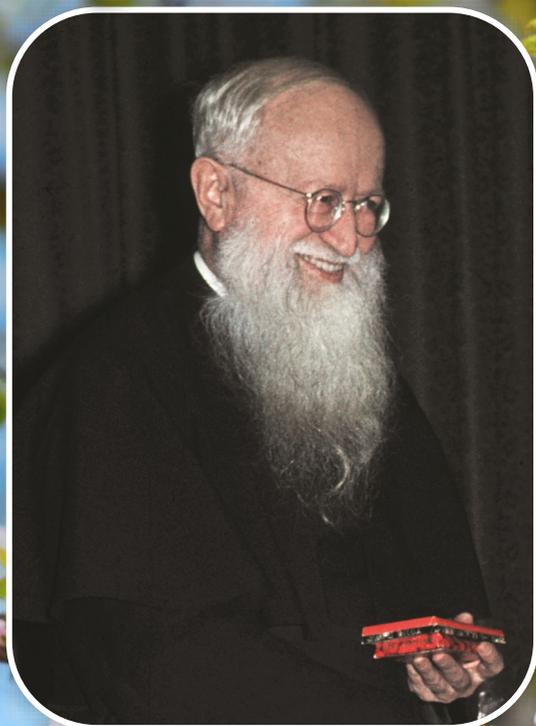


IMPULSES

2/2018

for Daily Living



*Father Kentenich –
One who enables us
to love*



Secretariat Father Joseph Kentenich

Father Kentenich – One who enables us to love

To love unconditionally

On October 20, 2015, the Islamic writer Navid Kermani received the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade for his book: “Incredible Astonishment about Christianity”. His astonishment was especially directed to a characteristic of Christians: their unconditional love. M. Kermani, a staunch Muslim, discovered love that does not expect return service or impose conditions: if you are, think, act like this, if you do this or that, if you please me or do something for me, then I will love you, otherwise not. Christians seem to learn from the example of their Master what it means to love. HE who is from God testified how much “God is love” and what love actually includes.

Was it this fullness of life that prompted an academic to write into her diary after meeting Father

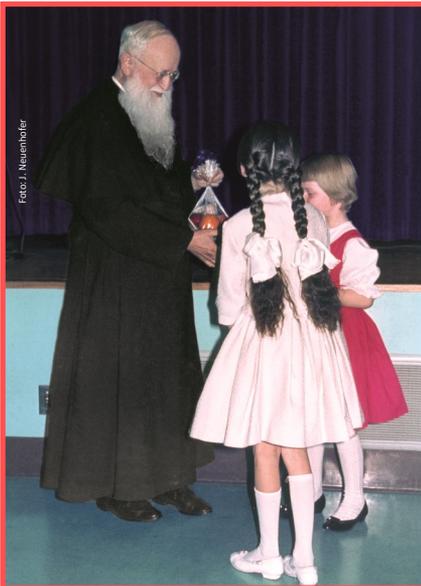
Kentenich for the first time: “How can you achieve such love for fellow human beings?” This question suggests how much an encounter with him awakened the wish in her: That is how I would like to be able to love! Actually, what were the characteristics of his love that astonished so many kinds of people? And how did he capacitate others to grow into such a love?

“What was it that made him attractive? Why did we like to go to him?” I asked this question of an elderly couple that had experienced Father Kentenich in Milwaukee. The spontaneous answer of Mr. Horn, the husband, was: “He gave us the feeling that in this world we were most important!” And another witness of that time period added just as spontaneously: “And thereby you felt that God really loved you!”

To discover gold

Father Kentenich had space in his heart to take in the most different persons. Without knowing how much he thereby gave witness of himself he said in a talk: “The more selfless I am, the more detached from self, the more open I will be for the value of the other person, for the noble and fine in the other person.”

