

# MY HOME SHRINE - A GIFT TO THE CHURCH

Sr. Marie Day

According to statistics from the 2011 “pontifical yearbook” approximately 1.18 billion people belong to the Catholic Church, the Body of Christ. In many cases they are also living in one of the countless “domestic churches” all throughout the world! Isn’t that an awesome thought! We want to keep this in mind. I will also remind you of it.

Only God’s loving Providence could have orchestrated such a moment in time that we are now here to celebrate. What do I mean?

Let us look at the definition of “orchestrated” to understand.

**Orchestrated - it means first of all - organizing two events! What are these?**

The celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council which began with the Year of Faith on October 11, 2012 and the 50<sup>th</sup> jubilee of the birth of the home shrine - its jubilee year officially opened on October 18, 2012, seven days later. Now in 2013 these two events are running parallel with one another.

Isn’t God good!

I always marvel at how our Heavenly Father from all eternity plans a moment in time and puts everything together so that His plan unfolds down to the smallest detail. Only God can orchestrate such happenings. And because he planned these two events to come together in this moment in time - the anniversary of Vatican Two and the jubilee of the birth of the home shrine - we know they have a very important message for the Church and for our Schoenstatt Family, especially against the background of our times- Vox Temporis - Vox Dei!

**To orchestrate means to organize these two events unobtrusively - not attracting any attention until a moment in time.**

These two events that are now attracting so much attention in 2013, in this moment in time - an International Home Shrine Congress with delegates from 14 countries and from 21 states of the USA! This has truly attracted quite a bit of attention...And countless pilgrims making their way to Rome to celebrate the Year of Faith. Yes, these two events are attracting attention.

WHY are these two events attracting so much attention?

Because both of these events announce the same essential message for our time - the domestic church as proclaimed anew at the Second Vatican Council - and the home shrine where the

domestic church is realized.

WHY are these two events attracting so much attention NOW?

We know so well the situation of our countries and the entire world today. It can be summarized: the attempt to destroy marriage and family. When marriage and family, the foundation of society, are destroyed we damage and annihilate society itself.

Already in 1932, Father said:

“What is the central problem of daily life? It is marriage and family. Therefore every organization must put its money where its mouth is and ask itself: What are we doing to create holy marriages and holy families? The ideal which we are working for here is to create islands of Catholic marriages. In the same way as did the early Christians, we must lift ourselves up by the Catholic ideal of marriage from the pagan world around us...Something like a storm should rage through our country - a storm of holy surrender for the renewal of the family. A large religious movement of elemental significance should come into being.” (The Birth of the Home Shrine, Second Edition, Fr. J. Niehaus)

How much more urgently Father would direct these words to us today!

Let us continue with our definition....

**To orchestrate means - that a desired effect or outcome is achieved...**

**What is the effect that we desire from these two events, from the focus on the domestic church?**

The effect we wish to achieve is number ONE - to bring the gift of the home shrine more fully into the Church for the renewal of our world through the renewal of marriage and of the family. Father Kentenich reiterates what is needed:

“Now the Blessed Mother wants to withdraw into our little shrine and there educate all the members of the family, inspiring them anew so that they become deeply religious people. She also wants to relieve father and mother of some of the burden of their educational responsibilities. She, therefore, will not only take care that the children grow up in a pronounced religious and Marian atmosphere, she will also take over the responsibility for seeing to it that under her protection and guidance the whole family will navigate victoriously through the secularized atmosphere of our day.” **(The Home Shrine)**

And number TWO - to fulfill the promise of our father and founder to Pope Paul VI.

In the audience on December 22, 1965, the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, confirmed father's rehabilitation, that is, his restoration to his previous position in the Schoenstatt Work. On that occasion, the founder assured the Holy Father that, **'together with his Family, he would make every effort to actualize the post-conciliar mission of the Church as perfectly as possible'**.

In a talk to the couples here in Milwaukee, on April 13, 1956, Father also pointed to our mission for the Church. He said:

"When we think of Schoenstatt in America {and we can each add our countries}...Our Blessed Mother wants to use us as her instruments. We can compare the Church with an ocean. It has many streams. Schoenstatt is such a stream, that goes deep down into the Church... In our time, God and the Blessed Mother want to use Schoenstatt as an instrument. The MTA waits for our yes to this calling."

