

**Your hearts caught fire**  
**Hoerde – An original source for a movement that can change the world**

Sister Dr. M. Nurit Stosiek

Vortrag beim Hörde-Treffen am 17. August 2019 in der Pilgerkirche Schönstatt, Vallendar

- 1 Hoerde – The finale is an exciting race between a pathway prepared by God and a pathway walked by people
- 2 Hoerde – An Adventurous Undertaking
- 3 Hoerde – A new Pathway for the Laity
- 4 The profile of the *Hoerde Type* then and now  
The *Hoerde Type*, is
  - a person who is not only confident in himself but also mission conscious, and is able to reach for the highest goal, being rooted from within.
  - a person who has a mature personality, and who through self-education wants to shape society from within.
  - a Christian living in this world, who makes room for Christ in every aspect of his daily life.
- 5 A movement of Christians in today' s world who can change the world

My dear participants at this 100-year conference,

At present Live Escape Games are in. There you will find a background story in which you can participate. Under a set time you are given clues and objects to find which will help you find the solution to opening the next door. What is fascinating about this game is that it is “*an adventure taking place in the real world*” (Scott Nicholson)

The outcome of Hoerde which we are looking at today, is the finale of this game where a young Father Kentenich has a bet on with God. He talks about a race between divine leadership through the open door and human compliance.<sup>1</sup> Even here this was a game of the times. From 1912 until 1919<sup>2</sup> the times were used to decipher God’s will and to find his way through new doors and rooms<sup>3</sup> until the events in Hoerde 1919 made room for a movement which has now spread throughout the world.

This is truly an exciting game between God and humanity which we want to look at in more detail today. This game continues and it is now our turn, in cooperation with our heavenly covenant partners, to stride forward through open doors and new rooms in order to develop our mission. Let us take a closer look at “*this adventure of divine signs and preparations and courageous human strides along this divine path.*”<sup>4</sup>

## **1 Hoerde – The finale is an exciting race between a pathway prepared by God and a pathway walked by people**

The young teacher Father Kentenich moved in September 1912 to the newly built college in Schoenstatt together with pupils from seven high school classes. Shortly afterwards, in October, contrary to his expectance, he was made their spiritual director during a student revolt. He searched for a way to use the energies of the revolting students in order to put it to good use. At the very same time, in September 1912 he got to know the Marian Congregation in Trier. He discovered that here the young boys’ independent actions could be activated and cultivated. Despite resistance from his fellow colleagues he founded the Marian Congregation (albeit via the Mission Society) in April 1914. His primarily concern here was the promotion of character formation by teaching them to help themselves, independence through self-activity. Much later he once said: “I did not want too much Marian piety; Christ needs to be at the heart.”<sup>5</sup> However since the Marian Congregation already existed, he used his May talks of 1914 to bring the young boys closer to Our Lady. Based on the strong, inner reaction of the boys to this he understood

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Kentenich, *The Key to Understanding Schoenstatt*, Vallendar 1974, S. 148-228, 185. German edition

<sup>2</sup> Father Kentenich mentioned this period of time. He describes that at Hoerde Schoenstatt came into being as an independent work and says: "That's how the work stood. In the course of seven years, from 1912 to 1919, it had been applied to according to the law of the open door of God's planning" (ibid. 204)

<sup>3</sup> Father Kentenich describes it as having "consciously interpreted and reciprocated all events as a slow revelation of great divine overall planning". "It's all in the plan!" This expression became over time a standing expression with a meaningful content, which gave all events in one's own life, in the family and world history a very personal note, the character of a warm, awakening divine call" (ibid. 185)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> J. Kentenich, *Talk for Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary on 6.1.1929*, unpublished manuscript

*how deep the value behind Marian devotion was. Since that time, I myself am deeply devoted to Mary.*<sup>6</sup>.

He then looked for a place where the congregation could meet without being disturbed. This was the unused Chapel of St. Michael in the valley. At that very same time when he received the go ahead from the provincial council to use the Chapel of St. Michael, he read an article about a lawyer, Bartolo Longo who founded a Marian Place of pilgrimage in Valle di Pompei in Italy<sup>7</sup>. A place of pilgrimage can therefore develop without extraordinary divine intervention. Could this be the same for Schoenstatt? Shortly after this the First World War broke out and many of his young pupils were called to the front where he could no longer support them personally. *“If I were able to make sure that Our Lady would set up her throne here, ... then I will have fulfilled my task.”*<sup>8</sup> What was a deep personal experience for him at the age 8 when his mother took leave of him and entrusted him to the Blessed Mother in the orphanage has now expanded to the founding act of 18<sup>th</sup> October 1914. And once again we see the educator in him, instead of using the rosary, as in the case of Bartolo Longo, he suggests to the boys that they offer their self-education to the highest level as a gift to Our Lady. And there we have the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1914.