He bore in himself the fullness of life and strength of love that cannot be explained in a purely natural way. He openly admitted when asked when he had time to pray with so many visitors throughout the day: “I adore God in souls!” For him they were always original souls with a God-given mission, original ideas of God,



not carbon copies. Therefore he could affirm all kinds. Looking at his person is not an end in itself, like arousing admiration, but it could stimulate us: How is it with me? Am I able to deal well with different types? Father Kentenich pointed out: “What we see as a bad habit in others is often nothing but a misunderstood distinctiveness.”

When companions in the concentration camp in Dachau complained about a confrere, he remarked with a smile: “Does he not have a nice way of acting?” By this he invited his companions to find a way to the peculiarity of the other, to discover the gold in the other person. He became a master in ‘treasure hunting’. “I see much more beauty in you than you yourself do.” When it was possible, he opened the way to the other person by helping to find the treasure in oneself. It succeeded because the other person not only discovered his/her own value, but he experienced it. One of his visitors summarized the appreciation that he expressed thereby when he said: Strange, when you leave Father Kentenich you always feel like a better person than you were when you arrived!

Uplifting understanding

Father Kentenich’s love did not get stuck in the wrong behavior or the limitations of the other person. He simply was determined to love, to be all for all, unconditionally.

He did not criticize anybody because he felt perturbed, injured or upset or to get rid of his hard feelings, not to make the other person small or bashing him, but to encourage blossoming and cultivate him in all

directions so that you almost felt honored when he drew your attention to a shortcoming.

When his secretary in Milwaukee, somewhat peeved, said that he never had corrected her (meant: for her self-education), he responded: “You have never asked me for it.” And he modeled what he tried to mediate to educators: to be reverent before the limitations of the other person!

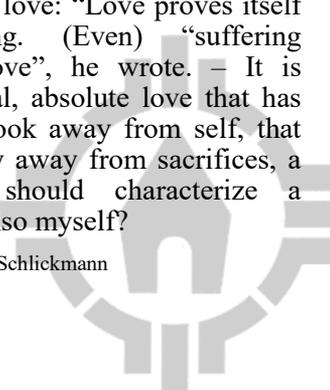
Today he invites us to examine ourselves: When and why do I criticize others, my husband, my children, friends, colleagues? Which of my reactions allows the other person to grow, to become great? Do I really want to serve them or do I only interiorly wind down?

Do not take love back

We are easily inclined to write off the other person if we are disappointed or hurt. We are tempted to think: If only I would not have loved like this then it would not hurt so much! But Father Kentenich’s advice goes in a different direction: Never be sorry that you have loved because it makes us more similar to God!

On the contrary, experienced suffering should not make us incapable to love: “Love proves itself in suffering. (Even) “suffering nourishes love”, he wrote. – It is unconditional, absolute love that has learned to look away from self, that does not shy away from sacrifices, a love that should characterize a Christian. Also myself?

Sr. Dr. M. Doria Schlickmann



Always only God

(Part 4)

Parts 1-3 report about the founding history of Schoenstatt up to the first difficulties that resulted from misunderstandings by the Church. Beginning in 1933, the young foundation was tested by National Socialism.

Father Kentenich saw the nature and danger of the national socialist government very clearly. When a well-know Church personality asked him, “Don’t you think that National Socialism could be ‘baptized’?” Father Kentenich answered: “I would not know any place that could be reached by baptismal waters.” Continuously and unmistakably he spoke to many priests and lay people who listened to his talks about the dangers of the spirit of the time and showed means and ways to overcome it. Away from half-heartedness, from a bourgeois way of life, but also no flight from the world and negation of the world. Father Kentenich showed the way of “Everyday Sanctity” and the



unconditional “yes” to the will of God. From then on, they speak in Schoenstatt about a “blank check” made to God and the Mother of God: I sign a blank sheet of paper, and God may write on the paper what he, according to his wise plan, considers best.