As Father's children we wish to continue to carry out his promise, specifically the mission of the post-conciliar Church in the light of the "domestic church".

Vox Temporis - Vox Dei - against the background of our time today it becomes apparent that the domestic church - the home shrine - is **THE** answer for the renewal of the world, for it serves to renew marriage and family, the basic foundation of society.

Let us therefore ask two questions:

What is the domestic church?

What is the home shrine?

With the answer to this first question we shall see that yes - The domestic church is NOW! FOR IT IS THE ANSWER FOR THE RENEWAL OF OUR TIME!

The teaching and understanding of what the "domestic church" is as found in many of the documents of the Church show us that holy families can be formed in these domestic churches if they truly are what God has planned them to be. Listen to just a few of these documents:

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church we read that the domestic church is where the father of the family, the mother and the children exercise the priesthood of the baptized. It is the first school of Christian life and a school for human enrichment where all members of the family learn endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, and generous forgiveness.

In the **Rights of the Family on the Threshold of the Third Millennium**, our then Holy Father John Paul II spoke much about the domestic church. He said that the domestic church is the place where parents build up one another, in which the children are brought up in the faith. He speaks very clearly that the future evangelization depends largely on the domestic church.

**In Familiaris Consortio**, John Paul II wrote that families who live in a domestic church should be able to radiate joy, warmth, a welcoming spirit and be proclaimers of the Gospel by their very being. In this way they fulfill their family apostolate also to non-Christians and non-believers.

**In Celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Familiaris Consortio in 2001**, John Paul II spoke of the family as that “Church in miniature” which means that it is in the family that the members grow in faith, and find encouragement to live a life under the banner of self-giving and a common life of solidarity.

On February 7, 2007, our then Holy Father Benedict XVI stated:

“Every home is called to become a “domestic church” in which family life is completely centered on the lordship of Christ and the love of husband and wife mirrors the mystery of Christ’s love for the Church, his bride.”

Let us summarize the qualities that are found in a domestic church -

- \*The love of husband and wife mirroring the mystery of Christ’s love for his Church
- \*Parents who build each other up, who stand in reverence before each other
- \*Where the family exercises the priesthood of Baptism with a family life centered on the Lordship of Christ
- \*Where they learn endurance, joy, fraternal charity and generous forgiveness
- \*Where the family proclaims the Gospel by example and in words
- \*Where the family radiates warmth and a welcoming spirit to all
- \*Where every member of the family is encouraged to live a life under the banner of self-giving and a life of solidarity

With these qualities the outcome has to be holy marriages, holy families and a holy Church. When these qualities are present in a family, the domestic church is alive and well!

Do you remember my opening statement that according to statistics....approximately 1.18 billion people belong to the Catholic Church? In many cases they are also living in one of the countless “domestic churches” all throughout the world.

Now my question is: if there really are 1.18 billion Catholics....and in many cases they are also living in one of the countless “domestic churches” all throughout the world....why are our countries and world in the shape they are today when we see what the domestic church is and what a power of formation and transformation can come from it?

I found the following article on the internet - maybe it gives us an answer to the question I just posed. This article was written by Thomas Knieps - Port Le Roi. He is a Roman Catholic theologian. He holds the INTAMS chair {The International Academy of Marital Spirituality}

at the Faculty and Theology of the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. He writes:

“In the growing body of theological and spiritual literature on marriage and family in recent years there is hardly any publication which does not explicitly refer to the ‘domestic church’. Christian families are said to be or called to become ‘little churches in the home’. Authors providing popular spiritual guidance seem to ally themselves with highly respected theological scholars, and even the most recent magisterial teaching of the Roman Catholic Church has assumed a leading position in propagating the term and concept. In spite of, or should one rather say because of, this broad interest, the concept itself still today dwells in a “doctrinal vacuum”, as Michael A. Fahey stated already in the 1990's. What is perhaps more alarming, however, is that one does not see how this concept could be translated into the concrete situation in which families and the Christian churches find themselves at present. Instead, with regard to an emerging theology of the family just as within the realm of ecclesiology, the “domestic church” does not represent much more than a **pious metaphor.**”

A **pious metaphor** - just a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to something which is not literally applicable. Is this how the author sees the domestic church - not something that is meant literally? Is he referring to it as simply a symbolic expression but not meant literally - that when we say domestic church we mean domestic church?

