

May 18, 2019

Dear Schoenstatt Women,

Blessed Covenant Day in this beautiful month of May! 'Tis the month of our Mother! Joseph Engling (pictured on the right) had a special fondness for the month of May. It was his favorite time of year. In case you are not so familiar with who this young man is, he was one of the first people to really grasp the message and meaning of Schoenstatt. After Joseph's death in 1918 at the young age of 20, Father Kentenich raised Joseph Engling as a model for the whole Schoenstatt Family. When I was 12, I adopted Joseph as my "big brother," and let me tell you, I was not disappointed in his intercessory power! He was dedicated to Schoenstatt in life and is even more devoted to us now. If you allow him to take you by the hand, he will prove himself as a sure guide and faithful friend. Your love for God and Schoenstatt will blossom and grow. If you don't believe me, I dare you to ask Joseph to be your big brother. Then see what happens!

During the month of May, Joseph had a special tradition of offering "May Blossoms" to the Blessed Mother. Each flower represented a virtue that he wanted to especially embody, with specific prayers or actions that corresponded to each flower/virtue. Especially during the May of 1916, his love for Mary bloomed in a way that is rarely found here on earth. While his peers were involved in other "boyish" endeavors, here was this 18-year-old young man, completely consumed in offering flowers for the woman of his heart. Men are generally not so interested in flowers; when you see a man in a flower shop, it is usually because he is in love. The flowers are a *symbol* of love and devotion, and we as women are much more quickly drawn into the realm of symbols. Father said about this in October of 1950, "*Please do not forget that it is a great tragedy for the education of our present times that people today, the*

*young people of today, have lost the ability to understand symbols. People who are sound, as well as those who have grown up soundly, have a right to a number of symbols. If symbols are not used in education, especially in the education of women, something is sick.*"



Therefore, in our self-education as women of Schoenstatt, let us make use of these symbols to create a blossoming garden in our hearts for God and his Mother. This offering of flowers goes both ways. Look at the beauty around you. Take time to notice the little blossoms of love that God sends to you, his beloved child. God didn't need flowers. He made them for you and me to enjoy. Next time you see a beautiful rose or humble violet, please think, "God created that flower *just for me.*" Believe it! Learn to let all things become signs of God's love for you, because that is truly what they are. And then, from the conviction that God's love for you surrounds you, may you always strive to return that love through the flowers of virtue with which you adorn your soul.



Venerable M. Emilie Engel (pictured below) is another of our great Schoenstatt heroes and models. She too had a special fondness for the symbolism of the garden and understood the meaning of creating a paradise in our hearts for God. After her death in 1955, Father Kentenich praised her also as a living embodiment of Schoenstatt's ideals. He encouraged us to go to her and entrust her with our problems and concerns. If you look carefully in this photo of her, you will see a small picture frame on her side. And who is in the photo? Joseph Engling! She said afterwards that she was glad he was in the picture with her. She understood the power of walking through life with Joseph as a model and guide.

One thing that will fill us with awe when we get to heaven, is to discover how close the saints really were to us on earth. We are truly never alone. The veil that separates us from eternity is only a very thin one, easily penetrated with the power of faith. With the simple faith of a child then let us walk trustingly through life, with one hand in Joseph Engling's and the other in Sr. M. Emilie's.

Even if the month of May is nearing its end, and you feel you've missed the opportunity to create this garden in your heart in the blossoming of spring, never fear! This is really the task of a lifetime, and it should not end on May 31 anyway. Therefore, let us begin *today* to create this garden for God and his Mother. And please remember, you are never alone. Sr. M. Emilie is with you, Joseph Engling is with you, and all your sisters in the covenant are with you. ■