

IMPULSE

212020

for Daily Living



Maria —

A Woman Familiar with Suffering



Secretariat Father Joseph Kentenich

Mary, A Woman Familiar with Suffering

It wasn't exactly a small thing with which she had to cope: to accompany her son on such a journey. Ever since Simeon announced that a sword would pierce her soul (Lk 2:35), she had to live with the prophecy that she had to expect enormous suffering for the sake of her child. She had to live with this fear, with the uncertainty. Father Kentenich, who was occupied and involved with her life, draws attention to the fact: *"We often think of Mary's life as a constant stroll across flowery meadows: without deeper conflicts and emotional distress, free from any uncertainty and fear. But that contradicts the harsh reality. It makes us blind to Mary's greatness: for the heroism of faith and love, with which she responded and overcame uncertainty and fear. She knew night and darkness, uncertainty and insecurity like us – even more than us."* (J. Kentenich)

Mary heard all that was said about her son, what he was accused of. She wanted to warn him, protect him from persecution, preferably take him home, but Jesus doesn't allow her to worry. He even rebukes her quite harshly: Who is my mother and who are my brothers? Those who do my Father's will! The will of the Father is decisive for him. This should be decisive for her as well. He knows it's not only his personal ideal of life, but hers as well. She had replied to the angel, "May it be done unto me according to your word." She will remain faithful to him even during these difficult days. Jesus admonishes her, as it were, not to simply give in to her maternal feelings. In this way he prepares her for even greater suffering. Father Kentenich explained that Jesus

also educated his mother, so-to-say equipping her spiritually so that she could follow him all the way of the cross. *"She didn't understand him. How often this word shone forth in her life! How much darkness it contained! In an exemplary way, she has overcome the uncertainty of the mind through heroism of faith and the fear and need of the heart through the heroism of trust and love."* (J. Kentenich)

Believe heroically, trust heroically, love heroically. Is this a way – also in my life – to master suffering and dark hours? There was always a quiet fear for him; distress and human anxiety is always present in her. She had to endure all this ever since he started his public life. What might it have been like for her when he went for the Passover to Jerusalem, of all places? What danger did he put himself in?

With him, she bears all the injustice, all the abuse, slander, and malice against him. She knows who he is, and she has to watch him be tortured. How cruelly he is abused, scourged, mocked! And there's nothing she can do. Suffering in silence, she watches everything, doesn't run away, doesn't close her eyes to suffering. She bears it with him, for him. Suffering has to be learned. But to suffer with someone, for someone also means at the same time to know the happiness of loving. Finally, comes the climax of his life: the Way of the Cross. When he was standing there in his glory, he had many followers. They all wanted to be friends with him, but now they have all fled in fear. But she doesn't flinch; she

cannot be stopped and held back. She hurries to him. She must be with him now. When he fell under the heavy beams of the cross she's not thinking about her own pain, the intolerability of having to watch him! She wants him to see her. We have to see each other. My son, my child, you're not going to carry that alone!

Her faith has become even stronger through all the trials and tribulations in her life: This Good Friday will be followed by an Easter morning. "He will free his people from their sins." Scripture says she had kept all these words in her heart and pondered. She had thought about what all this meant, what Simeon had told her... HE will win!

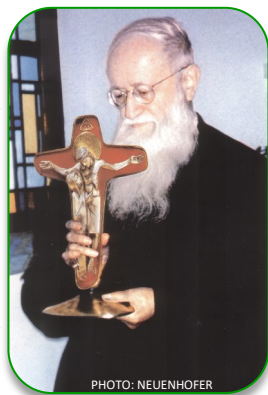
Mary goes with him all the way to the summit of suffering, to the crucifixion. For her as a woman it is far more difficult to see her beloved Son suffer so much than to be sacrificed herself. Mary's testimony speaks to me, to my life and suffering: There's nothing greater than to suffer out of love, to die for love! Is it any wonder that over many centuries people today seek refuge with her in their suffering, hope for her understanding, and to turn to her? This woman is capable of suffering like no other. She knows what suffering means and what it takes to suffer for a person whom you love. She will help me, too, to be able to carry my suffering. She won't take it away from me, but she'll carry it with me and give me of her confidence: Here is not the end of the line! Easter morning comes – also in my life.

