

IMPULSE

11/2020

for Daily Living



**In the Beginning
was Mary**



Secretariat Father Joseph Kentenich

In the beginning was Mary

He could have chosen many ways to achieve his goal: the redemption of humanity. But God chose the way to become man through a woman: Mary. He sent a messenger to her, asked her about it, waited for her reaction, her answer, her yes: May it be done to me as you have said (cf. Lk 1:38). This is how she stands at the beginning of the history of salvation. She is not just any woman, but a special one, the chosen one, the gifted one, who in freedom responds to the incomprehensible plans of God.



She, too, could have taken other paths, could have refused, denied him, but Mary complied, abandoned her own ideas, totally agreed to what God wanted.

At the beginning of this story with God, she stands as the new person who made God's way to us possible as closely as one can imagine.



He could have become bitter, defensive towards others, tense, intimidated or aggressive towards anyone, disappointed in life. He could have felt pushed off, left alone when his mother took him

and left him behind in the orphanage in Oberhausen. But all that didn't happen. Why? There was the intimate love of his mother, which he felt deeply inside. And there was an event in his young life, which opened a different, a new path. Yes, in his life, too, she was at the beginning: Mary.

When his mother, in her distress and worry, took the eight-year-old Joseph to the orphanage chapel, to Mary, she didn't suspect that a wonderful story would thereby take its course. Even when she carried him in her womb and consecrated him to Mary for the first time, she had no idea how much this was a prelude to an extraordinary life story. Since at the beginning of his Mary life was also there, Joseph Kentenich found profound access to God; love grew in him, which, as he later confessed, was always greater than his suffering.

Because Mary was at the beginning, he had a very profound experience of God so that he could overcome the enormous burdens and challenges of his life. He was carried by the one great experience: *Dilexit me*. HE – God loved me (first) (cf. Gal 2:20). And God doesn't love just in general, but deeply personally. Joseph Kentenich experienced himself as a *chosen child*.

Not as if everything about him was perfect, by no means. It rather pleases God to choose the inconspicuous, the small, the weak in the world, which doesn't mean much before the eyes of others, as in the beginning with Mary.

At the beginning of his young life, it was she, who showed him that she is a highly active woman, a mother and educator, who graciously influences his education, leads and forms him into what he then becomes....



Like so many in World War I who fell victim to the circumstances and lost all Christian values, they could have left the seminary as young revolutionaries in opposition to the Church. But none of this happened because at the beginning of their youthful life was Mary. The students of the seminary, who had very strongly opposed the new house rules, who actually had everything else in mind other than becoming saints, changed their lives, when the young priest, Father Kentenich, succeeded in bringing Mary closer to them. At the beginning of their transformation was Mary who gave them strength to give their profile to everyday life, to prove themselves in the harshness of the trenches, to realize their ideal as credible priests. This was the beginning of a worldwide movement of renewal: Schoenstatt.



Mary can also be at the beginning of our new life, if we let her be – if we give her space in our thoughts, questions, worries, and personal concerns, but also space in our self-education, of working on ourselves, and in our endeavors to become credible Christians.

She was at the beginning and is able to change the hardships and worries burdening the soul – be it in the education of our children or whatever it is – about dealing with others when we feel powerless. We can't change

people, we can't transform them, but she can. Where we, as parents or grandparents feel, we no longer have influence, she can bring about change from within. "She," says Father Kentenich, "unlocks our subconscious for God." She can give the grace of transformation where our hands are tied. She, this special woman, stands at the beginning of our own path of holiness, this powerful mother and wonderful educator who never relinquishes her belief in us and who also wants to reveal her glory in us. Keep her at the beginning of our day, of each day of the month and new year of your life, and she will show what she can accomplish in the sight of God.

Sr. M. Doria Schlickmann





Testimonials from letters to the editor

Father Kentenich is a very important person for me. Since 1984, I've belonged to a Schoenstatt group. During the first few years, I didn't pay much attention to him. But with time, that has changed. He has also partly weakened my prejudices against several people. I once read about him, that he accepted people as they were, not as he would like them to be. He also saw the good in those who weren't very friendly. In that I admire him very much. I read a lot about Father Kentenich. Thank you.



I would like to continue receiving the information about him and suggestions for prayer. All material from you is very precious to me. It helps me to believe in Christ and trust more in the Blessed Mother. I thank you with all my heart and enclose a prayer intention.



N. was in Schoenstatt on September 15th 2018 for the first time. On the bus, he said that this trip was preceded by three years of longing, during which he would have liked to go to Schoenstatt. With his wife, he has been cleaning the Schoenstatt chapel for a long time now. They

also have a circle of the "Pilgrim Mother". Father Kentenich has helped this family many times. He will continue to do so.