When on October 18, 1939 the silver jubilee of the Work was celebrated, the Schoenstatt movement surrendered to the Mother of God in the spirit of this “blank check”. As an exterior sign, a golden crown was attached to the picture of grace in the shrine. From then on, Mary was invoked with the title, Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt.” In his talk, “Words befitting the hour”, it is most important for Father Kentenich to refer all that had developed previously to God and the Mother of God. He solemnly stated: ***“All that has come about is her work.”*** His words that give direction for the future are courageous and bold: ***“We too are ready to endure cross and suffering, and if necessary even death, for our Blessed Mother and her work ... Whoever beholds the face of the Almighty will not be afraid to face the mighty ones of this world...”***

In the Sign of the Cross

Indeed, with October 18, 1939, a new epoch began when the cross was raised on high over Schoenstatt and its founder. He still had about two year’s time to prepare his followers for the approaching difficult time. He called for unshakable faith and confidence, as well as for unconditional surrender to God. Apart

from that, Father Kentenich conducted as many priest retreats and workshops as were possible during the increasingly difficult circumstances. Then the *Gestapo* struck.

For a long time already, Schoenstatt was labeled in Berlin the #1 enemy of the state. The attempt was made to strike the shepherd to break up the fold more easily. What hampered the attack was the fact that Father Kentenich was a well-known personality in Germany and beyond; who could not easily be removed without creating enormous ripples. For that reason, a summons date for September 15, 1941 was moved to September 20, 1941. Father Kentenich should finish the priest retreat in progress without creating ripples. When the founder arrived at the *Gestapo* he was arrested, and they took him, without interrogation and time designation or reason to most severe confinement in the cellar and darkness for four weeks. He was transferred to the prison of the police on October 18, 1941. Undauntedly, as if he wanted to say, "Do as you wish with me; the world belongs anyway to my ideas." He at age fifty-six came from confinement in darkness again to the light of day. The guards were so impressed that Father Kentenich became known in the whole prison. When he was asked what the secret of his strength was, he answered that God loves us more than a good mother can love her child. He was convinced that everything that he experienced was the best that the Father God could give to him.

In the Light of God

Father Kentenich also saw the difficult situation of imprisonment,

determined by unjust power, completely in the light of God. Thus he wrote in one of the many letters that he secretly sent from prison in December of 1941: "In the background – you may imagine – there is a serious battle between the crusher of the serpent (the Mother of God) and the serpent (devil). There is no doubt about who will ultimately be victorious. That I may be the buffer is appropriate and a great honor. You may also observe how God wants us to use this imprisonment for the best of individuals and for the whole family. Therefore we must carefully see to it that we will not in the least hinder God's plans."

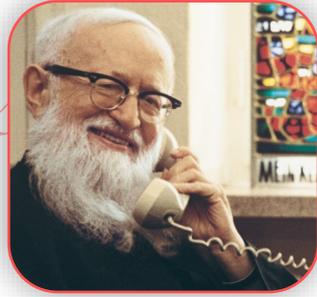
His only worry was that his followers could fail "to reach out to the stars". Therefore he used every opportunity to encourage them to heroic faith, hope, and charity. He wanted to take on what would bring them gain on their way to God and the fulfillment of their mission, even if it meant "death or the slow bleeding of all his spiritual strength". His life was completely in the service of his mission as founder and father.

A.K.



To be continued

He Helps *He Helps*



IN SERIOUS ILLNESSES

During the recent weeks and months our family was visited by serious illnesses. We implored Father Kentenich again and again for help, and he helped us. When I saw a doctor I was informed about a serious diagnosis that made immediate surgery necessary. In this situation, I approached Father Kentenich. In spite of apprehension, the surgery went well. I could leave the hospital after a few days. With the help of my husband and my children, I am healthy again. I am very grateful to Father Kentenich for his help.

At the time of my recuperation, my daughter suffered an accident and broke five ribs. She had to take strong medication to alleviate the pain. The pills hurt her liver and resulted in poor liver function readings. My daughter was hospitalized in the intensive care unit of a university hospital. Her condition got worse and there was the danger of liver failure. The doctors suggested a liver transplant as the only chance of healing. With heavy heart, my daughter agreed and on November 18, 2016, a donor liver had become available. The fact that the liver had become available on the 18th, a covenant day, was a sign of heaven for us. We trusted in a successful surgery especially because many supported us with their prayers. And help came, but quite differently than what we expected. After everything was prepared for the surgery, the

surgeon saw that the donated liver was not right. There was great helplessness. Then the wonderful thing happened: the diseased liver began to work again. Our daughter got better. The liver function values improved and stabilized. Meanwhile our daughter could return to her profession as teacher for the deaf. We are very grateful and believe that a “miracle” happened.

