15, 1968, in the Trinity Church of Berg Schoenstatt, immediately after the celebration of the Holy Mass. He is also buried in this church. His sarcophagus bears the inscription **Dilexit ecclesiam - He loved the church.**

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.

### Request the new publications:



**A Life on the Edge  
of the Volcano**



**Brushstrokes of a  
Father #5**

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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.