God continued to lead through the sodalist-soldiers’ apostolic work during the first world war where the external-organization developed with the growth in numbers of High School students and young academics who were soldiers fighting on the front lines.

While studying the mission of Vincent Pallotti he asked himself if the extern-organization another sign in the development from God is. In a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1916 he wrote:

*“What if Our Lady wanted to gather through us the educated youth around her – a thought too comprehensive to be immediately considered feasible, but also too beautiful and not too fantastic after the current development of things, not quite impossible to be totally rejected.”*<sup>9</sup>

After the war what was not possible then was now becoming a close reality. The young people in the extern-organization pressed Father Kentenich for permission to continue being active in Schoenstatt. He was trying to find out if this was the Holy Spirit leading the way and if this was the right time. The persistent pleas of the externs he finally saw as a sign.<sup>10</sup> So in April 1919 he gave the green light to set up new groups. At the beginning of July he asked his provincial to release him from his position as spiritual director in order *“to found the Apostolic Teacher’s and Student’s Union.”*<sup>11</sup> This was granted. It was then in August that the historical founding conference in Hoerde took place at which Father Kentenich himself was not present.

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> For more information on the history of the Place of Grace and Pilgrimage Valle di Pompei near Naples and the complete text of these articles by Fr. Cyprian Fröhlich in: REGNUM, III/1968, 133-138. German ed.

<sup>8</sup> J. Kentenich, Address on 13.9.1966 to pilgrims from Alsace/France, in: *Propheta locutus est. Lectures and speeches by Fr. J. Kentenich during last three years of his life*, Vol. X 1966, Berg Sion 1997, 167-180.

<sup>9</sup> The letter is documented in: *The Key to Understanding Schoenstatt*, J. Kentenich, Vallendar 1974, 148-228, 176. German ed.

<sup>10</sup> Fr. E. Monnerjahn writes: “Father Kentenich was waiting for a sign, a sign that those who mattered, those in the extern organization, still wanted to continue the work and could not be kept back regardless of the turmoil of the post-war period, or by the return to civilian life, or by his apparent disinterest.” (E. Monnerjahn, *Father Joseph Kentenich. A Life for the Church*, Vallendar<sup>2</sup>1979, 97).

<sup>11</sup> A.a.O, 97f.

We could describe Hoerde as the completion of the founding impulse from 18<sup>th</sup> October 1914. Young Schoenstatt has outgrown the “*nest*”<sup>12</sup> of the Marian Congregation and begins to develop in its own way into an independent, new type of movement. It is an overall wonderful divine plan in which the event at Hoerde culminates.

## 2 Hoerde – An Adventurous Undertaking

In retrospect, a lot of things combine so well. But at the time when Father Kentenich is committed to the foundation of the Apostolic Union of Schoenstatt, it is a step into the dark. *“The only thread I could hang onto was the thread of faith in Divine Providence, which helped me go forward, step by step”*<sup>13</sup> he later wrote. *“What an adventure this all was, can be easily guessed by those who know of the situation in the world, the Church and in society at that time.”*<sup>14</sup> The situation at the time: The Hoerde event took place a few months after the end of the First World War. Germany is sinking into chaos after this “primary disaster of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”. (G. F. Kennan)

The war had enormous potential for destruction, the ruling monarchies in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany were overthrown in a revolutionary way and thus their authoritarian social order. Social conditions and cultural orientations had changed fundamentally. In the months leading up to Hoerde, a huge wave of soldiers returned from the war and often organized themselves into *Frei corps* (German military volunteers), which fought the new democratic order. There was great unemployment, and the population was still traumatized by the experiences of war. Political assassinations destabilized public life. The struggle for the future political system of Germany led to street battles and civil war-like conditions.

Father Kentenich wrote in the MTA magazine: *“The war has shaken powerfully at the posts of today's social order. Violently, a new era is at the gates of the present time and demands admission. Old border posts are shaking, and like wild storm waves, new spirit currents are sweeping through the world... The task of the educated is to set the course for the brewing epoch.”*<sup>15</sup>

Let us look at this event ourselves for a moment and ask: What would I have done then to set the course? What would I do today in the face of a world situation that has some parallels to that time?

