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29 April 2023, 8.45 p.m.

**EUROPEAN Covenant CELE-
BRATION**

at the European Family Congress Vienna

Moderation:

Ella and Thomas Herkommer, DE

Manuela and Peter Miller, DE

WELCOME

Good evening!

We welcome you all to our European Covenant Evening: all those who are here on the Kahlenberg in Vienna and all those who are connected to us at home in their countries via the internet.

A warm welcome

We have come together as families of the Schoenstatt Movement to the European Congress of Families to strengthen and encourage each other for our vision of a united Europe that has a future based on strong families.

We know that we are called by our God. As his co-workers, we are building his kingdom of peace and love among us.

The joy of our vocation to a life of marriage and family and the strength of our Christian faith bind us together across national borders.

We wish to gather in this hour around Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to pray to her and with her.

SERVICE OF LIGHT

Christ is present in our midst.
As a sign of this, we light this candle.

A candle is lit

At the same time a candle is lit
in the shrine here on the Kahlenberg in Vienna,
in the Original Shrine in Schoenstatt,
in the "Shrine of the Family" in Schoenstatt.

We invite all of you who are connected to us through your home
shrine to also light a candle.

In many homes in many European countries a light is burning at this
moment.

A light of hope.

A light for peace.

A light that is a living prayer.

A light that unites us with Jesus Christ, who is the light of our lives
and our centre in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

In him we are one.

Him we call upon:

SONG Shine, Jesus, shine *T+M: Graham Kendrick*

1. Lord the Light of Your Love is shining, in the midst of the dark-
ness shining, Jesus light of the world shine upon us, set us free
by the truth You now bring us. Shine on me. Shine on me.

Refr.

Shine Jesus shine, fill this land with the Father's glory,
blaze, Spirit blaze, set our hearts on fire.

Flow, river flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy,
send forth Your word, Lord and let there be light.

2. Lord I come to Your awesome presence, from the shadows into Your radiance, by the blood I may enter Your brightness, search me, try me, consume all my darkness. Shine on me. Shine on me.

3. As we gaze on Your kindly brightness. So our faces display Your likeness. Ever changing from glory to glory, mirrored here may our lives tell Your story. Shine on me. Shine on me.

PRAYER OF THE CONGRESS

"Family - Hope for the Future" - this is the theme of the European Family Congress here in Vienna.

Family - hope for the future. This is our common mission and message.

This is our Congress -Prayer (Congress Prayer 2023):

AT Dear God,

You are triune love. Relationship in itself is you, God, our Father.

You have called us to be the image of this love as a married couple.

GB As families from many European countries, we unite, from home shrine to home shrine. We know we are called by you, to radiate the Christian ideal of the family, in the context of the current challenges, within our world.

ES Be in our midst.

Strengthen each individual family and let the "joy of love" grow.

HU Encourage us, as a family, to build a world for tomorrow from our homes. A world that knows more peace, justice, love and human dignity.

PL In Fr. Kentenich, you have given us a father of pastoral care for the family. As the Schoenstatt Family Movement lead us in his footsteps, and show us the right way to become a blessing for married couples and families today.

CH Mary, Queen of the Family, intercede the Holy Spirit for this European Family Congress. Grant that it may be a sign for our common mission within our Church and society:

"Family - Hope for the Future".

CONGRESS SONG

A LIVING BOND OF PRAYER

Mary, Mother of God and our Mother. You know the life of marriage and family.

We greet you, Queen of the Family.

We greet you here in the shrine and in all our home shrines.

We need you and your help.

We especially ask you in this hour for the graces of the shrine for all married couples and families

in the different situations of life

in the different phases of life,

in the countries of Europe.

We are united by a living bond of love and prayer.

HYMN Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu

T+M: Maria Parkinson

HU For the young married couples

We are Anna Górány and Bálint Szabó from Hungary. We are grateful that God has given us each other.

We pray for all young couples on their way to marriage and for the grace that the embers of first love will remain alive in all of us.

Üdvözlégý Mária, kegyelemmel teljes, az Úr van teveled, áldott vagy te az asszonyok között, és áldott a te méhednek gyümölcse, Jézus.
Asszonyunk, Szűz Mária, Istennek szent Anyja, imádkozzál érettünk, bűnösökért, most és halálunk óráján. Ámen.

„A család – a jövő reménye”

RO For the children in our families

We are Valentin and Florentina from Romania and we have been married for 14 years. God has given us 3 children.

We thank God for the children who are growing up in all our families. Bless and keep their paths. Give us parents your loving gaze, Mary, and your mercifully loving heart, so that our children may feel secure, experience affirmation and develop freely.

Bucură-te; Marie, cea plină de har, Domnul este cu tine, binecuvântată ești tu între femei, și binecuvântat este rodul trupului tău Isus.

Sfântă Marie, Maica lui Dumnezeu, roagă-te pentru noi păcătoșii, acum și în ceasul morții noastre. Amin.

"Familia - speranță pentru viitor".