M. & B. Sch., January 2017

My husband suffers from severe migraine headaches, which often take us, even on Christmas Eve, to the emergency room. This past Christmas I prayed, through the intercession of Father Kentenich, to be spared of this trip. And so it happened and we could spend Christmas at home with our family.

N.N., Texas

Most of the whole family came down with the flu. I prayed to Father Kentenich that my husband who had no sick days left from work wouldn't get the flu as well, and he really didn't. Thank you, Father Kentenich!

T.H., Minnesota

Since 1990, I pray daily the novenas to the Mother of God and to Father

Kentenich. In 2014, my husband had a heart attack. I prayed, and he is now very well. My brother had a heart attack in 2015. The doctors gave us almost no hope. After almost one year of hospitalization he is now, almost miraculously, very well. I continue to pray daily and trust in the Mother of God and Father Kentenich.

M.B., December 2017

A PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTURBANCE

What unexpectedly challenged and burdened us, especially our daughter as a mother, was the unforeseen and relatively sudden change of behavior in our grandson who is now 15 ½ years old. He was happy to start vocational training at a Technical High School, but then suddenly on October 18 dropped out. Total disorientation, taciturnity and fear of failure. The condition worsened in November. He went to psychological treatment for some time. Now since January 18, 2017 he went back to school and was welcomed benevolently. For us as longtime Schoenstatters this is an answer to prayers in a twofold way. Firstly, this condition that burdened the whole family began on the 18th of a month and ended on the 18th of a month. And secondly, the grandson is again very stable and just as if nothing had happened. That is for us a miracle of transformation.

It was helpful for us that we at one time in the framework of the Family Academy had discussed the topic puberty in the spirit of Father Kentenich – the way he dealt with young people. As grandparents we talked almost daily with Father

Kentenich and asked for his intercession. He himself experienced crises when he was young, and he knows how our grandson is. Naturally we also prayed to the Mother of God and asked for her intercession. The confidence and certainty that this inbreak was in God's plan and that precisely now puberty could be the "labor pains" for later adult life gave us hope. We know from experience that the outcome could have been very different. Therefore we are very grateful with our whole hearts to the Mother of God and to Father Kentenich.

M. & F. W., Austria

A HEALTHY CHILD WAS BORN

My daughter in law already had had several miscarriages. I asked Father Kentenich to intercede when I heard that she was pregnant again, with the hope that she could carry this baby full term. She went through the pregnancy without incident and now she and her husband are the happy parents of a little baby girl.

T. H., Minnesota



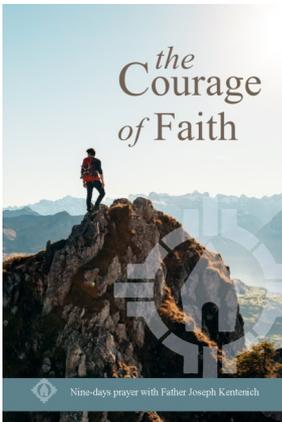
Father Joseph Kentenich

- Founder of the International Schoenstatt Movement -

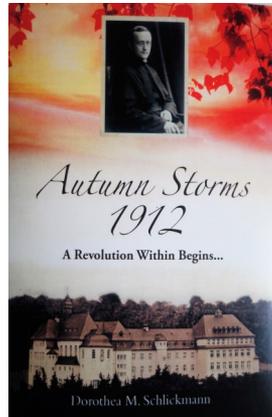
was born on November 16, 1885, in Gymnich near Cologne and died on September 15, 1968, in the Trinity Church of Berg Schoenstatt, immediately after the celebration of the Holy Mass. He is also buried in this church. His sarcophagus bears the inscription **Dilexit ecclesiam - He loved the church.**

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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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.