There were heated discussions at the meeting in Hoerde. Some of the members of the extern organization strongly advocated a political orientation, because the Catholics finally gained influence through the Centre Party. A different direction saw the force of the social question, triggered by the post-war misery, a major concern at the time. At the beginning of 1919, the

---

<sup>12</sup> J. Kentenich, 15. 10.1947, edited in: The Strategy of the Covenant of Love. Talks and accompanying Letters of the October Week 1947 edited and published by Fr. Heinrich Hug, Vallendar-Schönstatt 1997, 108.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to Father General Möhler 1956, quoted in: Hug, Heinrich, Catching up with the past. As of 20<sup>th</sup> August Contributions to the history of Schoenstatt 3, Vallendar-Schoenstatt 2002, 569.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 570.

<sup>15</sup> J. Kentenich in: MTA 3, Nr. 7 from 15.9.1918, 50.

same discussions had already taken place in the College's Marian Congregation, especially with the return home of the soldier - sodalists. At that time, Father Kentenich made it clear to those responsible: precisely because of the massive upheavals, the answer must lie deeper, namely in the formation of Christian personalities. This view is also reflected in Hoerde by the sodalists who arrived from Schoenstatt.

What motivated Father Kentenich to start with the formation of the personality? He perceived that the upheaval of post - World War I would be the beginning of a total revolution and fundamentally change world society in the centuries to come. He foresaw "*a new piece of human history*"<sup>16</sup> developing, "*a new time ... with new drives and a new face*".<sup>17</sup> For example, he repeatedly pointed out that state reform does not lead to the goal, because it does not extend to the change of attitude in people's hearts.<sup>18</sup>

A new way of education is needed. Herein he sees where the duty Church has a, if she does not want to lose modern man. The Church must take a new path of education, a path that corresponds to the attitude of life and the challenges of modern man.

### **3 Hoerde – a new way for the laity**

Father Kentenich has been preparing this new way since 18th October 1914. This way aims to reshape human hearts by giving Christ anew in them, "just as the new Christian and the new Christian community of tomorrow and the day after should look like."<sup>19</sup>

This task is expressed in the goal formulation of the Apostolic Covenant of Schoenstatt:

"To educate the educated lay people in the spirit of the Church  
by striving for the greatest possible standard of holiness".

"The education of educated lay people" – here is something that had been out of sight in the Church for centuries. "I still remember the early days of the Schoenstatt movement; how difficult it was then to get away with the lay apostolate in the public Church," Father Kentenich said at a later date.

On the other hand, he was convinced that, because a period of upheaval of incomparable proportions was on its way, the "total mobilization of all (Christian) forces, by any means, was needed." This means: "Everyone must be there today; everyone must be an apostle today"<sup>20</sup>.<sup>21</sup> That is

---

<sup>16</sup> J. Kentenich, Marian Education (educational Conference 1934), Vallendar-Schoenstatt 1971, 99.

<sup>17</sup> J. Kentenich, 11.4.1933, Talk for Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary unpublished manuscript.

<sup>18</sup> For example, a few weeks after Hörde, he writes to the group leaders: "Social democracy finds the cause of the appalling mass misery of our time in the existing states; Liberation and redemption, it hopes only of a fundamental change in external conditions; it will not achieve its objective. Certainly, many things in social and state life have become rotten and cry out for a reformer. But the deep source of our misfortune lies in ourselves, in the unredeemedness and in the enslavement of our own souls" (J. Kentenich, Letter to the Group Leaders, 6.11.1919).

<sup>19</sup> J. Kentenich, 2. 10. 1966, Address after a family consecration in Schoenstatt, in: *Propheta locutus est. Lectures and speeches by Fr. J. Kentenich from the last three years of life*, Band X 1966, Berg Sion 1997, 217-224, 222.

<sup>20</sup> J. Kentenich, 22.2.1952, in *Brazilian-Tertianship. Pallottine Father tertianship in Santa Maria/Brazil* 16.2. - 5.3. 1952. 2. Band: Lectures 18 to 33, 55.

<sup>21</sup> J. Kentenich, 23.2.1952, *ibid.* 111f.

why it is the central mission of Schoenstatt, "the idea of the lay apostolate ... to save the Church for centuries, for the millennia"<sup>22</sup>

The path that Father Kentenich is taking with the Hoerde objective is real pioneering work. It was not until decades later, in the Second Vatican Council, that the vocation of the laity came to light again. World Christians are already empowered by baptism and confirmation and are mandated to act apostolic in all areas of society. This broadcast is independent of participation in the hierarchical apostolate. Being a lay Christian is therefore a very separate way of calling, which stands on equal footing with the vocation to the priesthood and religious life. "The love of Christ urges us on." (2 Cor 5:14). The words of St. Paul became the motto of the Apostolic Union, reflecting this vocation, living entirely from baptismal grace.