The mother is especially concerned about her middle son. She has given him to the "great Joseph" (Kentenich). When I visited the family once, I was amazed to see a picture of Father Kentenich in the apartment. I had invited N. to come with me to Schoenstatt. He had not been able to take part in the staff outing because his retraining made it impossible for him. A woman from Croatia came to Schoenstatt that weekend of all days and took over the childcare, so that the couple could travel together to Schoenstatt. Despite financial problems, the couple didn't let themselves be deprived of paying the fare.

For both of them, it is a gift that at the death of Father Kentenich, a Croatian, of all people, was there, and that now, on September 15, 2018, the second Schoenstatt Shrine in Croatia was dedicated.



Father is my great example. Again and again, I ask myself: How would Father Kentenich decide in this situation, or what would he say? When I am not feeling well and I have a hard time, then I think: Father Kentenich would be able to endure it now by trusting in the help of God and the Blessed

Mother, and I can make it with him.

When the doctor told me nine years ago, "You have cancer, you need an operation immediately", I immediately thought of Father Kentenich and told myself: It's God's will. He won't leave me alone. He'll give me strength. The time of my illness was difficult, but it was a great time of grace. I wouldn't want to have missed it. I am so grateful to Father Kentenich for all the "treasures" that he gave me. In doing so, he enriched my life very much, and I can daily continue to be enriched this way.



With the novena *Longing for Life* I have found a deeper confidence and actually discovered how to trust. When I bring my questions and problems to God, the words of Father Kentenich encourage me over and over again. More than ten years ago, with this novena, I took my first steps in the direction of the teaching profession, and I have been guided by faith, trust, and being led.

The return to my profession as a graduate business economist after the education phase was closed to me at that time. In all these years, I've had the "calling" to teach, a new profession. Teaching also and especially where it is difficult, where students or participants are discouraged. It is task that is profoundly fulfilling, challenging, sometimes discouraging – but then I have a support in the prayer of the

novena. Please, support me with your prayer, as I also pray for everyone.



For a year now, my father has been suffering from incurable cancer. We have turned to Father Kentenich with confidence. My father is not cured, and there are often difficult days when he feels anxious and despondent. And yet we feel that we are carried, and that God is there. So, out of gratitude I would like to write a testimony about this. Father Kentenich helps that in difficult times of confusion the soul finds and keeps at peace in God. He [Father Kentenich] is like a sure hand that keeps us with God, even when we ourselves feel confused and empty. He is very comfortingly close at times like this.



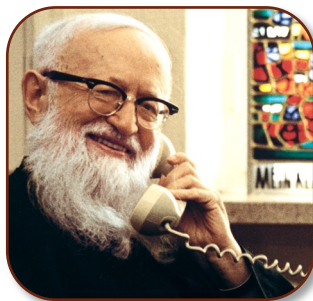
He helps

He Helps

IN SICKNESS

"The wire to the top worked," a statement of the professor in charge! In August 2017, my husband's facial nerve in the right half of the face showed up for the first time. At first, the obvious paralysis lasted a few minutes. But my husband quickly contacted the right doctors... No one could find anything wrong. At my husband's insistence, other tests were made. Finally, they talked about a mass in the right parotid gland. My husband was treated with cortisone in a clinic. In the meantime, the facial paralysis didn't go away. After further thorough examination they spoke of a white spot, a tumor behind the parotid gland. This required surgery and a transfer to another clinic. In this difficult situation we experienced Holy Week as a real way of the cross. My husband deserves a great deal of praise here. In this situation, he exhibited great tranquility and much trust in God. Many acquaintances prayed with us and stormed heaven. A short, hurried prayer from a novena became for me an incessant prayer: "Full of trust I fold my hands and I am confident: Father, I will experience your help." But *my* faith wasn't very great...

Further examinations in the new clinic brought the result that it was a malignant tumor. Days of uncertainty, fear, and worry followed again. What we heard at the clinic sometimes pulled the rug out from under our feet: An operation was too dangerous. Subsequently chemotherapy and radiation were required anyway. So, radiotherapy started. Further decisions were necessary, whereby a professor was very helpful. For the first four to five weeks the side effects were tolerable, but then they got bad. I was at my husband's side every day and sent many a prayer to heaven. The examination after the



therapy finally resulted in complete remission. That means there was nothing left of the tumor. There could not have been a better result. The professor was happy with us and said: "The wire to the top did make a difference." He said that because he knew that we are faithfilled people. Great gratitude and joy fills us. Thanks to the Blessed Mother and Father Kentenich! We will join a pilgrimage of gratitude to Schoenstatt in the near future.

M. D., March 2019

My sister's health wasn't good before Christmas. She was tired, exhausted, weak, and weighed only 43 kg [ca. 95 lbs]. In searching for the cause, a colonoscopy found that probably a polyp was the cause of the problem. The tissue was examined and judged to be malignant. She needed to be operated on as soon as possible. Date 01-17-2019. Torn between desperation, fear, and trust, we began to pray to Father Kentenich. According to the doctors, the operation went well, "picture-perfect". They removed quite a bit, also affected lymph nodes. Now began the therapy. Pain and everything were part of it; everything was connected and mastered with Father Kentenich. We hope that the healing process continues to go well. We are very grateful to Father Kentenich for his open ear and his good heart and for all his help. I promised that the answer to our prayers would be published.

