

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Selection of texts

by Father Joseph Kentenich

Unless otherwise stated, texts are from "Kirche im Aufbruch ans Neue Ufer"

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#### DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Selection of texts from the writings and training courses given by Father Josef Kentenich

1. The source of knowledge, the light that has shone out brightly to us through all the darkness of the times is simple, supernatural faith, which finds particularly strong expression in practical faith in Divine Providence.

We were very careful to use this source and keep it pure; we protected it jealously, unrelentingly and with austere consistency, and preserved it from being tarnished by any form, of pseudo-mysticism. We constantly looked with a clear vision and willingly at the God of life and of history, and like a child allowed him to lead us. Therefore the reproach does not apply to us that although we have understood the signs in the heavens we have not been able to interpret the signs of the times. Like St. Paul we allowed ourselves to be guided in every situation by the law of the open door, that is, we tried each time to discover God's will from circumstances, from the dispensations of Providence, in order to carry out his will actively or to suffer it. We carefully tried to recognize the eternal God's loving, wise and omnipotent plan in every detail, and courageously made it the schedule for our lives

and all we did: we strove to examine the itinerary attentively that he has written from all eternity for every day, and to act accordingly and allow ourselves to be treated accordingly. It was not always easy. It often required daring of the mind and will to discover a chink in the door each time and to use it at the right time, even at the risk of having to go to another door immediately without knowing very often where the road was leading us in detail.

It was not in vain that the past years have educated using a more profoundly penetrating way to practice heroic faith. After all, it forms an essential element of the new man. The letters from the Carmel prison and concentration camp never tired of trying to discover and mediate God's intentions in this regard.

The letters to the Sisters also place the same admonition repeatedly in the foreground like a "Ceterum censeo": The main thing is the heroic practice of the three theological virtues. This is what the Triune God and our Lady wants to educate us to do.

This simple and strong faith in Divine Providence made it easy for us to recognize and acknowledge the original covenant of love with our Lady as it is expressed in the First Founding Document. God's activity in the history of the family and the world revealed our Lady's intention without particular difficulty. By virtue of this, covenant she wanted to take up her abode in Schoenstatt, to direct a deeply penetrating and far reaching movement of renewal and education from there into the whole world, in order to save the Christian personality and social order, and to use us as instruments for this purpose. At the same time it also showed us the obligation of the covenant partner to cooperate faithfully and in an enlightened manner in fulfilling this triple task. The same light of practical faith in Divine Providence gave us the signal at the right time for the second and third Founding Documents, indeed, for all the great and small things we were allowed to do and experience in the course of the years. All this awakened a strong mission-consciousness in us, intensified it until it became flaming zeal for our mission, and gave us trust in a rich outpouring of the graces of a mission. We want to remain faithful to this source of knowledge and light in

future, and to answer the annunciation scenes in the history of our personal lives, the family and the era with our Lady's attitude: She first thought about the message the angel had brought her, then she sought advice and instruction, "How should that happen since I know no man?" Only then did she say her Fiat, This should also be our way of acting, then the "Word" will also take "flesh" on countless occasions in our lives as well, although of course in a different way from what happened to the blessed among women.

Our promise at the crowning of the Mother Thrice Admirable as Queen of the World (1946) is repeated today. We go out to the peoples as the supporters and heralds of the good news of practical faith in Divine Providence. We shall behave as children of Providence in every situation in life

and help to educate as many perfect children of Providence as possible in our professional sphere and every possible sphere in the world around us.

In this way we can serve countless people today for whom God's method of governing the world has become a burdensome crisis or even a snare because of its incomprehensible harshness. We can see to it in this way that the dreadful events of the era do not become a grave digger but a midwife of new life in Christ. In this way we can also prepare the ground in many others for an understanding of Schoenstatt, its spirit and its mystery.

2. The spring of grace that gushes forth from the shrine is the covenant of love with the Mother Thrice Admirable that was accepted and responded to in general terms in 1914, that was perfected in 1939, and that matured to its completion in 1944.