Saying that as it is, let us now ask the second question: what is the home shrine?

The time of the home shrine is NOW? Yes, FOR IT IS THE ANSWER TO CHANGE THE PIOUS METAPHOR OF THE DOMESTIC CHURCH INTO A LITERAL REALITY.

*The home shrine helps to make the domestic church a tangible reality in the home. It is the visible center of the little church, the family.*

What is the home shrine? We will look at several definitions.

The home shrine is **the place of the lived domestic church**. What does lived mean? It means.....

*Active, alive, continuing in existence or use, vibrant, bustling, flourishing, successful, blooming!*

For the home shrine to be effective, to be truly a domestic church and not just a pious metaphor, it has to be alive - vibrant, successful, flourishing with the activity of the Blessed Mother and her Divine Son. For our home shrine to be “alive” we know that means for us the living of our covenant of love, faithfully fulfilling the six demands of the covenant -

*Prove first by your deeds that you love me  
Increase your striving to the highest degree*

*This sanctification I demand of you  
Diligently bring me contributions to the capital of grace  
Faithfully fulfill your duties  
Lead a zealous life of prayer*

All these are our contributions to the capital of grace! If we are not faithful to our covenant, to the bringing of our contributions to the capital of grace - we tie the hands of the Blessed Mother and she cannot carry out her task as the Mother, the Queen, the educator, the Mediatrix of Graces, the great antidiabolicum from our home shrines.

If we do not do our part, our home shrine “dies”, there is silence, there is no activity on the part of the Blessed Mother. It is simply a beautiful corner some place in our home - nothing more. A place where one finds only dust and clutter! Then even the home shrine is a pious metaphor.

Father tells us:

“Perhaps there is no other place of grace which has come into existence in such an original way as has Schoenstatt. We believe that Our Lady was drawn here by our contributions. Therefore we speak of the fruit of the free divine choice and activity, and our human co-operation. From the beginning we taught that from the moment people ceased to strive for true holiness {living the covenant of love}, we could expect Our Lady to depart from our Schoenstatt Shrines.

Do you notice how important this is for our home shrine? It is clear that if you allow things to continue as they have in your home, the home shrine becomes meaningless {dead}. It is not as though we could say: We stopped once - hence Our Lady left us. No! She has obliged herself to stay for a time. She is kind. But in the long run, if we stop, she will also stop.” (HS)

A Schoenstatt family who joined a new parish wished to get to know some of the parishoners. It was a custom in this parish that families could sign up to invite other families to come to their home for a meal so they could get to know one another. This Schoenstatt family decided to do this. When the families invited arrived that evening for supper, they greeted the owners of the home very quickly because they were drawn immediately to the home shrine as soon as the door opened as they saw the home shrine before them in all its majesty! The entire evening was spent talking about Schoenstatt, the covenant and the home shrine. When the invited guests left they made the request: we want a home shrine! They must have experienced: “It is good to be here”! The Schoenstatt family was very excited and began a Schoenstatt group at their parish with 20 people taking part and all with one desire - we want a home shrine. Many from this group have already made the covenant of love and are now preparing for their home shrine dedications in this year of the jubilee of the home shrine.

That is a home shrine that is alive. We see that the Blessed Mother is hard at work, touching many youthful hearts and drawing them to herself as her instruments to help in the moral and religious renewal of the world. Twenty new home shrines! Twenty new, alive domestic churches.

Little four year old Maggie had to go to the dentist. Her mother dreaded it because Maggie would scream the entire time the dentist was trying to work on her teeth. For this trip to the dentist Maggie's mother had begged her husband to take her but because of work that day he could not do it. So Maggie's mother was preparing herself for this event. As she was walking down the stairs she saw Maggie kneeling in the home shrine and she heard her pray: Dear Mama Mary, help me to be very brave at the dentist today. Amen.

