

Believe me that I am in the Father
and the Father is in me
(Jn 14,11)

"... But above all my heart"



In remembrance of our deceased confrere

Fr Günther M. Boll

Schoenstatt Father

Born 17 January 1931
Ordained to the priesthood on 20 October 1963
Died on 16 July 2014

After **Fr Günther M. Boll**, who was still relatively well, had celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood on Mount Sion in September 2013 in the midst of many confreres from the international community of Fathers, we soon noticed an increasing deterioration in his condition. At the beginning of this year he was admitted to the Care Home run by the Brothers of Charity in Horbach, near Montabaur. It was there, on 16 July 2014, the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel, that he departed for the house of the eternal Father surrounded by a number of his confreres.

Fr Boll was one of the members of the community of Schoenstatt Fathers who set his stamp on its founding phase. The International Schoenstatt Movement counts him among the most outstanding interpreters of Fr Kentenich and his God-given charism.

Fr Günther M. Boll was born in Frankfurt am Main to an open-minded and believing family. He remained deeply attached to his parents, Theodor and Maria Boll, as well as his brother and sister, Siglinde and Manfred, throughout his life. He was always grateful for the incomparable starting capital he had received in a genuinely human and intact Christian family.

Günther Boll went to school mainly in Frankfurt am Main, although for a time this was interrupted by the upheavals of World War II, when he was sent to Aschaffenburg. It became a trademark of the highly gifted student (school leaving examination 1951) that he not only devoured books, but virtually whole "libraries". His main interest was literature – and he had eclectic tastes! – in the fields of history, art and religion. Is it possible to be really modern and at the same time a believer? This was a key question of his youth. As an expression of his search for a timely synthesis, he took up employment for a time at Frankfurt Airport, where he did statistical analysis of popular flight routes, and could have had a promising career. It also influenced his decision for a religious calling in the service of the Church, and his entry into the Novitiate of the Pallottine Society.

During his youth Günther Boll came into contact with the Schoenstatt Men's Youth Movement. The religious world behind a new ecclesial movement captured him more than advancement in a civil occupation. He spent 1952-1954 in the Pallottine Novitiate at Olpe, Westphalia. In this time he grew ever more deeply into Schoenstatt's spirituality and that of the Pallottine Society. He also became friends with confreres who came to Germany from Chile to receive their spiritual formation. This friendship lasted throughout his life and had a beneficial effect on the international exchange of life within the Schoenstatt Movement.

In 1955 Günther Boll and his Novitiate course moved to the Pallottine College at Vallendar, Schoenstatt, in order to continue his studies in philosophy and theology. This occurred at the time of the episcopal and papal Visitation of Schoenstatt, which led to Fr Kentenich's dismissal from his spiritual tasks in Schoenstatt, and to his long exile in the United States. In the discussion for or against Fr Kentenich's charism that followed, Günther Boll and some of the students with him took a very clear stand to him, even though it jeopardised their continued membership in the Pallottine community and their way to the priesthood in this community. The superiors of the Pallottine Society felt compelled to exclude Günther Boll and the

group around him from the College community, with the prospect that this dismissal would make their ordination impossible.

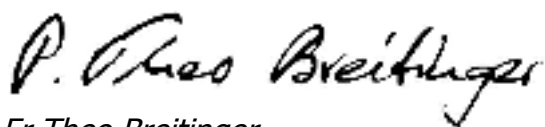
In the time that followed, possibilities arose for him to continue his studies in theology in Fribourg, Switzerland, and to gain his licentiate.

A small group of friends who had met the same fate gathered around Günther Boll in Fribourg. They prepared themselves for the priesthood and waited for the moment when divine guidance would enable them to help found a new community of Fathers in the service of Schoenstatt. Fr Kentenich, who was in exile, later interpreted the course and fate of what was at first a small group, as a new divine initiative. It had taken place without the least influence on his part.

In 1963 steps were undertaken to enable Günther Boll to be ordained to the priesthood despite all the predictions to the contrary. The Archbishop of La Plata, Argentina, Monsignor Plaza, declared that he was prepared to ordain him to the priesthood and release him for his future tasks within Schoenstatt. When Günther Boll was finally ordained on 20 October 1963 in the shrine at Florencio Varela, Buenos Aires, Fr Kentenich made the significant statement, "From now on everything will be successful", that is, the Blessed Mother would bring about the end of our founder's exile, and make it possible for him to round off his foundation.

After his ordination, Fr Boll, who belonged to the innermost core of the new community of Fathers, was able to work for decades within this community. His work was richly blessed. Immediately after the canonical erection and recognition of the new community on 18 July 1965, he immediately played his part in its government, and remained in this position until 1998. In particular he took over responsibility for two fields: In the field of formation and training as Novice Master, he introduced a number of young courses into the community, and was later able to accompany them as the Tertian Master. He also played a decisive role in developing the "*Ratio educandi*" as a whole, and attempted to create space for the theological training of the members within the community.

From 1998 Fr Boll undertook his first continuous work as a priest outside his own community. He was entrusted with the office of priestly assistant to the Schoenstatt Family Institute. As such he travelled a number of times around the world, just as he had done previously as the educator of the young Fathers. In this time he often went to Frankfurt airport, not as a technical employee, but as Schoenstatt's ambassador. From there he travelled to every continent, and got to know and value as few have been able to do the international obligations of the Schoenstatt Movement that had in the meanwhile spread worldwide. There is no doubt that Fr Boll is one of the outstanding spiritual sons and collaborators of Fr Kentenich. What our founder had invested in Günther Boll over years of personal encounters became a blessing to Fr Kentenich's foundation all over the world.



Fr Theo Breitinger

Provincial Superior

Translation: Mary Cole, England