

Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

172 – September 1st, 2015

Eternal Youth

I believe we all desire to be closer to the Spirit of God, to enjoy his presence, to live in harmony with Him. We are going to reflect on life in the Spirit.

Once when Father Kentenich, founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, spoke to us about the Holy Spirit, he told us that Christians of earliest times greeted each other saying: “Live in the Holy Spirit.” Thus they mutually wished for each other the richness and fullness of life in the power of the Spirit.

How is a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit, an educated person, permeated and sanctified by Him?

Eternal youth. It is one of the traits which characterizes a person who lives in the Spirit, it has to do with childlikeness. The Spirit gives us eternal youth.

It is true, says Father Joseph Kentenich, that a great deal of our juvenile enthusiasm was purely natural. But we can also interpret eternal youth as being on fire by everything great, by everything divine. And if we are mature persons, we continue on fire for God, this is only possible because another power is acting in us. And this supernatural power He gives us is eternal: “Pentecost is our feast. Pentecost is the feast of young souls and of young communities, the feast of the young Church – our feast.”

And what are young hearts? They are hearts which have maintained themselves always young, who have faithfully preserved their joy and youthful enthusiasm throughout their lives. Youth is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit.

Why are we and why do we feel young? Because we are Marian, Father Kentenich would say, because She has given us her spirit of eternal youth. Mary is the personification, the model of a young soul.

Eternal youth comes forth from a desire, from a permanent and invariable desire by the ideal man. Where youthful ideals have been destroyed and the soul bears unhealed wounds is where we find a bent youth, a youth which has given in. They are man’s areas of resignation. And our world today is filled with resigned people.

And which is that spirit of eternal youth?

1. It is the spirit of idealism which never lets itself be overcome by disappointments and setbacks, and which with enthusiasm and joy overcomes all resignation and pessimism. And it is set afire anew each day by great ideals and desires.

2. It is the spirit of radicalism which does not let itself be dominated by mediocrity and lukewarmness, but surrenders and sacrifices without reserve. It does not only go half way but strives to the end. It places great demands on itself and fulfills them with heroism and magnanimity.

That is our spirit. That is the Marian spirit, the spirit of eternal youth.

Mary is the sign of victory and the ideal image of eternal youth, a youth which knows how to resist the devil himself and all the fury of its enemies. Do you now understand the importance of Marian education? Eternal Youth is inflamed in Mary. And we are eternal youth because we are Marian. And we are eternal youth because the Holy Spirit guides us and gives us his gifts.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to give us the grace of having and always preserving this spirit of idealism and radicalism, the spirit of eternal youth.

Questions for reflection

1. Do I consider myself a person young at heart?
2. Do I still have dreams to fulfill?
3. Do I have the spirit, the openness and the idealism of a youth?

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Translation: Carlos Cantú, Schoenstatt Family Federation, La Feria, Texas USA 07142015