

Speech in the Hôtel de Ville, Merville

Hans Zier

Lord Mayor and dear friends,

We are deeply touched by your welcome and give you our heartfelt thanks for the hospitality that you have shown us in your town.

Encouraged by your interest in our work last summer, during the construction of the replica of the Joseph Engling Memorial, we experienced the way in which the "Saint of Reconciliation" touched the hearts of the people of Merville.

We experienced many signs of friendship and kindness during the time that we worked on the Memorial.

Our first welcome at the Hôtel de Ville a year ago stands out as a vivid memory. It was a huge surprise for us. What is more, an echo of that welcome last summer resounded to all parts of the Schoensatt Movement throughout Germany.

Today we have the opportunity to say thank you. We – that is the representatives of the different groups within our Movement, among them a large number of people who regularly come to our centre in Cambrai and who took a detour to Merville so as to visit the Memorial, to this place where the young Joseph offered his life to our Blessed Mother for peace and the goals of our Movement. He believed in the mission of his spiritual father, Joseph Kentenich. Today, our Movement has centres in many countries and the people there know about Joseph Engling and know the name of this town: Merville.

Lord Mayor, dear friends !

Thank you for everything, for everything that you have done for us, for Joseph Engling's voice of peace, for this atmosphere of comfort and kindness.

As we came to know many of the people of this town, we became aware that their words were always accompanied by positive and friendly help. First, the rose placed at the Memorial encouraged us, then the neighbours, Mr. Gérard Costenoble and his wife, later the representatives of the technical team, Mr. Denis, Mr. Lorphelin and the management ladies, the completion of all the necessary formalities without any bureaucracy and above all, the many meetings with the parishioners at the site of the Memorial.

It is with some pain that we must also mention some of the problems:

- the cows, the concrete, the rain, the wind, the foundations, the trucks that drove past too quickly.

But we made survived because of

- the coffee and biscuits at the construction site provided by various parish groups,
- Fr. Nicolas' encouragement to us from our very first meeting,

- Gérard Costenoble's tractor and his excellent driver who was always available to us every time we needed him,
- the service and seemingly limitless funds of the Williard-Hovine house and its representative Pascal Cochet,
- the support of the people who took an interest in our work,
- the snacks provided by Mrs. Costenoble when we were tired in the evenings before arriving home at Schoenstatt, where we were spoiled by the catering team and Sr. Michéla who opened the house to us.

Today we have returned, with sixteen times more people than a year ago, and we find the doors of this Hôtel de Ville welcomingly open to us, like the last time.

In this friendly atmosphere, we encounter the cooperation that exists between the town's administrative structures and the parish in order to accomplish our goal: to honour Joseph Engling and for all the things that have been accomplished in his name: peace, a deep reconciliation between our peoples, a vocation for our young people and the prospects of a united Europe that expresses its Christian origins.

Once again, Lord Mayor, dear friends, once again: Thank you.

Translation: Sarah Leah Pimentel, Johannesburg, South Africa