

Introduction to the Home Shrine Novena

Without the basic cell of the family, Schoenstatt could not exist. Father Kentenich knew this very well when he said that all the branches will be fed by the family branches and in his time in Milwaukee worked tirelessly to build up, educate and strengthen families. The Blessed Mother crowned his efforts with the gift of the Home Shrine.

The Original Shrine

In 1912 Father was concerned with the education of the boys in the seminary, "Under the protection of Mary we want to learn to educate ourselves to become firm, free, priestly personalities." He felt helpless in this task and searched for a way to bring the Blessed Mother into their lives as the primary educator. In 1914 the little chapel in Schoenstatt became a shrine when the seminarians took up Father Kentenich's suggestion to ask the Blessed Mother to erect her throne of grace in their chapel. They in turn promised to prove by their deeds that they really loved her and took their resolution seriously. The Blessed Mother rewarded their sincerity with many graces counting on their continuous cooperation.



The Daughter Shrines

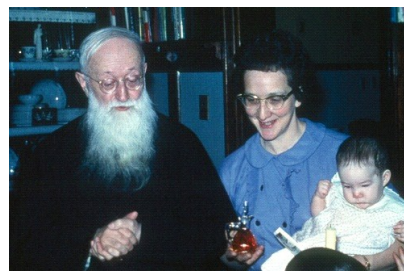
In 1943 while Father was a prisoner in Dachau the first daughter shrine was built in Uruguay where the Schoenstatt Sisters were experiencing the same helplessness in educating the people. They thought if only they could build a replica of that little shrine in the valley of Schoenstatt the people of Uruguay might experience the graces of the Mother Thrice Admirable. With their prayers and sacrifices they drew the Blessed Mother into this daughter shrine so that in union with the Original Shrine she might dispense her graces from this place as well. She rewarded their sincerity as this became the first of many daughter shrines to spread her graces far and wide. Now there are over 200 daughter shrines throughout the world, all endowed with the same miracles of grace, the grace of being at home, the grace of inner transformation and the grace of apostolic fruitfulness.

The Home Shrines

In Milwaukee in the early 1960s Father Kentenich spent much of his time with families. Some of the mothers, concerned about their own helplessness in educating their children, asked him for advice. Father Kentenich directed them to the Blessed Mother. They took the picture of grace of the Mother Thrice Admirable to their homes and gave it a place of honor. The ladies won their husbands over for their plan and the couples asked the MTA to settle in their homes and be the mother and educator of their families. The Blessed Mother rewarded their sincerity with many graces and took over the responsibility also for the adult children who did not join the spiritual efforts of their parents. Each member of the young families chose a symbol from the Shrine, for instance: the MTA picture, the tabernacle, the sanctuary lamp, the crucifix, the statue of St. Michael, the key of St. Peter, the sword of St. Paul, etc. to represent themselves in the shrine. Thus the small children more easily found a relationship to the place of grace. They started to discover the meaning of their symbols and to live it out in everyday life, so that the Blessed Mother would find some parts

of her shrine alive in their homes and feel well in their midst. Again the Blessed Mother rewarded the sincerity of these families with many graces.

Later on, in 1963, when Father Kentenich gratefully confirmed two years of faithful striving of those families — inviting the MTA to their homes and in a consecration giving to her all rights over them — he acknowledged that the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt has erected her throne of grace in their homes and coined the terms "Home Shrine" and "Living Shrine." Both are real shrines in which the MTA dispenses her special graces.



But those homes in which the entire family is united in the striving for the Blessed Mother's presence, are "Living Shrines." According to Father Kentenich, the conditions for the Blessed Mother's accepting the family's invitation and also her dispensing of the graces in each Home Shrine/Living Shrine are the same as they were for the Original Shrine in Schoenstatt.

This novena is a prayer for the perpetuation and the development of the home shrine stream in our world today. As you can see above, each stream is united to the great river of graces which flow from the heart of the Mother Thrice Admirable and from her throne in the Original Shrine.