Maggie did not see her mother and did not know she had heard her prayer. Off they went to the dentist. Maggie's mother was eager to see what would happen, how the Blessed Mother would answer this child's plea! When the receptionist came to ask who would like to go first - Maggie or her brother - Maggie said very quickly - I do - and mom you do not have to come with me this time. Maggie walked in there and you could not hear one little noise from her as the dentist cleaned her teeth.

The home shrine where Maggie prayed was alive - the Blessed Mother took right over and helped her to be very brave.

Little Rachel was having trouble with her math problems. She asked her mother to be excused for a moment. She went to the home shrine and asked the Blessed Mother to please help her. She came back and was able to figure out all of her math problems. In a living home shrine the Blessed Mother takes care of all details - she is even a master at Math!

And yet another example of a lived domestic church...

Their home shrine was very much alive and the Blessed Mother worked from there as a powerful Queen. A mother found out that two of her sons were going to be deployed to fight in the Gulf War. Years ago, an older son had fought in Viet Nam. This mother went to her home shrine and told the Blessed Mother she could not go through this again.

They were already planning to crown the Blessed Mother in their home shrine. All of sudden the mother got the idea - following the example of our Father in New York and offered the crown to the Blessed Mother saying to her: You see this crown - you can have this crown if you:

Take care that my boys do not have to go to war OR  
If they have to go to war they will come back OR  
If they will be called into eternity their souls will be ready

This mother had great trust in her Covenant Partner very present in her home shrine. She made sure she brought many contributions to the capital of grace and took the demands of her covenant

seriously, so that the Blessed Mother could be very active from this spot and work a miracle for her boys. Daily she would offer the crown to the Blessed Mother.

After some time she received the news that neither of her boys would be going to war although the one had been told to pack his bags and they would be leaving on this day at this time. That day nor time never came.

We see what great things can and do happen from our lived domestic church!

After their home shrine dedication, a family placed a petition book in the home shrine. It was the mother's way to attach her children - especially the boys to the home shrine. They made very good use of the petition book! They asked the Blessed Mother for a new guitar at a garage sale that only cost this much. It was found for just that price. They asked for help in tests at school, strength to run in the track meet and maybe to win... There little Mary wrote a petition in the book. She did not get an answer so she had to write it again. Her mother asked her why? She simply said that the Blessed Mother must not have read it the first time so she was writing it again.

This home shrine right in the middle of the living room is so very much alive and the family lives their daily life with the Blessed Mother asking her for help in all their concerns and wishes.

The home shrine is....

**\*A place of practical lived faith - practical faith in Divine Providence**

In our home shrines the Blessed Mother reigns as the Queen of Faith, the child of heroic faith in Divine Providence. She was always aware of her dependence on God and his plan for her life. Her soul was available for the wishes of the Father at every instant of her life. Her faithfulness encompassed all; her faithfulness enriched all; her faithfulness is without boundaries.

She wishes to give to us through her example and through her intercession the grace, that our faith too is alive, that we too live each moment of our lives out of the practical faith in Divine Providence.

Father, in speaking to the couples on April 24, 1961, spoke of this living faith:

“Last Monday, we began to - well, shall I call it - enter into the school of faith, a lesson in faith. Who was our teacher? It was the apostle and the disciple of love, St. John. Do you still remember the theme song? It is a deep and far-reaching word and it reads: Everyone born of God has overcome the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.

To say it more precisely: the one who will be able to overcome this modern world, with



all its difficulties is the one who has living faith in Christ and in his teachings.”

And on July 30, 1961, Father spoke about faith in Divine Providence:

“I told you once before, how the theologians have the conviction that part of our eternal bliss consists in recognizing and understanding the ways of God during our earthly life. We also would see then why God created us, and what special mission he gave us; that seemingly through a riddle, God was leading us to the accomplishment of his plan for us. I think that part of this bliss we can anticipate already. And in what way can we do this? By seeing the happenings in our lives in the light of faith, in order to find out through these events what God wanted. Many things we recognize already. What we do not recognize at the moment will become clearer if we live completely in the spirit of faith. Then we will learn slowly to master life. If we learn from the past, we will master the future. Then the attitude awakens in us “No matter what happens, I only want to fulfill the wish of God” as it becomes evident to me through this or that situation in my life.