In Mary's school, Joseph Kentenich learned early on what suffering means, but also how to deal with suffering without breaking down. *"Love and suffering belong together!"* he could often say. He broke off the peak of suffering because he put love first.

"Suffering nourishes love." The more I have suffered for someone the more I love him, and the more I love someone, the more I suffer. Once, when Father

Kentenich was asked how he could endure so much suffering in his life, he replied: *"My Love was always greater than my suffering."* Here lies the key – also for my life: See to it that love is always greater than suffering. Mary gave him the visual instruction. From her person, he recognized the nature of woman and discovered an enormous capacity in woman to bear suffering, especially for the sake of others.

People who have suffered much can understand others in need, in their worries, in their grief in a completely different way. This applies above all to Mary, the woman who, like no other person in the history of the world was taken into the redemptive suffering of Jesus. But this is true also for Father Kentenich and is a reason why so many people found so much comfort, encouragement, and support with him, especially in the most difficult situations. He knew that we do not overcome the fear of suffering by fleeing, as the men around Jesus preferred to do. Fear is defeated by love and by bravely approaching it out of love.



Sister M. Doria Schlickmann

Experiences of God through Father Joseph Kentenich

(By Father Rudolf Mosbach)

The question has already been asked: Is there any God experience in this world at all? A person today, in all one's awareness of life, is characterized by the experiential "Absence" of God.

Dachau was typical for this atmosphere: In 1942, Father Kentenich was sent to the concentration camp and was put in the entry barrack. Father Kentenich and some others were received by the block (=barracks) elder or leader...the Communist Hugo Guttman: "You can leave your Lord God at home. None of us here at the camp has seen God." Then he must have sensed that one person was not quite "levelled" by this opinion. That was Father Kentenich, who replied, "But perhaps you have seen the devil!" Through this, Hugo Guttman's attention was drawn to Father Kentenich. He kept an eye on him. What struck him was that someone here was, as it were, more "communist" than he imagined, because from day one, Father Kentenich never took all that was due him from the ration, bread etc., but still gave something away to others. The communist Guttman had never yet encountered anything like this kind of humanness. The admiration for Father Kentenich had a consequence a few months later. On

July 24, 1942, at his own risk he arranged not letting Father Kentenich go on the notorious Transport of Invalids, but was hidden and escaped from the SS and thereby extermination.

1. The Absence of the Experience of God

In some respects the situation of the camp can be extended to the whole world. Here too we hear: None of us has seen God! ... Father Kentenich says: If there is any faith left in a person...then I guess it's faith in providence. So, if it is claimed that there is no longer any intervention by God, then the person, if he's at all still open for the supernatural, has to critically ask his questions here.

Those who don't want to see God don't look for him and therefore don't see him. Hardly anything was explicitly mentioned about God speaking in two thousand years of Church history. Let's just think about our families. Where were the children taught that there isn't just a "God of the catechism", a "God of the altars", but also a "God of life"?

During camp, the Schoenstatt Boys' Youth had an activity called "Campaign SY" (Show yourself). This meant that from morning to evening we look for and pray to God and the Blessed Mother: Show yourself to us! - in any events and persons of everyday life. In the evening individuals could share where they had received a hint from God or the Blessed Mother – so-to-say a schooling about the God of life. We know how Father Kentenich was pleased when he heard reports from our Schoenstatt priests about this awakening life concerning faith in Providence.



2. Experience of God through Father Kentenich

Our question is: Does the God of life exist or does he not exist? Is there an experience of God in this world or does it not exist? We limit our answer to the person of Father Kentenich, we gather what we have experienced with him, we verify it. However, as with Francis or the Curé of Ars: What we experience with Father Kentenich was at first restrained, as if it were veiled. Only little by little did the experience, the rethinking and perhaps also through a flash of light in certain situations, the intuition became more clearly a consciousness or a conviction: There's more here than just something human; here we are faced with a real experience of God. This realization takes time. It's been the same in other cases, even among Christ's disciples.

Different groups of people made their "experience" directly with Father Kentenich. Joseph Engling and his classmates were first just impressed with him. However, little by little, they became aware that in the person of Father Spiritual, the title they used for the spiritual director, in his speaking and acting, they encountered something supernatural. We find something similar in the concentration camp. A Protestant fellow prisoner, who had gained great respect for Father Kentenich because of living together with him, sums up: "Father Kentenich disliked literal Christianity. He modelled his faith and his theology. In the tense atmosphere and gloomy, hopeless, and desolate situation of life his eyes caught the supernatural light in the rays of the cosmic starry skies and with sun in the heart he radiated consolation, happiness, and contentment."