AT Responsibility in family and work

*We are **Karin and Thomas Bruckermayr from Austria** and have been married for 25 years. We are joined by our three children Anna, Stefan and Tobias. We both work as employees in a home for the elderly and in a carpentry workshop for windows and doors. We pray for all spouses that they will be able to see the work in family and profession as different focal points of a common responsibility and that they will support each other in this as a marriage team.*

Gegrüßet seist du Maria, voll der Gnade, der Herr ist mit dir, du bist gebenedeit unter den Frauen und gebenedeit ist die Frucht deines Leibes Jesus. **Heilige Maria, Mutter Gottes, bitte für uns Sünder jetzt und in der Stunde unseres Todes. Amen.**

„Familie – Hoffnung für die Zukunft“

CZ Overcoming Sorrowful Situations

*We are **Veronika and Petr from the Czech Republic** and have been married for 22 years.*

We pray in our need: for the mentally and physically ill in our families, for the elderly and infirm, for all in economic difficulties. Mary, give all families a share in your inner strength, so that we, like you, can follow Jesus' way of the cross and be there for each other in times of fate or hopeless situations and trust in God's saving power.

Zdrávas Maria, milosti plná, Pán s tebou, požehnaná jsi mezi ženami a požehnaný je plod života tvého Ježíš. **Svatá Maria, Matko Boží, pros za nás hříšné nyní i v hodině naší smrti. Amen.**

„Rodina - naděje pro budoucnost“

HR For strength in marital crises

*We are **Mia i Sebastijan Levačić from Croatia** and have been married for 9 years.*

We pray for the strength of love for the married couples who are in crisis and for good companions. We also pray for the couples who have separated, for all who suffer from such a separation and for the experience of God's mercy.

Zdravo Marijo, milosti puna, Gospodin s tobom, blagoslovljena ti među ženama i blagoslovljen plod utrobe tvoje Isus.

Sveta Marijo, Majko Božja, moli za nas grješnike, sada i na času smrti naše. Amen.

Obitelj – nada za budućnost.

CH For the grace of faithfulness

*We are **Rita and Frank Schuler from Switzerland.***

We are happy that we could already celebrate our Silver Wedding Anniversary.

We ask you, Mary, for us and for all married couples, for the grace of fidelity to our yes - until death do us part. Let a climate of faithfulness grow in our families: a climate of mutual goodwill, in which we always see each other anew as great and unique.

Gegrüßet seist du Maria, voll der Gnade, der Herr ist mit dir, du bist gebenedeit unter den Frauen und gebenedeit ist die Frucht deines Leibes Jesus,

Heilige Maria, Mutter Gottes, bitte für uns Sünder jetzt und in der Stunde unseres Todes. Amen.

„Familie – Hoffnung für die Zukunft“

GB Family: first place of faith sharing

*We are **Anne and Konrad Ostmeier**, married on 4th August 1979 and have 3 children and 6 grandchildren. Christ is in our midst in the sacrament of marriage. We are and live a domestic church. The time of the pandemic has heightened our awareness of this.*

We pray for a living faith for us. And we ask that we as parents and grandparents bear witness to God's love through our words and actions and pass it on to the next generation.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus, **Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

Family - hope for the future.

IT Gift of the Home Shrine

*We are **Paolo and Francesca from Italy** and have been married for 24 years. Two years ago we blessed our home shrine. It is called the "Shrine of Trust and Home". It is the most important place in the house where we always draw strength.*

Mary, we thank you that you live and work in so many home shrines - in the midst of our families. Give each family the graces of the shrine in an original way: sheltering, transformation, mission.

Ave Maria, piena di grazia, il Signore è con te, tu sei benedetta tra le donne e benedetto è il frutto del tuo seno Gesù,
Santa Maria, Madre di Dio, prega per noi peccatori ora e nell'ora della nostra morte. Amen.

„Famiglia - speranza per il futuro“

ESP As a married couple - called to the apostolate.

We are Cristian and Rafael Munoz from Spain and have been married for 38 years. We have 5 children.

In Schoenstatt we have learned that our first apostolate is our own family. In addition, we are apostolically committed as members of the Institute of Schoenstatt Families. We are members of the Schönstatt Institute of Families.

Dios te salve Maria, llena eres de Gracia el Señor está contigo, bendito es el fruto de tu vientre JESÚS.

Santa Maria, Madre de Dios, ruega por nosotros pecadores ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte. Amen

„Familia - Esperanza para el FUTURO“

PT Families at war and on the run

*We are **Sónia e Paulo Ribeiro Crisógono** from Portugal and have been married for 16 years.*

We pray for the families and all the people in Ukraine and the many war zones; for all those who have left their homes and are on the run: Be with them, protect them and be the Queen of Peace.

Ave Maria, cheia de graça, o Senhor é convosco, bendita sois vós entre as mulheres e bendito é o fruto do vosso ventre, Jesus,

Todos: Santa Maria, Mãe de Deus, rogai por nós pecadores agora e na hora da nossa morte. Ámen.

