

# Reflections

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## The Apostolate of Being

The first way to be apostolic and at the same time, the most important way to be apostolic, is to be a living witness. It is the apostolate of radiating or the apostolate of being as it was usually called by Father Kentenich, founder of the [Schoenstatt Movement](#).

For us as human beings, words are not enough for us to have some guidance in our lives, we need living models. For that reason, God the Father sent us His Son, Jesus. He also invites us to be reflections of Christ and to be His witnesses. Therefore, Father Kentenich explains to us that the greatest apostolate is to embody Jesus Christ as perfectly as possible.

In each era, God repeats the pedagogy of the incarnation. He sent us the definitive model in Jesus. But in each new circumstance, He sends us new models. We believe that in the Founder of Schoenstatt, as in so many other great founders, how to live the Gospel today is most evident. We want to follow his footsteps.

In 1979, a group from Chile met with Father Menningen, a distinguished student of Father Kentenich and a member of Schoenstatt's founding generation. On that occasion, he told them: "The greatest apostolate of the father and of the mother consists in being father totally and mother totally. Men and women reach the highest level of their apostolate when they totally embody the father and totally embody the mother."

Something which is very important in the pedagogical style of the Founder of Schoenstatt is that he required of himself, as an educator, not to ask for anything which he had not first required of himself. He was convinced that the first duty of a father is to embody the ideals of his follower and he did this until the end of his life.

An anecdote: A German youth from the "new age" thought that [Joseph Engling](#), one of the first Schoenstatters, was old-fashioned. This young man, with a tone of irony, asked Father Kentenich about the Spiritual Daily Schedule, one of the ascetic practices in the Schoenstatt spirituality. He told Father Kentenich that he supposed that Father no longer needed that practice after living for so long his Consecration to the Blessed Mother in the Covenant of Love. Father then laughed, put his hand in his pocket and said: "here is my spiritual schedule."

He was faithful to marking his Spiritual Daily Schedule until he died at 83, and he said he marked it not because he needed it, but because he never asked anyone to do something which he did not do first. We cannot be educators, true fathers or true mothers, if we do not try to fulfill what we teach.

If we think about the Schoenstatt Shrine, our personal apostolate of being is to be men and women "Shrines." It is a great gift to meet people with whom we feel sheltered by God....men and women who radiate the joy of being full of God....men and women who because they are full of God also demonstrate with their entire lives that they are totally free to love and shelter others....men and women who are not paralyzed or impeded by chains or idols to love and shelter others.

That is how Father Kentenich was: a man who radiated the joy of God with an open heart and who never tired of loving and sheltering others. That is how our sanctity should be, our apostolate of being: radiating joy; demonstrating our freedom to love and shelter others....our spouses, our children, our brothers and sisters....

The other aspect is the **community apostolate of being**, the witness as community. People do not only see us as individuals or couples. They see us as a community, as a Family. People look at our relationships, at how we treat one another, at our style of life. When one of us fails, people say: he/she is from this or that Family, Movement, order, parish. What happens is that they need community models. Men and women have many community problems and also search for an ideal community. Our Family, the Church and the nation needs these models.

We want to be an anticipation of the Church on the new shores and of a new social order. We have to live that now. Already in 1912, Father Kentenich told the boys of the founding generation: "what we are doing is valuable according to the measure in which it is a solution in miniature for the great problems of the world"

### Questions for reflection

1. Am I a man or woman Shrine?
2. How do others see us?
3. Do I practice what I preach

If you wish to comment on this text or give a testimony, write to: [pn.reflexiones@gmail.com](mailto:pn.reflexiones@gmail.com)

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