In a short testimony, a French priest, who was also admitted to the camp, told how he was led to Father Kentenich. He had been without hope and said to himself, "I'm not getting out of here alive." Depressed, he spoke to Father Kentenich and asked him, "Father, do you think that I will get out of here alive? Then Father beamed at him and said: "But August, that's so incidental, we'll leave that up to the Blessed Mother!" This encounter worked. After some time, his depressed mood was overcome. He was an active co-worker of Father Kentenich. He used his free time to translate Schoenstatt texts to the French language. He could profess that in the person of Father Kentenich he had encountered something of the supernatural.

We recall Father Kentenich's confinement in the bunker (four weeks dark detention in 1941). They thought, if he comes out of this alive again, then he'll be broken for the rest of his life. And what happened? The chaplain of this prison said that no one had ever done that before; most of them collapsed physically and mentally after only a few days; would have testified or signed anything the Gestapo asked for. Father Kentenich came out after four weeks, radiant, erect, as if to say: "Do what you want, but the future belongs to me and my ideas!" Along with the general amazement came the sense that there was more to Father Kentenich than just human security and sustainability.

From a talk by Father Rudolf Mosbach during the Delegates' Meeting of the Schoenstatt Family, October 1970.

He helps

He Helps

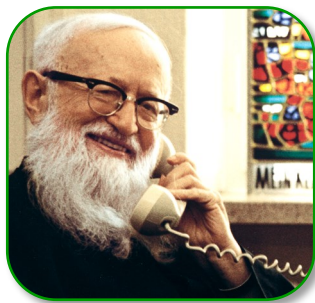
A TRUSTED AND SURE GUIDE IN TIME OF DESPERATE NEED

Father Kentenich has been once again, as many times before, my sure and trusted guide in life. But this time he has proven his intercessory power in an almost miraculous way. But he also demanded my human collaboration according to [the motto] *Nothing without me, nothing without you*.

I had booked a flight from Sydney to Cebu, Philippines, over Hong Kong on March 11. When I arrived at the airport at night, I was told at the check-in that a few hours earlier, the Philippine government had closed their airport for flights from Hong Kong due to COVID-19. For a moment I was stunned because I was not informed of it ahead of time. When the officials remained hard and not very willing to help me, I turned to Father Kentenich for his guidance. After much negotiation back and forth I was assured of a full refund of my ticket. Thanks to Father Kentenich, I was able to book another flight over Manila, Philippines, for the next day in the morning without knowing what was awaiting me.

Upon arrival in the Philippines I was told that in two days, the Manila airport will be closed for all incoming and outgoing flights. This would mean for me: I couldn't return that way.

Again, I turned to Father Kentenich for his advice. Calmly I took care of my various duties and in-between I searched for flights back to Sydney without transferring in either Manila or Hong Kong. Flights were offered to me in the moment, but in a few hours, they were cancelled again with the promise that soon everything will return back to normal.



Instead, the city of Cebu began a gradual lock down and the closing of the airport was in sight. When on March 18, our covenant day, I searched for possible flights I found one single flight offered on March 19 via Hong Kong. I dared to accept this only flight with total trust in Father Kentenich even with the uncertainty whether Hong Kong would accept flights from the Philippines while no flights from Hong Kong were allowed to land there. It was St. Joseph's day and I begged him on his feastday to guide me safely home and to calm my rising inner tension.

He was a sure guide. Upon arriving home, I learned that within a few hours the Sydney airport would be closed to all foreigners – and I am one of them.

I thanked Father Kentenich with all my heart. His intercession was total precision work that led me safely home just before the total lock down in the Philippines as well as in Sydney.

Father Kentenich used to inspire us to have *confidence as firm as a rock*! He did not leave me alone. Thank you!