Long years of theological discussion, drew it into the full light of faith, awakened new love, enthusiasm and commitment to our family and inspired us to try to develop a comprehensive and scientifically exact covenant theology that cannot be valued highly enough for the image of God, the world and man in times to come. We passed safely and surely through all these battles because we knew that our Lady was on our side and because we took our bearings from the saintly Doctor of the Church, Francis de Sales, and his

otherwise barely observed teaching on the world's fundamental law of love.

(6.5.1948, extract from letter, written in Nueva Helvetia for the canonical erection of the Secular Institute of the Sisters of Mary)

### Problems with Faith in Divine Providence today

Today it is difficult to still believe that God exists because of world events. It constantly seems as though he is silent. He allows himself to be expelled from the Temple everywhere. He does not come with a whip to drive the traders out. It requires much grace and strength to uphold a great faith in Divine Providence. It is difficult to believe that there is a supernatural power behind world

events. In Schoenstatt our Lady gives the charism of faith in Divine Providence. Here we learn the great truth: The Lord God speaks to me through every least detail in everyday life. The sacramentality of the present moment! That is the piety of our grandparents. God has to give this deep and genuine piety back to us.

(Congress for Families 31.5. - 4,6.1950)

That is the sad fate of many modern Christians, even if they have had a good education in dogmatics. Often they can talk brilliantly about the truths of religion, but the faith has remained in their minds, it has not passed over into their hearts and lives, it has not matured to become practical faith in Divine Providence. That is why it could not strike deep enough root in them, at least not deep enough for the stormy weather of the present Apocalyptic era. The people who have been formed in this way do not belong to the class of people of whom one can say in the Pauline sense: "Justus autem meus ex fide vivit - the righteous man finds life through faith"

(Rom 1: 17; Gal 3: 11).

From such considerations it follows that those men are correct who consider education towards practical faith in Divine Providence a central task of present-day pastoral, and who never tire of opposing all those false prophets who remain with abstract ideas in teaching and life; who to repeat a saying of Shakespeare, "are sicklied o'er by the

pale hue of thought" and separate faith from life. Schoenstatt's history is a flaming protest against such a risky and destructive enterprise. It is risky and destructive particularly today in an era that has weak faith and yet has to cope with unequalled tests of faith. In the past years faith in Divine Providence has proved to be a great power of first importance. It has proved to be an ability and organ, indeed a spur, which from the beginning has seen and sought, gripped and embraced, hugged and held the God of life everywhere at the head of all things and events. The greatest and the smallest, the most important and most insignificant, the loudest and most silent, not only with a "divine" sureness and instinct, but also with a holy and insatiable hunger, in order, I am using a saying of the old Masters, to celebrate "constant communion with the divine will", to undertake the

"consecration of the present moment" or to suffer the "martyrdom of faith in Divine Providence". In this our Lord's words showed the direction, "All the hairs of your head are counted" and the very brief characteristic statement of Paul's wisdom in teaching and life: "By turning everything to their good God cooperates with all those who love him" (Rom 8: 28).

Therefore it is with justified pride that the child of war calls himself a "Providentia child per eminentiam". He knows that he is constantly surrounded by and cared for by God and the divine, and, like our Lady, he never got or gets tired of preserving and weighing up in his heart all the words that the Father speaks through his mysterious guidance and dispensations, through the ravelling and unravelling of circumstances, and through the ontological structure of things and people, until he is completely at home in God's enigmatical plans. And was and is borne by a supernatural atmosphere, without on that account losing the ground under his feet, until he knew and knows, that he is thoroughly permeated by divine powers in order to espouse his own limited strength, his poor personal abilities and willing with them, and receives light and warmth from God's light, without on that account denying reason.  
(Extract from Josef's Letter, 1952)

## The historically creative significance of faith in Divine Providence

It is God who unveils his countenance through the signs of the times and speaks to us.

When his words lack immediate clarity this requires a death-leap for mind, will and heart. We have done this courageously. We have done it in every period of our history. Every guidance to the heights, every clambering upwards, every traversing of dangerous mountain peaks required this high price. As a result a marked sense of history grew in us, that is to say, the conviction as an outflow of interpreting history through faith in Divine Providence that Schoenstatt has a historically creative mission through realizing a clearly defined vision of the future. This is how Schoenstatt came into existence, this is how Schoenstatt grew, this is how it prepares itself year after year for new work, new battles, new victories. The child of war is a child of Providence and wants to remain one forever.

