

# United in Mary—on fire, we go forward!



## REFLECTION FOR COVENANT RENEWAL

### United We Stand, *In* and *With* Mary

United in Mary, aware of our mission, on fire for it, we go forward. Forward in this sense, means helping the Church close the gap between the Vatican Council II and the post-Council time—a time when the Church may fully understand its identity, existence, and function in the world [help close the “interdiem”]. Father Jonathan suggests that, together, we

As we go forth, it is imperative that we embody what we have found here. It is a spirit which must encircle the globe and uplift laity, priests and religious to the “entire fullness of genuine Catholic life.” To talk about a “no-holds-barred” faith in the supernatural and a “roadmap” to this faith, but to do nothing, would mean risking a still more prolonged “interdiem.” We must take action... We must be the “ambassadors” of... [a] great treasure, we must be the “face” of this great model for the Church of today and tomorrow... We will need to be the necessary transparencies of this world of grace, including all the “little work” that this entails in our ordinary everyday lives...

In 2004, Father Jonathan Niehaus concluded these thoughts, from his presentation: *Our Gift to the Church*, by stressing the fact our covenant of love with the MTA is the gift we bring to the Church in our times. This is our gift, not so much because the Church needs more Marian practices and devotions. The Church needs people who are deeply formed and who embody the best of Catholicism. And, how do we, united, embody the best of Catholicism if it is not in the heart of the Blessed Mother. She is the one who best represents the ideal of the Christian soul. But, as soon as we set out to do this “little work” we encounter our limitations. Father Jonathan continues:

And here we meet our limitations. We realize that our faith is not as unconditional as our founder’s. We realize that we are seldom as attentive to the personal needs of others as our father and founder was. We realize that the turmoil of the “interdiem”<sup>1</sup> is still a factor, slowing our hoped-for progress. Perhaps the turmoil even casts a shadow on my love for the Church, and I become frustrated or want to give up. Whatever the limitations, they are a life-sized reminder that our gift to the Church on this Jubilee is, above all else, the gift of our covenant of love with the Mother Thrice Admirable. Without her we cannot hope to attain the great ideals we see before us. Without her presence in the Shrine our hands will droop and fall

- Questions for discussion:
  - What is the hoped for progress that we would like to see in the Church and in our Schoenstatt Family? What keeps us from moving forward?
  - What meaning does our love for Mary have in relationship to all that is mentioned here?

<sup>1</sup> Father Jonathan Niehaus refers to the time between Vatican Council II and the post-Council time, when everyone would have understood what the Holy Spirit wanted to effect in the Church.

Father Jonathan's concluding prayer summons us to unite in Mary and stand together with and for her.

Arise, O Queen Thrice Admirable! In every time when we, your family, have faced impenetrable darkness, we have crowned you and begged you to show your power – and you came through! It was no small feat for you to do the seemingly impossible and restore our father and founder to his family after long years of exile, but you did it! We will stand at your side in whatever turmoil still lies ahead, and actively seek ways to make your love and power known. As our founder said at the same May opening:

“We must not overlook the fact that our task, to a great degree, consists in *defending* the person of Our Lady wherever we are and *standing up* for her mission. (...)

“A Frenchman, quite in tune with the modern world and familiar with the coming youth, recently said: The coming generation of youth (...) will [be ready to] face great tasks. Why? Because they are being nourished by the word of God (...) [and] the bread of God. But while both things are true, for them to be truly able to reach for the stars, that is, to become a generation of the stars and men and women of the sun, then what is still essential – in fact, bitterly essential – is that they (...) *rediscover* the Blessed Mother!”<sup>2</sup>

- Questions for discussion:

- Three verbs stand out from Father Kentenich's words quoted by Father Kentenich:
  - defend,
  - stand for, and
  - rediscover.

What do these three words mean for us when we think of our time, of our parishes, of our dioceses, of our world, and of being among our relatives and friends?

- Mention ways of helping others rediscover the Blessed Mother.
- Do you think Mary is considered something of the past? Is our covenant of love really a means to help others rediscover her?
- Mention ways in which we need to defend and stand for the Blessed Mother. How does our covenant of love help us in this regard?

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<sup>2</sup> Father J. Kentenich, May 1966.