At the conferences after Hoerde, Father Kentenich repeatedly imprints a definition on the participants, which is intended to bring to their attention the universalism of their vocation: "A lay apostle is a person who is always and everywhere, with all natural and supernatural means, directly and indirectly, someone who is committed to the salvation of other people".<sup>23</sup>

How much the conference in Hörde was supported by this "drive for his mission", in the middle of the life centre of the time, shows a taste of Fritz Ernst's lecture on the Apostle Paul: "With the courage of one on Paul the Areopag we should stand up for sourdough, for the masses." Love "enabled him to do such amazing things. And where did he dare? It was at the Central Empire that reached its peak in terms of trade and transport. It was here the world impulse strikes, here the flags of all nations were flying ... For us, too, the day of Damascus our entry into the covenant should be a turning point in our lives."<sup>24</sup>

Baptismism is the root of the lay apostolate, it must be constantly reactivated and unfolded. Father Kentenich sees this as the central task of the covenant of love with Mary. It is she who entrusted her son to all his sisters and brothers: "Behold your mother" (Jn 19:27). In baptism, Our Lady becomes effective as the educator of the Christian, she begins to form him into Christ. This is a lifelong process. Mary can only exercise her upbringing where the baptized person opens him/herself to her influence and participates. In Schoenstatt, this is done through "contributions to the capital of grace": with each contribution, we are drawn away from circling around ourselves and open ourselves to the work of Our Lady, so that she can shape Christ in us.

This was already clear to the young men in the newly founded Apostolic Covenant. For example, a group leader, Felix Evers, suggests in a letter to his group: "How about sacrificing our daily work, all the work on us personally, our struggles and sufferings to her (the Mother of God) and give everything to her, let us consider ourselves entirely as her tools, without always thinking about our own self ...? It can be small things. If I feel the desire to smoke, wait a few

---

<sup>22</sup> J. Kentenich, 23.2.1952, *ibid.*, 110.

<sup>23</sup> J. Kentenich, 22.2.1952, in: *Brazilian-Tertianship. Pallottine Fathers Tertianship in Santa Maria/Brazil* from 16.2. - 5.3. 1952. Vol. II: Talks 18 - 33, 55.

<sup>24</sup> *Zeitschrift MTA* vom 15.12.1919, 23-27.

more minutes, or give it up for a whole day. On Saturdays be polite to others, eat slowly at the table, etc." Evers goes on to say that Our Lady will do nothing better than lead all to her Son. What profile does this "new Christian", the *Hoerde type*, look like then in detail? Which driving forces can be discovered, and which ones are important for us today?

#### **4 The profile of the "Hoerde type" then and now**

In the following, I would like to take a closer look at three of the many possible aspects

##### **The Hoerde type is**

- **a person who is self-confident and mission conscious, someone who is capable of reaching out to the highest goal, because they are deeply rooted within**

Father Kentenich showed the young people from the start that the new beginning of Hoerde was all their work, in which he himself would only support them in the background. Yes, he even made it clear that he would support the work in as far as they showed independence and responsibility.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, the attitude of the leaders was: "The union, that is me!"

This independence has a deep dimension to it. It is the so-called Personal Ideal, or PI for short. Father Kentenich was convinced of the individual vocation of each person, which is revealed in his personality structure, his life story, his strengths and weaknesses. Helping each individual to find his PI was the real "independence" that Father Kentenich gave to the young people. A testimony to this: "The Personal Ideal was like a gift to us, like a discovery. Until that night, we struggled to find the right formulation. We are grateful to this day how Father Kentenich helped us, how he sacrificed hour after hour to help us find and formulate the Personal Ideal."<sup>26</sup>

The Personal Ideal is an ideal of the personality – the original way in which I present the personality of Christ through the power of baptismal grace. The Personal Ideal also describes the original mission that Christ wants to accomplish through me. It gives value awareness: "As the Mother of One and All Christ original an in this world ... He gives me so much confidence that he wants to communicate with people through my mouth and my hands. That's how valuable I am to him. Concretely, I will become a saint!" This is recorded in the diary of a young man from our movement who died of cancer in 1995. The Personal Ideal does not unfold first by reflection and meditating on it, but through life. It grows by tying myself to truths, experiences, people, places, things that become "mine" that make my personality wider, richer, more profiled. This contemplation of life in Schoenstatt is the spiritual core exercise from the very beginning: How, when, where, by whom did God address me personally today? Thus an organism of bonds arises "capable of having the soul deeply rooted and rooted in God and to equip it with an immovable firmness and unique religious dynamics".