Such plain clarity of aim that has been followed so inexorably has preserved us from much suffering, in particular from the greatest anguish of modern man, the bewildering insecurity resulting from the apparent senselessness and incomprehensibility of world events.  
(Extract from October Letter 1949)

## Faith in Divine Providence in Schoenstatt's foundation, essence and work

In our case the driving force is generous, childlike self-surrender to God's guidance which has revealed its mysterious plans for Schoenstatt bit by bit according to the law of the open door, and which has challenged and urged us, to carry them out.

This self-surrender can only be called a driving force if it has become almost second nature to the soul, so that it discovers a holy urge in itself and can say with St Paul: caritas urget me (love urges me)... As long as this is only a matter of feeling one's way with difficulty, one cannot speak of a driving force in the actual sense. Teachers of dogmatics would define the state meant here as a unique

form of the "habitus fidei" that has developed through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in particular the gifts of knowledge, understanding and wisdom, to become a marked supernatural instinct, which must however be examined by the authority of the Church in order to preserve it from self-deception.

The form of the "habitus fidei" and its unfolding are original. Self-surrender to God's guidance is believing self-surrender to God the Father and his plans. Therefore, the "habitus fidei" mainly finds expression in the direction of "caritas patris urget me".

God can reveal his plans with sovereign freedom as and how he wills: in an extraordinary way through visionary dreams, miracles and such means. But he can also do it in usual ways: through his guidance and dispensations that are ultimately determined by the great plan of God's wisdom, love and omnipotence, and lead to its realization. Simple faith in Divine Providence, which discovers the hand, wish and will of God the Father behind all, even the smallest events, gradually manages through loving watchfulness to put together the net of God's total mysterious planning from the threads of his individual guidance, to rejoice in this knowledge and to work unflinchingly and daringly to carry it out.

It can be proved that this practical faith in Divine Providence is the chief source of knowledge to which Schoenstatt owes the knowledge about its God-willed nature and activity. This faith has pointed out God's hint and wish for us. He has shown us the way through the ontological structure of people and things, as well as through the ravelling and unravelling of public and private circumstances, and he wants to know that they have been made the chief itinerary and curriculum for life and work. (October Letter 1949)

That is to say, God was at the beginning of Schoenstatt, he is at the middle; he will also be at the end. Human co-operation is limited to childlike obedience and listening. The difficulty encountered in the process is indicated by the words "law of the open door". The expression, an image for faith in Divine Providence, has been taken from Paul's vocabulary and wisdom. He was filled to overflowing by the idea of his life. He had been called and commissioned

"omnia instaurare in Christo" (to renew all things in Christ). However, he allowed the Lord to show him through circumstances, through the doors that opened (1 Cor 16:8f; 2 Cor 2:12), where he should go in order to attain this goal and what he should do in detail. In his first letter to the Corinthians he spoke of an "osmium apertum magnum et evidens" (a big and important door), but this was most probably not always the case. At any rate we were often in the situation in which the door was not widely open, at least not for human reasoning even though it was born by grace. Instead only a chink was open. Only a deep, supernatural attitude - the teachers of dogmatics speak, as has already been mentioned, in this connection of the perfection of the theological virtues by the gifts of the Holy Spirit could see more clearly and grasp things more surely. Not rarely this required of nature the death-leap of mind, will and heart.

In its foundation, essence and work Schoenstatt is outstandingly a Providentia child. Therefore no one should be surprised that the opinion is growing that it is attracting and collecting those of the faithful who are not dependent on signs and miracles, but who are all the more called and able to master everyday life, even if it imposes heavy and most heavy burdens as the present moment does, with the help of faith in Divine Providence, and thus climb upwards to the top of the mountain of perfection. However it must be genuine, proven, creative, Catholic faith in Divine Providence, which carefully enters into the divine plan for the world and divine omnipotence, and which on that account keeps its distance from any historical activism that sets out to force through its arbitrarily conceived plans; but which is also freed from historical passivism that folds its hands in its lap in a quietistic attitude and fatalistically allows everything to run its course.