An Invitation to join as Family in praying a Novena

We offer this nine-week novena to all those who would like to join with the Schoenstatt Family of the United States in praying for a deepening of the home shrine stream. All the prayers of the novena are taken from Father's prayers, from the "Home Song" (Heavenwards), from the "Ite Missa Est" (Mass of God's Instruments – Heavenwards) and prayers he prayed at individual home shrine blessings while he was in Milwaukee.

In the book *Birth of the Home Shrine*, Father Kentenich's first defining statement concerning the home shrine is recorded as being given on November 18, 1963:



First let me list three things in succession: We have the Original Shrine. We have daughter shrines and among the daughter shrines, central shrines. (...) Now comes a third expression, which is perhaps unfamiliar to you in this form. It is the home shrine.

What do we mean by "home shrine"? Many of us have not only dedicated their house to the Blessed Mother in general, but also offered it to her as a Living Shrine.

What I am about to say is of elementary importance for the future: Everything which holds true for the Original Shrine and for the daughter shrines also holds true for the home shrines. The Birth of the Home Shrine – Second Edition – Father Jonathan Niehaus

November 18, 2013 will be the 50th Jubilee of Father's proclamation of the home shrine as a further development of the Schoenstatt Shrine. The U.S. Schoenstatt Family will celebrate this gift for the year leading up to that date. Since this gift is a gift given to the whole Schoenstatt Family all are welcome to join in these Jubilee celebrations. Combined with the year of the *Missionary Stream* (International Schoenstatt Family) and the year of *Faith* (Universal Church) it is the intention to give to the Family and the Church the depth of Father's love for the home shrine, an integral and identifying part of the "Shadow of the Shrine."

In our founder's words: *We listen to Holy Scripture: "Lord, how good it is for us to be here!" (Mt 17, 4) We*

want to take the shrine, just as it is, with us into our families. Our family should be a living MTA Shrine. Who will transform our family into a Church in miniature - into the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church? Mother takes perfect care! – ibid

This invitation is extended to all those who are willing and able to join as an International Family in this nine week novena. The intent is to pray the novena at the start of the Home Shrine Year (October 18 – December 20, 2012) and then again at the end of the Jubilee year (September 15 – November 17, 2013).

At the beginning of each week the page of the novena for that week will be posted on Schoenstatt.org. Those who want to participate can print it or save it to their computer or just follow along on the web site week by week. If anyone would like the whole novena to print into a booklet and pass on to the local Family in your area please contact Michael & Margaret Fenelon at: homeshrinejubilee@gmail.com.

An invitation for renewal of our Home Shrines

To celebrate this year leading up to the 50th Jubilee we would also like to prepare a renewal of our home shrines drawing our hearts deeper into the beauty of this abundant gift of grace. This year to come could be the beginning of a deepening of the life-stream that our father and founder nurtured and developed during his time of exile. Could we all be encouraged to renew our home shrines in whatever way would be most meaningful for each family and each individual?

Father often spoke about how important renewal is – he would say that the spirit diminishes over time and renewal offers “a new in-break of grace.” There are many possibilities that could be chosen as a means of renewal:

- ◆ Discovering the name/ideal of the home shrine
- ◆ Working on the Living Shrine (choosing and working on symbols for each member of the family) if this hasn't already been a part of your home shrine.
- ◆ Dedicating the home shrine (if you haven't done so already) – or renewing the home shrine dedication
- ◆ Crowning the Blessed Mother in the home shrine – or renewing the crowning
- ◆ Offering our Mother the Scepter
- ◆ Enthroning the Holy Spirit Symbol
- ◆ Working toward conquering and placing the Father Eye in your home shrine.

These are some ideas of the many different ways that each individual or family could choose to work toward spiritually renewing or deepening the life of the home shrine during the coming year, so we can then pass this great gift on to others and offer this gift to our Mother for the 100th Jubilee of Schoenstatt in 2014.