R. P., April 2019

As a Schoenstatt fan from my youth, now in retirement, I suddenly experienced severe shortness of breath when climbing stairs. It turns out, that I might need to

get a new heart valve. So, I contacted and asked the sisters to pray for me and entrust my concern to the Blessed Mother and to Father Kentenich. I myself also went into silence and prayed the novena, *In Distress*. I soon felt better. The doctor confirmed the improvement by saying: "Fortunately you don't need surgery, and the next examination will also be in six months." Thank you all very much.

C. W., April 2019

My aunt, the mother of four young children, was diagnosed with a brain tumor and the doctors didn't give much hope for remission. We entrusted this prayer to Father Kentenich and after a complex surgery and treatment, she is thriving, and her strength has almost totally returned. We are so grateful to Father Kentenich!

S.S., Minnesota

FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

When everything seemed to be getting out of control at work for my son, he almost gave up on himself. He fell into a deep depression. His small business failed, and he had to disband the carpentry workshop. At the same time, he was also in the middle of preparing for an exam and was under enormous time pressure. We were in telephone contact. He said that he no longer has the strength to get up in the morning and get on with his day. I asked for solace from Father Kentenich and I sought refuge with the Blessed Mother by praying the novena *Longing for Life*. After only a few days my son called and told me that he'd received a call from one of his teachers. Now highly motivated by this conversation and with renewed courage, he will resume his duties and tackle the problem. I am infinitely grateful for this answer to prayer and would like it to be published.

K. W. V., May 2019

My son has a very low self image and I prayed to Father Kentenich again and again that somehow, somehow, his morale would get a boost. At school, they had a contest taking place with a geography test between 400 students and my son received the highest score. Now, full of

trust, we are petitioning that through the next exam, he would make it to the state competition!

K. R., Wisconsin

DURING AN EXAMINATION

Through your prayers and powerful intercession from Father Kentenich, I was able to experience the help of God in my examination and I passed it yesterday. Quite unusually for me, I could sleep well before the exam and was in good spirits before the exam. I could also stay calm during the exam. I could concentrate well. The examiners were benevolent, and the atmosphere was pleasant. That was the only way it was possible to complete the six parts of the examination. What a relief! I thank you very, very warmly! I prayed a novena to Father Kentenich before the written examinations, and then was always calm. Since I passed on the novena [to someone else], I'd like to accept your dear offer to send a small selection of novenas and prayer sheets. I would like to thank you with a donation.

A. R., May 2019

TIME PRESSURE

I was running late for a doctor appointment and knew that if I didn't make it on time, I wouldn't be able to get in to see the doctor, and it was crucial that I would. On the way to the appointment, to make matters worse, there was a lot of traffic. I tried to remain confident in Father Kentenich's intercession. I did in fact arrive late to the appointment, but the doctor was behind schedule and so I was able to keep my appointment.

N.T., Wisconsin

I went on a trip and lost my passport. I retraced my steps but didn't find it anywhere, and I was to leave for home from this foreign country the next day. In desperation I thought I would entrust this great intention to Father Kentenich, and I went to bed peacefully. The next morning during breakfast I received a phone call from another guest staying at the same hotel that he had found my passport on the counter. I couldn't believe it! Thank you Father Kentenich!

R. U., Illinois

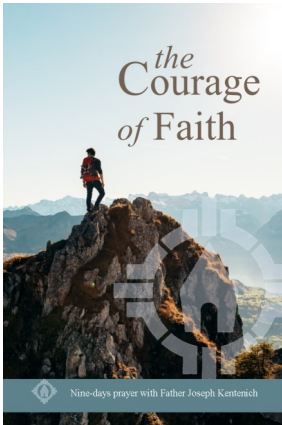
Father Joseph Kentenich

- Founder of the International Schoenstatt Movement -

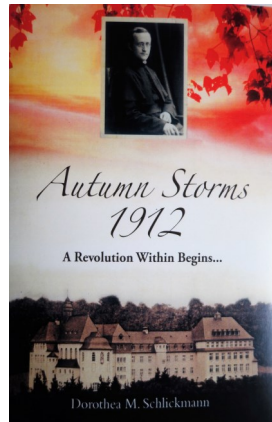
was born on November 16, 1885, in Gymnich near Cologne and died on September 15, 1968, in the Trinity Church of Berg Schoenstatt, immediately after the celebration of the Holy Mass. He is also buried in this church. His sarcophagus bears the inscription ***Dilexit ecclesiam - He loved the church.***

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
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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.