Whoever is not satisfied with this, whoever requires more has been given Fatima and Lourdes by God's kindness and wisdom to be a lighthouse in the darkness of time.

The opinion (mentioned above) is justified to the extent that it shows up the mystery that explains Schoenstatt's development, and the task it may help to carry out for modern man. The child of Providence may help to make as many people as possible children of Providence, witnesses

and imitators of divine wisdom. At any, rate it is wrong to call Schoenstatt an incidental product of favorable circumstances. However, it is just as wrong and misleading to hold that. It is the work of a genius who had a finished plan that was laid down in every detail in his head and who then forced circumstances to serve his purposes. All this is not true. Schoenstatt regards itself as God's instrument. God requires a certain degree of extraordinarily creative naiveté of his human cooperators and instruments, he asks for generous, childlike self-surrender, in order to carry out at the right time and in the right way the loving, wise and omnipotent plan he has conceived from all eternity.

In this way Schoenstatt's history has become a race between divine guidance through the law of the open door and human nimbleness; it has become an exciting, holy game between prodigal divine suing for love and generous, human answering in love, a drama of generous divine guidance and preparing the way, and courageous, human traversing the way. Yet all this served but one goal: the piecemeal revelation and realization of God's mysterious plan. Through Schoenstatt God wants to give the great idea of the new man in the new community marked by the universal apostolate a very definite and concrete form. Everything, the greatest and the least, has come into existence in this way and no other. Nothing, absolutely nothing owes its existence to human arbitrariness, to autocratic human planning. It may be that God spoke in a similar way at the same time to millions and millions, and made his will known to them. They may also have answered him. The difference may lie in the fact that we regarded ourselves as Boy Scouts and interpreted and responded to every event consciously as the slow revelation of a great, divine total plan. "It is in the plan!" As time went by this saying became a standing expression filled and loaded with meaning. It gave every event in our personal lives, in the history of the family and the world a very personal note, the character of a warm and challenging call. "Vox temporis, vox Dei" (the voice of the times is the voice of God) became our favorite motto. The more we interpreted and treated the voices of the times as the voice and wish of God, the less our Lord's reproach applied to us, "You know how to read the face of the sky, but you cannot read the signs of the times" (Matt 16: 3).

(Extract from "The Key to an Understanding of Schoenstatt", 1951)

(These extracts are to be found in "Kirche im Aufbruch ans neue Ufer", 1964, pages 71 - 86)

### Education towards Faith in Divine Providence

On the whole we educators and pastors base ourselves too little on the unshakable foundation of the reality of the next world, the metaphysical and supernatural values, the values of first importance. They are not a reality to us. They are too much an idea. We feel this everywhere today! Where are the deeper roots of this to be found? It is not merely the general secularization of the era that is to blame; us, the way we educate is also a cause. The root of the supernatural life, of faith and the spirit of faith has become unhealthy not rarely even in the circles of those who are extremely religious and who can talk enthusiastically about faith and religion. God and the divine disappear too much into ideas. God no longer stands as a living Person before us, but as a great, abstract idea. It may be that a generation can bear this for a time.

In Catholic circles people like to talk about God's transcendence. However, the transcendent God has often become so transcendent that he has lost connection with life. You see, God's immanence, or more precisely, the whole theological edifice of our faith, the whole organism of the world of faith, enters into our lives through practical faith in Divine Providence. Whoever does not repeatedly teach practical faith in Divine with God's immanence will ensure that the root of the tree of faith becomes sick and increasingly sicker. One of Schoenstatt's three messages is the message of practical faith in Divine Providence.

We have to enter into the heart of this faith in Divine Providence. We have to ask: How does the God of life come to meet me? Where we are teaching, it may be all very well to "float about" in all sorts of situations and show the transcendent God here and there, the Eucharistic God in the sacrament and the God in our hearts, but the cardinal point in present day life, the essential test of our religion, of our faith, must be practical faith in Divine Providence. Through it we again acquire a sense for values of the first

importance. Practical faith in Divine Providence constantly reaches into the will, the heart and the emotions.