---

<sup>25</sup> (Letter to the group leaders of 6.11.1919).

<sup>26</sup> F. Ernst, Bedeutung, 24.

The Personal Ideal is an ideal of the personality – it is the original way in which I present the personality of Christ through the power of baptismal grace. The Personal Ideal depicts the original mission that Christ wants to accomplish through me. This makes us aware of our worth: "As the Mother One and All, originally depicting Christ in this world ... This gives me so much confidence that Christ wants to communicate with people through my mouth and my hands. That's how valuable I am to Him. In concrete terms, I will become a saint!" A young man from our movement wrote this in his diary. He died of cancer in 1995.

The Personal Ideal does not unfold first through reflection and meditation on it, but through life. It grows in as far as I bind myself to truths, experiences, people, places, things that become "mine", giving my personality width, richness, and becoming more profiled. Looking at life this way in Schoenstatt has been the spiritual core exercise from the very beginning: How, when, where, by whom did God address me personally today? Thus, an organism of bonds develops "capable of deeply rooting the soul, rooting it in God and equipping it with an immovable firmness and unique religious dynamic"<sup>27</sup>. There is a growing inner hold, a strong identity that is particularly important in our fluid society. This is a kind of charisma that Our Lady, as the educator of the new Christian, gives in the shrine: a home in me, in God, but also a home in the world, and in the moment.

Where a person is awakened by life from the Personal Ideal, inwardly set alight, where he has "caught fire", something changes inside: The "Hoerde type" is a type of person that does not move at the lower level of *must*. When it comes to his personal mission, he demands the highest things of himself – even if in the eyes of other small things or unreasonably big things. It's like a great infatuation: where real love begins, an effortless heroism awakens, taking everything out of itself. Here, too, "The love of Christ urges us on." (2 Cor 5:14). Father Kentenich says: "The current that we represent in the Church must be a Magnanimitas current"<sup>28</sup>, a current of generosity.

Some examples could be given from the Hoerde generation. Josef Engling also belongs here, he would have been with this generation if he had not died shortly before. In the spirit of his personal ideal of "becoming everything to all and Mary as his own", he heroically fought for his comrades in the war. "Stay, comrade, I will go for you!" is one of the most famous Engling words. The power of a personal mission!

Such "Hoerde types" can be found wherever people discover themselves and their personal life mission through the covenant of love. The following then applies: "Your hearts have caught fire!"<sup>29</sup>

There is a young man who is currently completing a "Sustainable Development" course in Uppsala / Sweden. At Schoenstatt, he is fascinated by the everyday sanctity. "I want to be a Christian in everyday life and Schoenstatt is the key to it for me," he says. For him, this

---

<sup>27</sup> J. Kentenich in a letter dated 15.8.1965. Unpublished source.

<sup>28</sup> J. Kentenich, 16.10.1947, Edited in: Strategy of the covenant of love. Lectures and accompanying letters of the October week 1947, ed. and edited by Fr. Heinrich Hug, Vallendar-Schoenstatt 1997, 172.

<sup>29</sup> J. Kentenich, First Founding Document, (Schönstatt-Verlag) Vallendar 1995, 24. German ed

means being respectful of creation, specifically shown through commitment to climate protection. Instead of flying from Uppsala to Schoenstatt for an event, he makes the 24 hours bus journey. For the climate conference in Marrakech, his team took several days by car. He endured the inconveniences of such a journey with ease. It is part of his mission.

There is another student who has decided to live the ideal of purity before marriage and says this very simply. One of her fellow students with a very different attitude towards this addressed her several times. He wants to know what motivates her to do this. Finally, to her surprise, he tells her that by waiting until marriage, she radiates - now there is an underlying tone of - "great happiness," "joy of life," "naivety," a "total, radical affirmation" that distinguishes her from other women. And: "You live happiness like I will never / never be able to experience again."

