

Extract from a Conference for the Women's Union
1-7 August 1932

If it wasn't stupid for the students¹ to believe (in Schoenstatt) when they had not proofs available, there can be no room for doubt today that such a faith is really justified. God can do things on his own, and he has often enough done so. Think of our Lord. However, he can also work miracles through people, and he has done so often enough as well. He can also connect his grace to certain circumstances or something else.

In our Movement, God has made use of people, but he has not connected his work to these people, so that it would have to come to an end once these people had gone. No, he has connected his work with the shrine. All those people are connected with this work who are here at present. If we believe in the Mother of God as the Mother Thrice Admirable, we are given the grace we need. ...

Extract from a Talk to the Women's League
4 September 1945

Wasn't that the case from the beginning? Let us look back into the early history of our Family. What do we find there? Our young founding generation, no matter which front they were scattered to, centered with their minds and hearts, with their imaginations, on this little shrine. This little chapel was the point of rest for their minds and hearts. This remained their home, even when they were homeless out in the world and had to wander or flee from place to place.

Haven't we had the same experience in the past years? Outwardly we were separated, we may even have been hunted from place to place, but the point of rest for our heart and mind was our little shrine....

Extract from a Talk to Seminarians
24 August 1934

I want to dwell on just one thought: Schoenstatt is my home. Schoenstatt is my home - it is a gift and a task.

It is a gift. Let me add immediately:

¹

At the College in Schoenstatt

1. It is a rare gift,
2. A perfect gift,
3. A tried and tested gift, and
4. A permanent gift.

1. Should I try to prove this? I have said that Schoenstatt is my home, and that this is a rare gift. If you take a look at your own lives, if you examine what you have observed of life and the experiences you have had, if, in addition, you want to learn from people who are experts on our times, I think you will find that everything will flow into a single river bed: "People today have been uprooted, they are insecure, they lack a profound sense of being at home." One of our modern philosophers put it this way: "People today have been deprived of their roots, they lack a home ..." Heidegger said: "The underlying condition of life today is essentially a profound Angst (anxiety) and need, it is worry". ... So if I now say that when you met Schoenstatt, you were given a place to be your home, am I right in saying that it is a relatively rare gift? You will see how rare it is when I explain the other statements.

2. Schoenstatt, my home, is also a perfect gift. What goes to make up a perfect home? Philosophers and psychologists are able to answer that question quite quickly. They show that there are three elements that constitute a home:

- a) a physical
- b) a psychological, and
- c) a religious element. Look at these statements.

a) A physical element - it must be real, something I can hold onto, it is a definite place, definite people. ... That is the physical element.

b) The psychological element is made up of two subordinate elements:

- i) one that touches the emotions, the heart, and
- ii) one that touches the mind, the intellect.

Look again at your own lives. Of what use is a place, or a person, if I do not love them both, if my heart is not connected with them? However, this on its own is not sufficient to constitute a perfect home. This place, this person, must at the same time symbolize a correspondingly great intellectual world. This is the psychological element of a perfect home. It too is insufficient. People have been created by God and for God. God should ultimately be our source and original home. A perfect home, therefore, in so far as this is possible here on earth, must be a symbol of the divine. It should point the way to the world of the divine. I should like to ask you to see whether you

can find this element in yourselves when you examine your childhood and youth. ...

If you examine which of the three elements was primary, you will find that historically the physical element was most important. However, according to its value and ranking it is not primary. According to their value and ranking, the intellectual and religious elements are primary. This is how we should understand those well-known words: Where there is love, there is a home. If in my innermost being, in my soul, I feel secure, I can speak of a home. This can be a place in foreign parts. Indeed, if our feeling of being at home develops soundly, a time could come when we will feel at home at a place even if you have not been able to be there for a long time. Then the three elements converge - the place has become a symbol of the intellect, the heart and religion. It is then easier for me to separate myself from a place, because I love it all the more, but as a symbol of a great thought.

This creates the foundation for the statement: Schoenstatt is a perfect home. I now turn to those for whom Schoenstatt has become their home. Schoenstatt as their home in essence. Then also to the younger generation: Schoenstatt becoming their home. I will soon have dealt with the older generation. Ask yourselves:

a) The physical element is represented in a definite place, Schoenstatt. We are happy that Divine Providence has seen to it that this is beautifully situated. We are also happy that definite people are here. Schoenstatt as our home - the physical element is preeminently present.

b) The psychological element

Our emotional attachment and spiritual union with Schoenstatt. The emotional attachment: When we look back into the history of our Family, we find representatives from our own ranks who have had very profound experiences with God's grace here in Schoenstatt, on holy ground. They love Schoenstatt, even if they cannot talk a great deal about it. This is essential if we are to feel at home - our hearts have to be deeply touched here at our holy place. Consider whether during a pilgrimage Schoenstatt has not become a deep experience of the workings of God's grace in some way, whether you have felt a strong inspiration of grace, or had a vital experience of being urged powerfully upwards towards God. Has not each visit here become a turning point for you striving? If the answer is yes, it means that Schoenstatt has become your home even if you cannot say much about these matters. There are realities that need to be discovered. Please do not forget - I don't want to put the young generation off - that the emotional side has become such a sound reality because we believe very deeply that the Mother Thrice Admirable has set up her throne here, and that when

through faith we touch this place physically and emotionally, the Mother Thrice Admirable allows her thoughts to flow into our wakeful, striving and often revolutionary hearts. Of course, whoever understands this even to some extent will soon discover where the mystery of being at home in Schoenstatt is to be found.