I think that you should not take these things in as one statement on a par with others; they get to the heart of the matter. Therefore, foster the spirit of faith! Faith is the root and foundation for all justification (Council of Trent). Fostering, the careful fostering of the spirit of faith in the sense of practical faith in Divine Providence even to the least detail of everyday life should be a favorite topic for sermons, for personal counseling and in the schools. As time goes by I can then rise up with the most striving members from this immanence to transcendence. However, transcendence and immanence will always complement each other in a mutual relationship in tension. From this follows quite naturally a third hint. When the spirit of faith has again opened up and formed a sense for ultimate and supernatural values in us, we may take it for granted that the spirit of faith will urge us towards the spirit of sacrifice and practical, heroic action. I have already mentioned that the other side\* makes demands, even heroic demands. And we don't have the courage to make demands.

The other side not only makes demands, it actually intervenes with tremendous dynamism in the lives of modern mankind. That is the dynamism of personal action. This too has to be seen in a great context.

In actual fact the other side is a "day fly". It doesn't have a great tradition. And we? We can reach back to martyrs, to great figures in the kingdom of the Church, to geniuses of the mind and heart. The other side cannot do this, and yet it attracts the masses. You may be inclined to say: Behind it there is the whip. This is not entirely true. There is something else behind it, the dynamism of action, action that makes demands on self. Do you know what that means? Don't you think that in this regard we are all weaklings? Don't you think that we not only make too few demands on our followers, but that we also do not take the dynamism of the religious life, which intervenes in the mechanism of our own lives, seriously enough? We know the classic statement about the educated educator.

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\* the Communists

What we are is the great factor in education today, not what we say.

Who still believes in a person's words today? There is no really reliable word today unless it is spoken by someone who tries to exemplify it. The only Bible that is still read by people today is the reliable, serious lives of Christians. "Religion is up in the clouds," it forms us too little. Since we are too little formed by it, people no longer believe what we say any more. The educated educators? Dynamism!

When we combine the two things, on the one hand the tradition of centuries, and on the other the strength of grace, the strength of faith, that makes us step over all that is earthly, we will also pull our youth along with us, a youth that is difficult to appeal to and that hardly has any sense for higher things.

At the end of his journey through Germany Pr Lombardi declared: Young people in Germany are still noble minded, it is true, they are still receptive but who is giving them the ideals they need? We should embody these ideals far more strongly again. Or, let us say, what we want to achieve with the religious renewal of the world is something so remote and reaches so far into the supernatural! In addition, we educators feel so weak! Deo gratias! (Thanks be to God!) Allow me to sing a hymn of praise to this form of humility later. It makes us feel helpless and weak in the face of the present day situation. However, let us not forget that God chooses the weak, not although, but because they are weak. And who doesn't feel weak today? The educator is physically tired, he is helpless because of failure, doesn't he feel weak? What does the Lord tell us? "It was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning" (1 Cor 1: 27) Who is strong? The other side is strong today.

What did the Lord promise? Please listen: Lepers will be cleansed...the dead will rise...(Matt 11: 5). Of course, we play that down today and say that it only applied to the Apostles. But what is the crux of this teaching? God wants to bring about extraordinarily great things with the weak. But what does he require for this? The death-leap of faith, hope and love, the death-leap of heart, will and mind. That is what I have to reach out towards; and God will work

great things through me. Divine care freeness is based on this attitude. I may say: My greatest care should consist in being endlessly carefree. I should see the great outline and then throw myself into God's arms and finally let God see to things. He wants to save the modern world. That is the dynamism that has such a power of suggestion on the other side. We may have geniuses of the spoken word, but where are the men and women, the educators, who try to live what they teach?

If you manage to record modern demands from the point of view of apologetics you will discover an extremely significant complementation to what we formerly called the "praembula fidei rationabilia", the preparatory insights of the faith. Everything hinges on cognition. Please do not forget that all of us have come out of the age of rationalism and now find ourselves in a time that is going into the opposite extreme of irrationalism. Rationalism presented teaching upon teaching with a view to our lives of faith and our religious and moral lives. For example, if I want to lead pagans to the faith, I must start off by giving them certain basic information such as the existence of God, the existence of the Church, etc. I have to prove all this historically. These are preparatory insights. However, on their own they are insufficient. The whole person must be drawn into the faith, not just his intellect. Therefore, today people talk about the "praembula fidei irrationabilia", that is, in addition to the preparatory insights, there are also preparatory experiences. This is what psychology speaks about today. It asks what, has been previously experienced inwardly, and not just what is the initial knowledge brought along in the mind. My heart, my whole personality, must be gripped by faith. Today the whole person has to be drawn into religion, including the sub-conscious.