Now at the end we may think over how our Blessed Mother was not only the Mother of Divine Providence, but how she exemplified faith in Divine Providence in her own life. What does it mean Mother of Divine Providence and faith in Divine Providence? She has the task {from our home shrines} of interceding from the Holy Spirit the great grace of faith in Divine Providence. This is one of the most beautiful gifts that we can impart in the education of our children. And our example as a father and mother are the great power that can prepare our children for such a gift. Therefore, once more;

God is Father, God is good,  
Everything He does is good!”

A mother belonged to a Schoenstatt Mother’s League group. She had made the covenant and had a home shrine. She was able to draw her family into the world of Schoenstatt. One night there was a fire in their home. Her husband and two of their five children lost their lives in the fire. The only thing that was standing of the house when the fire was finally extinguished was the wall where the home shrine “is” - it was still there. The Blessed Mother hung radiantly on that wall.

At the funeral, a person came up to this mother and expressed, very ignorantly, that if she had not joined Schoenstatt and made that covenant and had that home shrine this terrible tragedy would not have happened to her. In her great sorrow, this mother simply stated that this was in the plan of God from all eternity, was part of his loving Providence. Then she went on to explain that God had given her Schoenstatt and very much the teaching on the practical faith in Divine Providence so that she would have the grace from her home shrine - that was still standing - to go through this time.

You see, she tried to explain, God knew this was going to happen and so he gave me what I needed

to go through it - my covenant, my home shrine, my deep faith.

You see, establishing a tangibly Marian and religious atmosphere in the home {through the home shrine} helps the family members acquire the fundamental attitude of the Blessed Mother and her basic disposition to God - a child of a living faith and of a childlike belief in Divine Providence.

A little two year old ran into the house one afternoon trying to tell her mother that her big brother - four year old Thomas - was at the bottom of the pool. When the mother finally understood, she ran outside, jumped into the pool, grabbed Thomas and ran into the house. As she was running to call 911 she was trying to resuscitate him at the same time. In running she slipped on a throw rug and dropped little Thomas on the floor. That fall was enough to force him to begin breathing. Then the ambulance arrived and took over the care of Thomas. The mother quietly went to the home shrine, lit her covenant candle and prayed. She had such a peace and confidence that Thomas would be alright. God had already shown her that by seeing to it that from all eternity that rug would be there that she needed to trip over to drop her son so he would begin breathing again.

Divine Providence has a perfect plan and she could be so calm. God is Father. God is good. Good is everything he does. Thomas is now a fine young man, perfectly healthy in every way.

We all know and experience how challenging life is - the many injustices, the unfairness of life, the crosses and sufferings, the tragedies. We are also aware that in these situations many people turn away from God, they become angry and bitter. For us, in our home shrine, we receive the grace to see God's loving Providence in every event and happening. The Blessed Mother helps us to accept the Father's will and even come to the point to find joy in it and to be able to say thank you - even for the crosses. Without this living faith in Divine Providence you and I will not be able to master life today and grow through it to the heights of sanctity. These graces we receive from our home shrine.

Each home shrine is unique because each family has its own originality. The uniqueness of Mary's activity is captured and expressed in the name of the home shrine. This name also expresses the ideal, the mission of the family. Therefore, the name is very important.

An example:

When a family was searching for the name of their home shrine they chose HEROIC CONFIDENCE? Why? When they looked into their lives, they saw that every step of the journey demanded of them trust, heroic confidence, unshakeable belief in Divine Providence. It was as if God would take them again and again to the abyss and then "save" them. After they had their home shrine dedicated, their lives have continued in the same way, but now they can deal with these events with greater peace and calm and a carefreeness because of the special graces the Blessed Mother offers to them from this home shrine. This family also sees it as their mission from their home

shrine to help many others follow the plan of God for their lives without anxiety, fear and worry.

The home shrine is also

**\*A place of evangelization**

The family's task to evangelize is of utmost importance.

Pope Paul VI wrote On Evangelization in the Modern World (1975),

“One cannot fail to stress the evangelizing action of the family in the evangelizing apostolate of the laity. He pointed out that the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. Such families - living out of their domestic churches, he concludes, should become the evangelizers of many families.....”