That is the first element - the psychological element.

c) A home also includes an intellectual element, especially where thinking people are concerned. For such people, if they are to find a perfect home, they must see this place as a symbol of a tremendous world of thoughts and tasks. This is where I have to hook in if I am to offer you a programme. I am well aware - I say this in deep humility - if you have understood what we are aiming at, it is the creation of a new person, something that has not been successful to any extent in the Church of God until now. If you were to understand this, the most noble minded of you would commit all your time and strength to this great task and make it your task in life. ... We do not just concentrate on the Marian element, but we see it to start with. The Marian person is for us the person we want to create, the incarnation of a harmonious connection between nature and grace, the expression of a whole system. ... It will take us half a lifetime to recognise this task, because we are so far ahead of our time. ... How do we see this new person? Such people are completely divinised,
completely penetrated by the Spirit,
completely themselves.

There is a whole world of ideas and tasks behind each word ... but it is not my task at present to unveil the great related realities to you. You realise and feel, however, that Schoenstatt is a symbol for a tremendous world of ideas. ... So, from this point of view it is able to become a perfect home.

d) The religious element: human beings, human nature is totally orientated to God. Human beings as purely natural beings are imbued with a strong urge towards God. ... Do you not see Schoenstatt as a symbol of complete divinisation, of the inward life? It is impossible to think otherwise. The divine touches us here in a very unique and profound way. We feel that we are living and striving in a divine atmosphere. ... How many noble-minded and religious people worship here. Hundreds and thousands of people look to Schoenstatt as a place where they direct the movements of their souls, their prayers and sacrifices. If we can feel the divine in an ordinary church, how much more where heaven and earth meet and create a unique, paradisaic element. God walked with pleasure in Paradise, and it seems that God also walks with pleasure here. The Mother of God conceives and gives new birth to Christ here day after day. Our little shrine is our Nazareth, Bethlehem, Cenacle, Tabor. All the great and glorious things we know about the world of

grace are connected with this little shrine for those who are at home in Schoenstatt. Think of the hero socialists who constantly lived here in spirit, with their interests and hearts, because they were at home. (...)

How can something become our home? Let me look into everyday life and then into your souls - the workshop of your souls. Pestalozzi once said: "By nature human beings are totally nest-bound beings". A person spins as many threads as they like, what else do they do than what the spider does, which spins its thread from its nest. The difference between human beings and a spider is that the spider can choose its nest, human beings can't. That offers us an answer to the question: how does a home develop? Something becomes our home when it becomes the focal point for my associations, and for my feelings. In purely human terms, I am at home where I have received my first thoughts and feelings. Thousands of threads bind me to it. The first thought I received is extended through association. I can only absorb as much as I can associate. If someone is connected with their nest and the thought they received in that nest, everything else is associated with it. This is all the more true for our feelings. If you have younger brothers and sisters, think of how a child clings to all that goes to make up a home - mother, father, ways. A focal point for all our feelings - a child cries, expresses needs, and someone comes along and satisfied these needs. The feelings of that child are brought together at a certain point. I spin threads, by all are dependent on my centre, the core of my personality, and the way it was influenced from the start.

How can Schoenstatt become my home? What must Schoenstatt become for me? What do I have to learn? To think and feel like a Schoenstatt member. I have to learn to understand the whole world, the trends at work in the world today, from the point of view of Schoenstatt. ... Schoenstatt must also become the focal point of our feelings - learn to feel like a Schoenstatt member. It means seeing to it that any gatherings do not become a mass gathering. Unless you constantly experience a profound break-through of the divine here in Schoenstatt that influences your development, you may one way be able to repeat the slogan: Schoenstatt is my home, but it will never become your home. I am afraid of slogans. Be careful about saying: Schoenstatt is my home. The more critical you are, the better. Such saying have to be based on the truth. ... See to it that you set up bonds through experiences here. We must protect ourselves against a crowd mentality, otherwise we will give out slogans, but fail to form souls.

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Swiss educationalist (1746-1827). The reference here is taken from his seminal work: How Gertrude teaches her children (1801).

Schoenstatt is my home - a rare gift, a perfect gift, but it is also a tried and tested gift.

3. A tried and tested gift. May I draw your attention to something that results from observing life today. Woe to them who are alone today, who have no spiritual home. They will become vagabonds. People without a home are without minds, without characters and without religion.

Can you understand this clearly? Human beings remain nest-bound. If I do not have a nest, I become mindless, an intellectual vagabond. I must have a home. This wasn't so necessary in former times, because we were far more bonded. Those people become mindless and characterless who lose their bonding to their nest. They are just as devoid of religion for the same reason. As you know, all these things that we see as a symbol should lead us through an organic development into God.

4. A permanent gift. Our home is an earthly symbol of eternity, it should bring us into the heart of the Triune God and into our permanent home. Until the end of your lives you will take your bearings from places that have become a symbol to you of greater, spiritual trends. That is part of the mystery of human beings' bonding with their nest. A time will come when you will recall what I have said. Perhaps you realise that these aren't empty words when countless numbers of people say: Schoenstatt is my home, I am at home there. ...

II. A home is not just a gift, it is a task.

A home is and remains a task, just as heaven, our final home, is and remains a task. I will always have to see to it that Schoenstatt's great spiritual world increasingly becomes my own. I will always have to see to it that I remain attached with my heart to Schoenstatt. It is my task to ensure that I am filled and gripped by the divine, no matter whether I am present here physically or through faith. Please do not forget that a home is and remains a task. Once I have found a home, it is my serious duty in these difficult and uprooted times to become a home for all whom God may lead to me. ...