With regard to the "praembula fidei irrationabilia" we have to distinguish between the:

praembula fidei ascetica-the ascetical preparatory experiences,  
" " psychologica-the psychological preparatory experiences,  
" " experimentalia-the experimental preparatory experiences,

Ascetical preparatory experiences could, for example, be experiences of one's moral weaknesses and religious aridity. They create the condition necessary for one's experience of dependence on God. The person, who does not

feel powerless in relation to the eternal, or in relation to the present situation, does not have in himself, or in his heart, the disposition out of which religion can easily grow.

Psychological preparatory experiences also create valuable starting points for religion. That is why parents and educators, for example, should foster a sense for purity, truthfulness and reverence in early childhood. Then a person will also be receptive for God's purity, truthfulness and reverence.

Experimental preparatory experiences are created by the example of the lives of those who teach. If educators exemplify the opinions they stand for their followers will gladly accept them. Life, dynamic life, exercises a far greater influence today than any spoken word.

I think that with that I have offered you an answer by means of the comparison. It would actually be worth our while to dwell on this for some time because we are dealing with important insights that may not be avoided since they show us the direction and must continue to do so for our whole lives.

If we Catholic educators and pastors do not acquire supernatural daring once again, if we do not learn again how to throw ourselves into God's arms, and if we do not once again make austere demands on ourselves, on heart, mind and will, as well as on the body, we will wait in vain for success in education. God expects us to show enlightened care so that divine care freeness can win the victory in every respect.

(Grundriss, pages 53 - 59)

What is at bottom the aim of Catholic education?

To start with the answer is easy: From the pedagogical point of view the aim is the readiness and ability to live the life of a child of God independently and through independent activity as a member of Christ. Please distinguish between what pedagogy contributes to this formulation and what religion tells us. In Catholic education it is ultimately always the Triune God himself, especially the God-Man Jesus Christ, who is the educator. All that we can do is only minor work.

There is a completely different daring that is required of the Catholic educator and Catholic followers, that is, to strive for the genius of the naïveté of a child, of God, than is required when you enter into the school of existential philosophy. Wherever an image of the human person is being formed, either by national socialism or by collectivism, daring is required. However, the form of daring required by them always remains on a purely natural foundation. They only come close to the "divine", but they do not have the courage to hand themselves over to God and what is truly divine. This is possessed only by those who can say of themselves: I am striving for the genius of naïveté. That is the aim of Catholic education today. Of course, we can express it in another form: the readiness and ability to live the life of a child of God independently and through independent activity as a member of Christ.

#### The daring of the genius of naïveté

Today we find that countless people have absolutely no ability in this regard. However, dynamic life has again to enter into the Catholic religion. Please recall what we said at the start about the death, the drying up and shriveling of the religious disposition in people, not simply in mankind in general, but also in our own circles. However, when the organ for religion has atrophied, or perhaps even died, how is one to have a sense for the genius of naïveté?

I am not talking about the "genius of primitiveness", but of naïveté, that is, God-marked "and God-willed childlikeness. Some want to have nothing to do with it because their supernatural trust has become sickly, others because pride had made them inwardly rigid. You see, this genius of naïveté basically includes a double, tremendous daring: the daring of the saint and the daring of the sinner. This is synonymous with the daring of magnanimity and the daring of humility.

#### Firstly, the daring of the saint

The daring of magnanimity includes the daring of mind, will and heart.