It was on November 19, 1963, a day after the proclamation of the founding of the home shrine that our Father said:

“The third grace this family would like to ask of you is the grace of apostolic fruitfulness. They want to be fruitful here on earth for the Kingdom of God. First, they want to be apostles for each other. The children should be examples for one another just as the parents strive to be good examples for them. But what they wish most from you, dear Mother and Queen of Schoenstatt, is that they become a little paradise on earth...”

A home shrine evangelization victory story!

Mrs. Smith had made her covenant and with her family had invited the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt to establish her throne of grace in their home. Her husband had been dealing with alcoholism for a long time. Now she found out that he was also addicted to pornography. Praying in her home shrine, she asked the Blessed Mother to show her the way she could be used as an instrument to help her husband be transformed, to give up these addictions. She made it clear that she was not going to leave him for marriage was forever. Mrs. Smith saw her field of “evangelization” was her husband. She was aware that she herself could not change him but the Blessed Mother could from the home shrine with the grace of inner transformation if she did her part: filling the capital of grace in the home shrine on his behalf.

After three years of struggle and pain, and faithfulness in prayer and begging, her husband is now “free” of his addictions - at least for three years already! For them all the credit goes to the activity of the Blessed Mother with her Divine Son in the home shrine.

This couple is today an example of faithfulness, of conversion - something all families can attain if

they turn to the Blessed Mother and all of the supernatural powers. And I think we can dare to say - something all families need in one way or another.

Here is another evangelization event!

When the children were small, Family Jones would pray the Rosary together in the home shrine. When one of the boys became a teenager he refused to pray with the family. His mother was wise and did not push him, but each evening she would invite him and let him know what time they would be praying. He never went to the home shrine to pray with them.

One evening as the family was praying, the phone rang and the mother answered - something she usually did not do when they were praying - the person who called needed something right away. Mrs. Jones had to go upstairs to her room to get it. She passed the room of her son - the door was half open. She saw him kneeling at the side of his bed praying the Rosary. This mother was deeply touched and her heart was filled with gratitude as to how the Blessed Mother works as the great Missionary, the evangelizer in our lives in many different ways.

In speaking of the life and function of the family, John Paul II in Familiaris Consortio said that by receiving the love of Christ through the Church, they become a saved community and they are then called upon to communicate Christ's love to their brethren, thus becoming a saving community. It is a place of evangelization.

A family had their home shrine dedication - a beautiful Holy Mass in their home. They named their Home Shrine - the Annunciation. All the children picked a symbol in the Shrine. At this time many of their children were already teenagers and so they did not have much of an attachment to the home shrine even with a symbol. Once the children were grown and out of the house, whenever anyone of them were in need of anything, they would call their mother and ask her to light a candle in the home shrine and pray in their particular intention. They also told their friends about the power of this home shrine, how they had received help in so many ways. Many, many years - actually forty years - after the home shrine dedication they are still calling her. This mother finds great consolation in seeing very tangibly how the Blessed Mother is working in each of their lives drawing them in her own way from the Annunciation home shrine that they too can say yes to the Good News and bring it to many others as well.

#### **\*A radiating center of holiness**

The home shrine, as our cradle of sanctity, becomes the place where we are formed into saints who can go out into our world being unaffected by it and helping to sanctify it, radiating its power into the world as stated by Pope John Paul II on May 13, 1982. Our home shrine has a great power of radiation. He said:

“...In certain places the Mother's presence is felt in a particularly vivid way. These places

sometimes radiate their light over a great distance and draw people from afar. Their radiance may extend over a diocese, a whole nation, or at times over several countries and even continents. These places are the Marian sanctuaries or shrines.”

As a radiating center of holiness in our home, the home shrine gives us the grace to go out from our homes.

On May 14, 1965, Father said:

“The difficult problem is: what do we who live in the world do? Since we belong to our dear Mother of God and Schoenstatt through the covenant of love {and Father would add today because of our home shrine} we are convinced that we do not want to merely walk once through the world in order to reach heaven above by the skin of our teeth. We really should become holy.

Our task consists in remaining in the world, to judge the worth of the world correctly, and to use the world to attain God...

... I want to show you what it means to go through the day with the loving God. You see, we people of the world usually leave the loving God behind. We always think that to be in the world means to be separated from God. If I now may tell you what system one can apply in order to gradually learn something similar, then I want to give you three answers. Firstly, I must often look at the loving God in faith; secondly, to speak often very originally with the loving God, and then, thirdly, to make many sacrifices out of love for the loving God and out of the spirit of faith.