A.T., Australia
March 30, 2020

A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE

In order to understand this story, you must know that I suffer under Tourette's -syndrome, which causes panic attacks and dizziness. Earlier this year, both had increased, especially when I was the passenger in the car, but also when shopping and visiting the doctor. I didn't have the courage to leave our house. I

asked the Sisters in Schoenstatt to pray to the Blessed Mother and Father Kentenich for me. This has obviously helped. A few days ago, my mother went to the bank for me, and my ATM card got stuck in the ATM. My account was then blocked. Finally, my card was again found. Now it became unpleasant for me: I had to get my own bank card at the branch of the bank. Through this I was forced, after a long time, to get in the car. My mother drove me to the bank. I was very scared in the car and felt dazed. But nothing more happened. We also received a parking ticket from a man. There were no Tourette's-syndrome attacks on the return trip either. For me the story is a clear proof that God has given us life and leads us. I am full gratitude for this experience.

P. H., November 2019

I asked Father Kentenich that there would be holy Mass in the shrine the next day, on my birthday. It was highly improbable because there usually isn't a holy Mass on this particular day of the week. A big surprise! In the evening a priest called and asked if he could celebrate a holy Mass the next day in the shrine! Thank you, Father Kentenich!

MGD, Waukesha, WI

Recently, I received a citation from a justice of the peace in which I was being fined a great sum of money for parking in a handicapped designated space. We were completely stunned because we use the handicap space on account of my wife's condition. I called the appropriate office to discuss the situation and was told to bring a copy of the handicap placard and a copy of my driver's license to see if the case could be dismissed. We immediately entrusted the petition to Father Joseph Kentenich. We entered the building and had to take a number. As soon as our number was called and we approached the person who was attending us, the young woman said, "I know you people. You were my first grade teacher and you were the counselor at the high school." We provided the

necessary information and the case was dismissed. Thank you, Father Kentenich, for your help; we are forever grateful!

C.C. Austin, TX

HAPPY AND GRATEFUL PARENTS

We're a married couple who, for eight years had an unfulfilled desire to have children. It was a very stressful and painful time with several miscarriages and surgeries that we had to live through. During these painful years we went to pray to the Blessed Mother and Father Kentenich in the Schoenstatt Shrine. We also brought our requests to the community of the Sisters of Mary to seek their support in prayer. Likewise, some friends and family members prayed for us. With countless prayers and lighted candles, we have trusted that all would turn out well. On October 18, 2018, we finally went to Schoenstatt to visit the Original Shrine to present our concerns loudly and participate at a worship service on Covenant Day. Together with our parents, with other members of the Schoenstatt Family, and some Sisters of Mary, we participated in this service and poured out our hearts at this place of grace. On December 18, 2018 we went to the gynaeccologist for an ultrasound. So, when the doctor said, "O, there are two of them," we could hardly believe it. Still a little afraid whether the two would stay with us now and not leave us, we were at the same time filled with great hope. During the rest of the pregnancy, everything went well. We were overjoyed and infinitely grateful for the great grace that has been bestowed on us. Our faith and our trust were rewarded. Again and again, the quote from Father Kentenich came to mind: "Those who trust have everything." On July 23, 2019, our twins were born. Those who look into the eyes of the little angels can see God. With great gratitude and joy, we celebrated baptism, and filled with trust placed the life of our children into the hands of the Blessed Mother. Mary helped! She helps even today! All things are possible for the one who believes.

H. S., July 2019

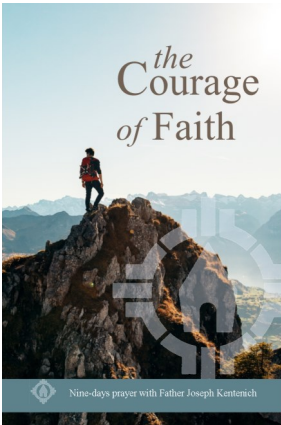
Father Joseph Kentenich

- Founder of the International Schoenstatt Movement -

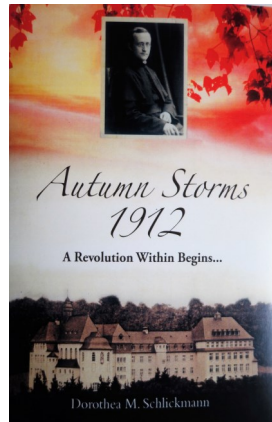
was born on November 16, 1885, in Gymnich near Cologne and died on September 15, 1968, in the Trinity Church of Berg Schoenstatt, immediately after the celebration of the Holy Mass. He is also buried in this church. His sarcophagus bears the inscription ***Dilexit ecclesiam - He loved the church.***

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.