

S.Em. Cardinale Camillo Ruini

Vicario Generale di Sua Santità per la Diocesi di Roma

Presidente della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana

Eminences, Excellences, Authorities, Reverent Priests, Dear Schoenstatt Family,

With joy I convey to you the salutations of the Italian bishops as sign of their solidarity with you. I rejoice that I may share with you the joy, gratitude and hope that surely fill the hearts of the international Schoenstatt family on this very significant day.

Most of all I share your *joy*. Finally today, the promise is fulfilled that was made to Father Kentenich 1965 on his 80th birthday here in Rome at the same time when Vatican II was concluded. Today we will solemnly dedicate the international Schoenstatt shrine with the mission “Omni Matri Ecclesiae”, everything for Mary, the Mother of the Church and everything for the Church, the mother of all believers. It is a shrine where and from where the motherly functions of Mary are continuously renewed as she is the “Mater ter Admirabilis”, Mother thrice Admirable. We can well imagine that Father Kentenich shares our joy today and exclaims just as the archangel Gabriel has done: “Rejoice, Mary!”, for on this hill of Belmonte, your name will be glorified by thousands of pilgrims from all over the globe. Once more all the people will call you blessed; your intercession will continue to change the water of our life into the wine of grace and grant us the benefit of the work of salvation of your Son Jesus Christ. The Italian genius who had praised you as “virgin, mother,

daughter of your Son” unites himself spiritually with the genius of Schoenstatt who called you “Mother thrice Admirable”.

Furthermore I share your *gratitude*. Many have cooperated that this shrine would become a reality. Many have believed in it even then, when there was no more hope; recently many also have offered their lives for this international center of Belmonte. Their memory will be for us grace and blessing. There were many technical difficulties, there were many obstacles, and always different ones, blocking the way, there were many delusions and disappointments. Many times when they got one step ahead and one step away from the abyss, they got discouraged and repeated with the words of Mary at the wedding feast at Cana: “They have no more wine!” Today, this dream has become reality. Therefore, in the name of all those present here, but also in the name of all those who will be celebrating this day of grace in their diverse countries, I want to thank in particular the institute of the diocesan priests who have carried “the burden and the heat of the day” especially concerning the planning and the actual construction. I want to thank also the general presidium who supported and encouraged this project. Thanks also to the institutes represented here in Rome, the Schoenstatt sisters of Mary, the ladies of Schoenstatt, the Schoenstatt fathers, the Roman Schoenstatt family at the center Father Kentenich, the workers and finally all those who participate in some way with their prayer and life in the mission of Schoenstatt.

Finally I share your *hope*. I actually nurture the hope that every pilgrim who comes to this hill of Belmonte and prays in this shrine will receive the threefold grace of inner transformation, of being at home in the supernatural world and of apostolic zeal. At different occasions, as you know, Father Kentenich has spoken about the Church as pilgrim Church and longed for her renewal in the spirit of Vatican II. He envisioned the Church as a large family where the individuals experience that they are accepted and loved, that they are forgiven and that their co-responsibility is appreciated. He spoke about the Church as being guided by the Holy Spirit and taught his sons and daughters to keep their ear at the heart of God and the hand at the pulse of the times.

With the dedication of the international shrine, a great mission will be entrusted to the Schoenstatt family: to bring Schoenstatt into the heart of the Church and the Church into the heart of Schoenstatt. First of all: What does it mean to bring Schoenstatt into the heart of the Church? To bring its charism into the heart of Christianity so that with its tradition, its pedagogy, its spirituality it can help to create adequate ways to live the sanctity in the ordinary life and to bring forth people who radically live the spirit of the gospel in an exemplary way. The motto of the shrine reads: “Everything for the Mother of the Church.” This “everything” reminds us of the totality of the personal vocation of great founders of communities, like St. Francis of Assisi, Theresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola. It reminds us of the vision of Father Kentenich who used to say: “Everything for Schoenstatt, Schoenstatt for the Church, the Church for the Triune God.” It reminds us of the vision of Josef Engling who chose the motto “omnibus omnia” as personal ideal. It reminds us especially of the vision of the apostle Paul who exhorted the Christians to become “everything to everyone”.

At the same time we have to bring the Church into the heart of Schoenstatt. I am certain, that you, dear Schoenstatt family, will do everything so that where ever Schoenstatt is established, the Church will be present and that your hopes are the hopes of the Church. The words “Dilexit Ecclesiam” are inscribed on the tombstone of your beloved founder Father Kentenich in the church of the blessed Trinity. It would be great if one could say of each member of Schoenstatt as a loyal disciple of the founder: He loves the Church, he loves the Holy Father, he loves the bishop, he loves the ecclesiastical establishments, he loves the mission of evangelization with the goal to form the new person in a new civilization of love.

Dear Friends of Schoenstatt, permit me to conclude my words of congratulation and solidarity with you with the call of the Holy Father directed to his brothers in the episcopate, to rise and to go forward into the future with hope and courage, although he himself cannot rise any longer

due to his illness. For this solemn concelebration you have chosen the gospel about the wedding feast at Cana, and thus I would like to tell you: “Fill the jars” and place your movement at the service of this pope. In these times when the logic of war and conflict are dominating, he makes every effort - with passion and insistence - to affirm the effectiveness of peaceful means and dialogue and to give courage to all those who believe in the goodness of the human heart. His magisterium encourages us to hope, to be optimistic, because it teaches us to believe in the human being without renouncing the faith in God and to believe in God without renouncing the faith in human beings.

Recently Cardinal Ratzinger wrote: “Mary of Nazareth, the Mother of Jesus, poses in front of the Church the mirror in which the Church should recognize her own identity.” Would, that “the faithful virgin and holy dwelling place of the word”, who has preserved the mystery and the words of her Son in her heart, teach us what the Holy Father expressed in his marvelous prayer in Lourdes, “to persevere in listening to the words, to be docile to the voice of the spirit, to be attentive to his voice in the intimacy of conscience and to all his manifestations in the events of history.”

“Virgin, Mother of the Church, help us to give always witness to the hope that lives in us, trusting in the goodness of a human being and in the love of the Father.” Amen.