You see, to look at the loving God so he really lives in us. I think, for instance, if you look at your children - not only how beautiful and talented they are exteriorly - if you look more deeply and see that the loving God dwells in the child and I love the loving God in the child, then everything receives a different basic aspect. The same is when I as a husband communicate with my wife and I as a wife communicate with my husband. It is always the same idea that I must seek contact with the loving God everywhere...

Is it a little bit clearer what I want to tell you? We want to remain in the world and use the world to go to the loving God...”

If the home shrine is a radiating center of holiness, you can read such a letter from children that are growing up in the shadow of such an atmosphere.

*Written by John:*

“Father Kentenich is a good priest. Thank you for Father Kentenich coming to bless our

house. Father Brell is also a good priest. Our home is a good home. When I grow up I think I will be priest like Father Kentenich too. Thank you for taking care of our family, Blessed Mother.”

*Written by Joey:*

*“We’ve got a good family. Sister gave a kitty to me. Me and John ride bikes. Father Brell is a nice priest. We took pictures of Father Kentenich. We made funny pictures. Paul was a good baby today. We went to the chapel. We had a good time. We had a good supper. We’ve got a good dad and mom. We’ve got a good house. Thank you for daddy bringing lots of good stuff, the lamp and the rug. Dad is the best dad in the whole world and mom is the best mom in the whole world. It is fun to go to the store. Mary has ice and John has ice. Thank you for grandma and grandpa coming to our house. John is an “eweebum”. One time John took the batteries out of the train and put them back in. We have the best family in the world.” (A Tribute to the Memory of Father Joseph Kentenich - Mr. G)*

The home shrine is a very important tool for us in building the Kingdom of God, for it creates a supernatural atmosphere in our profane world. This sacred atmosphere of the home shrine gives us the strength to make every effort possible to live our lives in this world by divine standards, living with the loving God throughout the day and seeing God in everyone and in every event in the world.

On January 4, 1967, Father confirmed that it is in the home shrine where we find this sacred atmosphere so that our little family is a radiating center of holiness in the world.

“We intend to prepare a place in our home where the atmosphere of the shrine can be created, a place that inhales this atmosphere and breathes it out again...We must live in this modern world today and at the same time be totally a part of the supernatural world. We know well the kind of breeze that blows through every place we go. It is not at all permeated by the supernatural spirit. We need certain places where we can inhale the supernatural atmosphere, otherwise we might be in the danger of losing ground under our feet. The home shrine will guarantee that spirit...Here we can take in the supernatural atmosphere in order to be immune against the spirit of the secularized world...When we constantly inhale the atmosphere of the shrine, our hearts become a sanctuary also. Then we can go out to our work places, immune to the spirit of our time and creatively active as well. The divine, supernatural atmosphere will flow through our being into our surroundings. We ourselves become moving, acting little sanctuaries.”

A father writes;

“As a father I found it most difficult to really feel at home in the home shrine. It was only very slowly that I was able to make the first steps to this place of holiness. As I am writing

this, I am sitting in the home shrine. I asked myself: Why am I sitting in the home shrine rather than in another room as I would have done formerly? I have to quietly laugh to myself and admit: Where else could I find such peace? Here we all feel secure. From here we experience that we are growing in holiness. Even the children restrain their steps when they pass through this room. Here we pray; here important decisions are made; here clear and creative thoughts are born. Here the burden and worries of the day fall away. Here we also place all our failures before our MTA with the firm conviction that her merciful love will make up for everything. Here we believe she is forming us into the image of her Son to send us out to help renew our world.”

The home shrine is...

**\*Our mission for the world!**

Schoenstatt has a mission for the entire world! **And we are grateful to be part of this mission!** From our home shrine - in the light of the name of our home shrine - the Blessed Mother sends us out to bring the Good News to all corners of the world! We go with our Great missionary as her little missionaries.