The mind submits believingly to a supernatural reality. St Augustine has left us that classic saying, "You, Oh God,

were with me and yet I was outside of myself." The daring of the saint has the courage to take the death leap of the mind, and in the light of faith sees God everywhere. It not only sees the God of our hearts, not only the God of our altars, but also and above all the God of life, the living God who is behind every event and all the events of life. By virtue of this daring each situation in life is looked upon as a cathedral on the spire of which the living God is standing. The daring consists in putting up a "ladder", as it were, for mind and heart in every circumstance of life in order to discover God at the top. According to the "law of the open door", this daring senses and sees the living God in the darkness of faith even when only a chink of the door is open, and with deadly courage throws itself into the arms of the living God. You see, that is the abyss between this world and the next.

The existentialists who are developing and growing in our universities today also know daring. They, too, see life in its dreadfully confused and confusing situation and know that life today requires courage. For them the whole of life is "being towards death." The daring with which this life should be mastered is the daring of despair. Instead of throwing myself daringly into the abyss of God, my daring consists in gritting my teeth and venturing with the courage of despair into this whirlpool, or onto the ice flow in the river. The daring of the saint has the courage to take the death leap into God's arms - the death leap of the heart, the death leap of the will.

Of course, this daring knows about the law "Gratia supportit non destruit naturam" - grace presupposes nature as its support, but also as its co-working and goal providing strength, and does not destroy it. The daring of the saint also knows, however, that the ideal of the human being does not merely consist in exemplifying the "ecce homo" in as far as this refers to the elevation and perfection of nature, but is also aware of the sacrifice of nature. The daring of the saint consists in his having the courage to erect a "new building" even on the ruins of his sick nature. In addition, the daring of the saint sees not only the "majestas divina" (the divine majesty) in the light of faith, it also submits to the "Christus crucifixus" (the crucified Christ). It wants to be crucified to the world as the world is crucified to it (cf Gal 6: 14). Together

with Paul this daring proclaims Christ everywhere, "and only him as the crucified Christ" (1 Cor 2: 2).

If I, as a Catholic educator, see this goal and always have it in mind, it will not sound so very different from the general trend of thoughts that are again and again to be found today in the educational situation. Once again, the genius of naïveté.

Together with the daring of the saint we at the same time have the daring of the sinner before us.

Humilitas is part of magnanimita! How important today is the daring of the sinner who does not belittle sin and look at it superficially. No, no, it rather grasps sin in all its gravity - "pondus peccati" not only as an offence against a law, but also as a personal offence against the "majestas divina". The daring of the sinner also has the courage, once a sin has been committed, to be vigorous in doing penance. That is the "daring of the thief" as it is depicted in Calderous "Thief" when he speaks about devotion to the cross. The thief had sinned, piling sin on sin. He is about to die. Now comes the daring of the sinner - "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence" (Matt 11: 12). The thief has the daring of trust - he embraces the cross. The cross has the power to absolve and free him. That is the tremendous • abyss into which we have to jump - the abyss of the reality of our faith. We people of today know it far too little; even we who call ourselves Catholics are too naturalistic in outlook. The plague of naturalism, the plague of laicism, can also be found in deeply religious people, for example, those who have often passed through the school of the liturgy. They go courageously to the edge of the abyss, and then when they should jump into the "arms of God" in the abyss, they jump backwards again.

This leap into the supernatural is what we have to exemplify to our youth today; the death leap into the supernatural, the divine.

Of course, we undeniably fall into God's hand. But just that is what requires daring; I do not know what God will ask of me tomorrow or the next day. I only know that this one step has to be taken. With the courage of faith I dare to take this step and am convinced: God will open the

little door for me again. That is and remains the daring, the audacity of the saint, the daring of the sinner.

The daring of the sinner. Think of Pizarro, the great conqueror of Peru. He heaped up sin upon sin. Suddenly the enemy's bullet struck him and he collapsed. He had sinned, he acknowledged it. He bent down, making, a cross out of the stream of blood, kissed the cross and threw himself into the hand of the merciful judge. That is the daring of the sinner, the daring of the thief who hung next to our Lord on the cross and admitted, "We have done evil..." The daring of the sinner is at the same time the genius of naïveté which also hears our Lord's words, "This day you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk 23: 43).

(Extract from "Grundriss", an educational training course held by Father Kentenich in 1950, published by Schonstatt-Verlag 1971, pages 137 - 142)