Hoerde types then and now - are people with a strong identity who enthusiastically push themselves to stay in constant touch with what is important to them. They go their own way without undervaluing other people and their way of life. There is an idealism that unintentionally radiates and makes values attractively tangible. The philosopher Robert Spaemann once wrote that immorality is "the attitude of someone to whom nothing is precious."<sup>30</sup> Father Kentenich says it in a positive way: It is all about a "new moral principle"<sup>31</sup>, that takes its measure from love. "Whatever pleases the Father, I will do at all times" (cf. Jn 8:29). "The love of Christ urges us." (2 Cor 5,14)

*Let us not walk away from this conference without our Blessed Mother in the shrine making us feel at home in our personal ideal, in our personal mission in life once again. Let her show us more clearly our personal mission, which sets the fire of generosity within us alight. Because that is what will change everything.*

A second description:

**The Hoerde type is**

- **a mature personality who, through consistent self-education, shapes society "from within"**

In a letter to the leaders soon after Hoerde, Father Kentenich described the situation of the time as an emotional uprooting of people through the "war and the revolution. Both events have increased the superficiality and alienation to the excessive ... And in the midst of this chaos, we are setting up a programme that is like raising a solemn shield of inner life."<sup>32</sup>.

This expression to "raise the shield of inner life" must not be seen in isolation. The care of our inner lives also serves our final goal to "build a new world and place it at the feet of God, and

---

<sup>30</sup> R. Spaemann, Happiness and Goodwill, Stuttgart 1989, 224. German ed.

<sup>31</sup> J. Kentenich 12.6.1966, "Sermon on the Mount" for Mothers and Women's Union, in: Propheta locutus est, Vol. VI 1966, Berg Sion 1987, S. 283-309, 295.

<sup>32</sup> J. Kentenich, Letter to Group Leaders, 6.11.1919.

by participating in the great mission of Our Lady in this day and age".<sup>33</sup> But our way to the construction of this new social order demands from us a solution to the great questions of our time through the microcosm of one's own personality. The interpretation of time and the interpretation of the emotional processes are closely linked in the heart of our founder. This was also experienced by the young men of the Hoerde generation. One of them wrote: "His time analysis was clear and credible. Of course, he also interpreted the situation of our hearts. He saw through us, we felt understood and therefore we were ready and willing to listen and answer the call ... The lectures never made us pessimistic, but better listeners, more perceptive, bolder."<sup>34</sup>

At a time when Catholic organizations were more or less still functioning, Father Kentenich made a new beginning through Hoerde, which was already a response to the coming upheavals. He builds Schoenstatt for a future in which the personality of the individual Christian will depend, because the Church as an institution loses its influence. He set up Schoenstatt for the future which depends on the strength of the individual Christian personality, because the Church as an institution will lose its influence. For this reason, he spoke in connection with Hoerde about the renunciation of a "mass movement"<sup>35</sup>, he pleads for "purpose-filled legwork"<sup>36</sup>, "legwork on the heart and soul", whose aim is "a profound moral-religious renewal of the individual-human and the entire cultural basis of humanity"<sup>37</sup>. In those early years, he himself did "the legwork on the heart and soul" of each individual leader in order to introduce the proper educational means.

Later he said that it was the reactions of the young people which made him realize just how novel this educational pathway that he embodied was.<sup>38</sup> The novelty of our educational system has still not caught up within the Church. It is a constant interplay of highly effective psychological and pedagogical means and a consistent struggle for growing spiritual surrender to the Holy Spirit, the actual educator. By working on ourselves, we move Our Lady to call the Holy Spirit upon us.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> J. Kentenich, 17.10.1967, Schönstatts Vision for the future. October Week Talks 1967, *Propheta locutus est* Special edition Vol. 18, 187.

<sup>34</sup> F. Ernst, *Meaning*, 19.

<sup>35</sup> J. Kentenich, *Letters*, 6.11.1919.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Father Kentenich later recounted that he particularly noticed how strongly the young men reacted to the lectures in which he presented the devotion to Mary in connection with personal self-education, in connection with his own temperament, the main passions, etc. One of the participants at the time, Fritz Ernst, later wrote that they had "experienced the sense and meaning of the devotion to Mary" (i.e. not only intellectually understood) "and our attention must have been particularly high. H. P. Kentenich told us in the evening that he had read it from his eyes what he had to tell us. During the breaks we knelt in the chapel to silent personal prayer" (F. Ernst, *Meaning*, 16f.).

<sup>39</sup> As Father Kentenich explains to families in the USA: "We have ... said, 'Mother of God, yes, we want to educate ourselves; but we cannot do it without you. Now we ask you to settle here.' And: 'You should set our self-education into motion.' But: 'You shouldn't do it without us. We want to give you all that we do in the spirit of self-education, so that you can settle here as an educator.'" (J. Kentenich, 13.9.1953, in: *Father Josef Kentenich, Family - Service for Life. Return for families*

USA 1953, Vallendar-Schoenstatt 1994, 217-232, 229.)