It was on May 22, 1961 when Father explained our mission {from our home shrine} for the world. He told the couples:

“Through the covenant of love we dedicate body and soul to the Blessed Mother and her mission which she has for the family from the shrine. Isn’t it true that this reaches much deeper? She gives us her mission, in particular that mission which she has from the shrine. Through our dedication, we have voluntarily and freely accepted this mission as the content of our lives.

May I repeat the question: What does this mission look like? It is the mission she has given to the Schoenstatt Family from the Shrine for our time. We accept this mission. Isn’t it so that, if I know what mission she has given to the family then I also know what my mission is. Therefore the concrete question: what does the mission look like which she gave to our family? We gave a three-fold answer to this question last Saturday. What did we call it? What mission does the family have?

First, the family shall be an **ark** in the deluge of modern times.

Secondly, what is our family to be? We again look at it as the **capsule** for our modern times.

Third, I think we should choose an expression which I did not use last Saturday so that we will understand it even better. The family is the **cenacle** where the Blessed Mother works in a unique way.”

Listen to this family's mission for the world!

A family had their home shrine dedication. The nine year old girl, who was born with arthritis and had suffered all her life, took as her symbol the cross. She prayed that she wanted to carry her cross as Jesus did and that she wanted to help her family carry their crosses and the {entire world} in imitation of Jesus.

Her mission from the home shrine was to teach the world the value of suffering, the redemptive power of suffering by her example of the way she accepted her cross.

Her entire life has been marked with the cross in many different ways but she gets up each time and beginning anew after each fall, after each cross and it is probably because of her symbol in the home shrine - the cross picked over 30 years ago. She has touched many people in the years since she chose this symbol.

Being a missionary at the University!

The daughter of a couple began her university studies. She was having a difficult time at school. In her frustration she wanted to just quit. Her Dad offered her his office shrine to take to her dorm room. She gratefully accepted it. As soon as the Blessed Mother set up her throne in her dorm room, everything changed. She found peace, she found good friends who had the values as she has, her studies were easier ...and from this little corner the MTA reaches out to all who come to her dorm room - and perhaps throughout the university - for our Blessed Mother has a mission for the entire world.

As we now summarize what the home shrine is:

- a place of the lived domestic church**
- a place of practical faith - practical faith in Divine Providence**
- a place of evangelization**
- a radiating center of holiness in the world**
- a place from where we fulfill our mission for the world**

We can see that it is the home shrine that can free the domestic church from being a pious metaphor

*for the home shrine - with what it is - helps make the domestic church a tangible reality..*

**Therefore we can say with great confidence that the time of the home shrine is NOW in order to remove the pious metaphor and save the world.**

On December 13, 1963, Father said:

If our heavenly Mother blesses our endeavors, that means we have discovered the future



direction of pastoral care. Please think over the fact that we often speak of a pluralistic society, a society lacking a distinctly Catholic atmosphere. This is a very difficult situation. How will the correct atmosphere be created, and who will have the burden of bringing it about? It will have to be created by families in their own homes. That's why, when I bless a home shrine, I like to speak about "islands that are moving". It is not as if the islands are large. They are tiny islands where a vibrant Christian spirit prevails.

I would like to say - Alleluia - we realize how important the home shrine is for the Church and world! If our countries do not change is it because our home shrines are not alive, effective! Will we one day have to stand before God in judgment for the awesome gift we received and did not make good use of it?

In conclusion, we need to ask two more questions:

1. Why aren't our home shrines making a greater impact in our world?

I have two thoughts for us to consider:

\*Have I tied the hands of the Blessed Mother in my home shrine because of not striving seriously to live my part of the covenant?

\*Do I see my home shrine, as mine, how it helps me and forget that Schoesntatt is also an apostolic movement. How am I bringing the message of the home shrine to others?

2. How can we bring the home shrine more fully into the Church as our gift to help renew our countries, the Church and the world? Did we find a practical point from our discussions yesterday?

In conclusion, Father tells us:

"In making our house into a home shrine, we need not look with fear at all the great crisis still awaiting us... we can be certain, therefore, that we are not at all near the end of the crisis of our modern times. But for these times also the Blessed Mother wants to work from her shrines." (HSB)

It truly is the answer to the world situation today. God has given us this gift in our time. Let us with great joy and gratitude go forth to share this gift with the 1.18 billion people that make up the Body of Christ throughout the world....

Isn't God good!