

Reflections

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THE HEART SHRINE

Father Kentenich, founder of the Apostolic Schoenstatt Movement, began to speak – in his last years – about The Heart Shrine. From the entire link of Shrines – for him – the most important was precisely the Heart Shrine.

What does the heart as a Shrine mean for Father? It means that our heart is a Shrine of the Virgin Mary. She forms and transforms our heart, converting it more and more into a dwelling of God and a temple of the Blessed Trinity. Each one is and must be a living Shrine, inhabited by the Triune God, consecrated and surrendered unto Him. We all learned that truth in catechism class. At sometime or other, we have all read in the Bible about that mystery: *“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”*

But the question is if we truly live that mystery? We know it, and nevertheless, how little are we united and attached to that God who dwells in us. Perhaps we look for God outside of ourselves and the reality is that He is within us. We should seek Him, therefore, much more in our inner self, in the depth of our soul. And after finding God in our heart, the great task is to attach ourselves to Him.

Father Kentenich recommends to us three things to live that relationship with God:

1. To look with faith at the God of my soul: become aware of his presence and contemplate Him, look at what He speaks in me and does in me, learn to be silent, pause from time to time.

2. Speak with God who dwells in my heart: learn to speak to Him throughout the day, about my things, my concerns, my desires, pray to Him spontaneously, pray ejaculations, express my childlike love to Him.

3. Make sacrifices for the God of my heart: to manifest to Him my mature love and to become one with the suffering Christ, to offer Him my contributions to the Treasury of Grace lovingly, that is, my daily struggle to improve and to grow in sanctity.

In this regard, Father Kentenich explains: “If we modern men would discover anew the God within us, then we would always feel tranquil, serene and secure. If we discover anew the Lord in our soul and the action of the Holy Spirit, it will be of great importance for our spiritual life and also for our mental and physical health” (My Heart, Your Shrine, 60).

And there then comes the importance of the Heart Shrine. In it, we learn to attach ourselves to the persons of the supernatural world: Mary, Christ, God the Father, the Holy Spirit. In it, we receive the graces of deep rootedness, of inner transformation, of apostolic fruitfulness. And in this way we grow and mature until we become a living Shrine of the Virgin and of God.

Among these attachments, the most important is the attachment to God the Father. It is the main challenge given to us by the Heart Shrine: to grow in our attitude as children before Him. It is decisive, not only for our personal happiness. Our success as apostles also depends on our childlikeness. It is the attitude of an adult child who shares responsibilities with his Father, who forges history alongside Him. It is a child who struggles for a world worthy of the Father, where the values of truth reign, justice and love. It is a child who feels called to build the Nation of God the Father, to forge a reflection of his heavenly Kingdom amidst our world.

Questions for reflection

1. Are we, each one of us, living Shrines who radiate that love to the Lord, that undissolvable rootedness in the heart of God?
2. Do I feel I am the builder of a new world?
3. What concrete resolution can I take to connect myself with the God of my hear?

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