

# **Sermon for Covenant Mass**

## **18th February 2011 - Garden of Mary**

### **New Evangelisation**

Father Kentenich carried a vision of the “new person in a new community”. He gave all his strength and energy for the realisation of this vision.

**If we really want to be a new community, building the Kingdom of God on earth through the vision of a new social order, then we have to start with the personal bonds from one heart to the other.**

### **Garden of Mary - How it started**

In Koblenz, the Sisters had a large hospital, St Joseph's, and had a community of around fifty-five sisters. It was approaching Christmas 1941. In Germany, there is a beautiful custom of writing a letter in the days before Christmas to the Baby Jesus.

One of the Sisters – Sister Mariengard - took up his idea and asked the Baby Jesus to allow Father Kentenich to come home. She didn't want any Christmas presents or anything else, this was her only wish for Christmas. She handed the letter to the Superior of the House Community and the Superior, without the Sister knowing, smuggled the letter to Father Kentenich in prison, because she found it so unique and heartfelt. Father Kentenich read the Letter and wrote an answer immediately. The Sister was called Sister Mariengard (which means Garden of Mary)

This is the main part of the Letter:

*“My dearest Mariengard! I will grant your wish, when your heart and the heart of the whole family are transformed into a flourishing garden of Mary. Therefore, the answer to your prayer – the ‘miracle of the Holy Night’ – has been placed into your hands and into the hands of the Schoenstatt Family. But please hurry, before it is too late...”*

**One of the things that you notice with this letter is that a great and sincere love comes through it.** There is a tremendous affection here from Father Kentenich. Sister Mariengard wants to give up everything - symbolised in the gifts for Christmas – so that he returns safe and sound. And the love that the Sister has for the Founder is a real expression of her love for the Lord. It is one great love.

The Sisters accepted the challenges and they did everything to realise this flourishing Garden of Mary in every sense of the word. They really strived for holiness through every means available to them. The hospital was also full of soldiers from the war. It was an easy place to work and serve; also when the sirens wailed the Sisters had to get all the patients downstairs to the basement for protection.

They offered up their joys and sorrows, their efforts and sacrifices, their hurts and pain so that they could become a flourishing Garden of Mary.

## **Vision of a New Way of Living Community**

Father Kentenich always believed that we can build a new world, a paradise, and a “new civilisation” of love through the Gospel.

The symbol of the Garden is beautiful: Unity, but also diversity, brings healing... etc.

The vision of the “new community” is crucial to the charisma of Father Kentenich. He dreamed and hoped that Schoenstatt as an ecclesial Movement would be a dynamic force for a new community awareness in the Church.

## **The new Community - as a means of evangelisation - means:**

**We love each other,  
and we feel responsible for each other,  
and Christ is our centre.**

**Loving in each other means having a vibrant contact with someone, where you are in touch with their feelings, life and aspirations.**

“You live in me and I live in you and we live in each other. Love is giving someone a “resident’s permit” for my heart. It means letting someone enter your heart; looking out for their wellbeing. And it means knowing that I have a special place in their heart...”

Father Kentenich often spoke about a “community of hearts” or even a “melting-pot of hearts” – a “fusion” of hearts, where I write my name in someone’s heart and they write their name in mine.

**Responsibility for each other shows itself in an awareness of my role in someone else’s life and future.** We need to develop and enlarge this awareness. The new personal in the new community is someone who is willing to take on responsibility. Love and responsibility belong together.

Example of Freedom. How do we get our young people to heaven? One word: Truth

**Father Kentenich could only envision a new and renewed community with Christ at its centre.** New community also means consciously living from the supernatural relationships and reality. The New Community then becomes a “**sacred space**” where people encounter Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, our Blessed Mother. An intimate union.