This is the second charismatic gift, the gift of the Blessed Mother in the shrine: *inner transformation*. It is about a profound change of heart that only the Holy Spirit can work in us. The Holy Spirit works from within. He adapts to our individual nature and acts within it as He heals and sanctifies. Our participation consists in our "attempts at self-education"<sup>40</sup>. Father Kentenich explained to families this interaction with Our Lady in a very simple way: "We have to say to her: 'Take our education into your hands. See our goodwill. I'm often so irritated and nervous.' ... So then it's not enough to just ask, 'Blessed Mother, help me calm down.' Our Lady will say: 'First of all try to bring me joy by taking yourself in hand. Bring me all these little attempts, and then I'll make sure that something will become of you.'"<sup>41</sup>

The Second Vatican Council outlined later the vocation of the baptized with the word to sanctify the world in all its spheres "from within" (LG 31). Father Kentenich explained the same word decades earlier in the expression "shield of inner life" and this vocation is more important than ever for us as a lay movement.

*Perhaps it is good to ask yourself personally during these days: What has changed in me since I belonged to Schoenstatt? Where does the Holy Spirit ask for my participation in order to shape me more into love? At what point of self-education do I start to give my contribution for the renewal of the world?*

One final thesis:

### **The Hoerde type is**

- **the "new Christian" who creates space for Christ in today's world**

If you want to explore what the apostolate looks like in the spirit of Hoerde, it is good to take a look once again at Josef Engling. He embodies what is later described in the St. Paul's lecture, which has already been quoted, at the Hoerde meeting. It says: "The focus of the apostolate for us through our good example is no mean feat in the turning of the wheels of a big city. The world is converted to Christianity not only through the preaching of the apostles, but also through the virtuous example of Christians ... words instruct, illustrations lead."<sup>42</sup>

Josef Engling lived the apostolate of being a good example. On 18<sup>th</sup> February 1917, he wrote to his friend Karl Klement: "One sore point that I experience more and more about us missionary students is that we lack camaraderie, real friendliness. I myself, like most of us do, all of us, withdraw from the conversations of the other soldiers in order to read. Now I have no-

---

<sup>40</sup> J. Kentenich, 13.9.1953, in: Father Josef Kentenich, Family - Service to Life. Return for Families USA 1953, Vallendar-Schoenstatt 1994, 217-232, 210. German Edition

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> MTA Magazine from 15.12.1919, 23-27.

ticed this and after such a realization I want and must act. I want to become a saint, a contemporary saint, an apostle of today."<sup>43</sup> It is Josef Engling's concern is how to pass on to his comrades in the field what helps him personally. But he doesn't want to push it.

There is, for example, his encounter with an art student Kunibert Riedinger. He is impressed by Joseph's great inner calmness, his helpfulness, his camaraderie. Riedinger himself has had a frivolous life and has long since ceased to practice religiously. The encounter with Joseph touches something in him, he tells him his life story with all his downfalls and finally has the desire to confess and start anew. Joseph maintains friendly contact with him. Riedinger then goes on holiday, falls back into his old lifestyle and – probably in a brothel – gets a deadly illness. When Joseph learns of this, he immediately tries to get his friend's address. Unfortunately, the bearer of the message lost the letter. When all attempts to determine the address fail, he reinforces his contributions to the capital of grace with the request that Our Lady may assist his comrade so that he can return his life to the hands of God in a good way. There is not disappointment at Riedinger's falling by the wayside but takes pity on him and has the strong desire to help him.

Decades later, Father Kentenich says of the apostolate of the laity: "We should not work should no longer work, to use a harsh image, by taking a rope and putting it around people's necks in order to drag them into the Church and making them into Christians by any means available."<sup>44</sup> Through the Council, the Church has a new concept of the apostolate – it is the view we had of this in Schoenstatt from the very beginning: "the apostolate of being has always been in the foreground, but we should not neglect the apostolate of action."<sup>45</sup>

The apostolate of deeds has an even greater diversity in Schoenstatt, because many individuals, as laity, are involved in the various areas of society according to their personal mission and professional professionalism.

And yet the apostolic act is only a "medium", we are bearer of what we hope to achieve:

Christ's redeeming grace. Father Kentenich emphasized: "First of all we must bear witness to God, to Christ through our redeemed being ... We must be redeemed people of Schoenstatt." Nietzsche's saying that "the redeemed must look to me more like his disciples"<sup>46</sup>, shows that this is the core of the testimony, that through this I learn to believe in their Redeemer.

The grace of salvation is of course no cushion to rest on. In the morning prayer our founder teaches us to pray — in the morning of a new time -: " Let us glow like brands of fire giving witness to redemption..."<sup>47</sup> This is the charism of apostolic fruitfulness. Being a Christian is not like "looking over into an airlock-like world ... Creatively, we need to intervene in the chaos of today", we, as lay people, are to shape the world in the spirit of God. The thoroughly apostolic person, says Father Kentenich, "thinks about divine ideas, examines what God wants, how He wants to be able to shape the present face of time. It follows the law of the

---

<sup>43</sup> J. Engling, Letters and Diary Notes, Vol. II, Manuskript, 82. German edition

<sup>44</sup> J. Kentenich, 8. 6.1966, Retreat for Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, unpublished manuscript.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> F. Nietzsche, So spoke Zarathustra, Chap. 37. The original states: "Better songs they should sing to me, that I may learn to believe in their Redeemer: His disciples must look more redeemed to me."

<sup>47</sup> Heavenwards, Prayers Father Kentenich in the Dachau Concentration Camp, Schoenstatt-Vallendar 1996, 15. (German ed)

'open door'. Again and again, God wants to show us through these conditions how He thinks, how He wants to shape things and shape today's world through us."<sup>48</sup>

Looking for open doors, learning to decipher and pick up God's clues with wakeful eye – this was our first idea, it was the game between our founder and the God of life, who made Horde possible. This is the apostle spirit which can change the world. Now today it is our turn. Let us be ignited by the fire in the heart of our founder, so that we too may become apostles through and through, of whom it can be said: "For the love of Christ urges us on." (1 Cor 5:14)

*We would not be here today if we had not met at least one Christian whose face did not show some of the glory of Christ, the glory of Our Lady. Let us ask ourselves personally: Who has encountered God through me? Where do I feel that God wants to change something for the better through me in this world, in my sphere of life?*

## **5 Outlook: A lay movement of Christians that can change the world**

Taking into mind the early days of the movement, which we have now taken into account through the Hoerde event, Father Kentenich says:

"What we thought of as a huge goal from the beginning was two things: originality and universality. For originality we say: the new person in the new community! – for universality: the universalism of the whole movement! These are the two guiding principles that were in our minds from the beginning (as our mission), much like St. Paul noted the mission he had received: to make all men members of Christ."<sup>49</sup>

We have now taken a closer look at the originality of this new path: it is the pathway of the laity, who matures into a lay apostle in the MTA's school of education through the three charisms, the three graces of pilgrimage.

Father Kentenich goes on to say that even as he prepared the statutes for the Apostolic Union, he followed up: "That is not enough, universalism must remain! That's why I prepared the league's draft statute. And in 1920 both were printed and published for the first time."<sup>50</sup> With the founding of the Apostolic League, which extends to the popular and pilgrimage movement, the whole vastness of Christian life is covered.

In order to ensure the authenticity of Christian testimonies in this vastness of the apostolate, the core communities also had to be expanded: in the further history of Schoenstatt, the formation of the unions and the foundation of the secular institutes, which, like the unions (with the exception of priestly communities) are communities of lay people. All institutes and associations, including the priestly communities, "are called to provide scouting and pioneering

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 131.

<sup>49</sup> J. Kentenich, 4.1.1951, in: J. Kentenich, Organization and way of life of the Apostolic League of Schoenstatt, leadership conference of the Women's League January 1951, unpublished manuscript.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid..

services for a new lay asceticism and pedagogy"<sup>51</sup> and to be the soul of a universal lay movement.

Finally, a word from our father and founder, which shows the dimensions in which he saw the Apostolic Mission of Schoenstatt: An apostle should not only be someone who belongs organizationally to a community or to the movement. No, millions from all over the world, through their contact with Schoenstatt which sets them alight, and through this Schoenstatt flame, their wonderful calling, need to make the love of God in this world as a Christian present. In the original sound our founder said: "We want to create an apostolic world ... Everyone who comes into contact with us should not only be touched by the Divine himself, he should become an apostle. An Apostolic Movement!"<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> J. Kentenich, 31. May 1949, unpublished manuscript

<sup>52</sup> J. Kentenich, 19.10.1945, Here was God. October Week 1945. Edited by Fr. Heinrich M. Hug, 1999, 333.