Família - esperança para o futuro.

PL Protection of life in all stages of life

*We are **Regina and Alojzy Strzeduła from Poland** and have been married for 48 years. We are very grateful for our 5 children and 6 grandchildren and for all the support we receive in our extended family.*

We pray for the family, which is the "sanctuary of life". Let us help build a culture of life where human life is protected from beginning to natural end, in health and in sickness.

Zdrowaś Maryjo, łaski pełna, Pan z Tobą, błogostawionaś Ty między niewiastami i błogostawiony owoc żywota Twojego, Jezus, **Święta Maryjo, Matko Boża, módl się za nami grzesznymi teraz i w godzinę śmierci naszej. Amen.**

"Rodzina - nadzieją dla przyszłości"

Hymn **Jesus Christ, you are my life**, T+M: Marco Frisina
Jesus Christ, you are my life Halleluja, Halleluja. Jesus Christ, you are my life, you are my life, Halleluja.

1. Zeugen deiner Liebe sind wir, Boten des Lichtes in der Welt. Gott des Friedens, hör unser Fleh'n: Schenk deinen Frieden allen.
2. He calls us to the waters of life. He pours his love into our hearts. Jesus comes to us in our heart. Glory to God forever.
3. Tu sei via, sei verità. Tu sei la nostra vita. Caminando insieme a te. Vivremo in te per sempre.
4. En el gozo caminaremos trayendo Tu evangelio; testimonio de caridad, hijos de Dios en el mundo.

READING

Indrė & Ramūnas Aušrotai, Lithuania.

We hear a reading from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians: Clothe yourselves, then, as God's chosen ones, saints and beloved, with fervent compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience! Bear with one another and forgive one another if one has something to reproach the other for. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also forgive! Above all, clothe yourselves with the love that is the bond of perfection! And may the peace of Christ triumph in your hearts. You are called to this as members of the one body. Be thankful! May the Word of Christ dwell with you in all its richness. In all wisdom, teach and admonish one another! Sing to God psalms, hymns and spiritual songs in gratitude in your hearts! Let everything you do in word or deed be done in the name of the Lord Jesus. Give thanks to God the Father through him!

Col 3:12-17

ADDRESS

Father Ludwig G uthlein, DE

Dear Families, dear collaborators on the future of Europe!
These days with their diverse encounters are a great gift. We have experienced diversity and variety as a source of joy and strength. Today, many voices speak of the richness of diversity. Sometimes it takes on the character of a speech template. Sometimes it sounds like incantatory formulas. At the same time, we know that the reality between the countries of Europe and also in our countries is moving in a different direction. Tensions are growing. Polarisations are becoming clearer. Instead of wealth, we experience arbitrariness and excessive demands.

Our congress is a counter-current to this. We do not have to talk our togetherness into existence. We have experienced diversity as a source of joy and strength.

Why is that so? I believe we have experienced something of the charisma of marriage and family. We have looked together at the source from which human life grows and develops. I have deliberately chosen the word charisma for marriage and family. Theologically, I would like to understand it in a broader sense. The biblical charisms are sometimes seen as special gifts of grace that are not absolutely necessary. However, the life of the early Church was strongly characterised by the fact that the Holy Spirit with his gifts was effectively experienced in a very concrete way in the everyday life of the congregations. For me, the word charisma is about this effectiveness of the Holy Spirit. Marriage and family have in themselves an effectiveness that really gives "hope for the future".

The last Popes were fond of talking about marriage and family as a school of humanity. We have spelled it out in our Congress. Humanity grows in a space of secure attachments. Marriage and family is a school of complementarity. It is a school of love, in which otherness is affirmed and deepest mutual care is awakened. Marriage and family is a body-soul school of human wholeness. The word charisma tells us that marriage and family carry this reality within them. The basis of this reality of marriage and family is not first of all the good human effort and the best intentions we invest. Like all human reality, of course, marriage and family can be overwhelmed and become destructive. However, to live from a charisma is to hold the basic direction of vision. I was very touched by how Prof. Trost emphasised at the delegates' meeting in Schoenstatt that perfection is not necessary. In his research at the Chair of Attachment Research at the University of Aachen, he was very concerned with the importance of a

basic secure attachment in infancy. He once experienced a Schoenstatt shrine. At that time he saw the image of mother and child as a beautiful illustration of what his research is about. He sees the secure attachment of a child as an almost irreplaceable foundation for the development of a human being. "Good enough is enough," he stressed. You're not supposed to develop perfect expectations. It's about a foundation. The unfolding of the path of life is a path that each person must and can shape for themselves.

Marriage and family have the charism of "good enough". Pope Francis said a few months ago at an audience for the Pontifical Theological Institute "John Paul II" about this: God can always "form a blessing for the creature from the grace of the sacrament".

If we now renew the Covenant of Love, it is about Schoenstatt's covenant charism. The covenant reality of marriage and family unites to the Blessed Mother in the shrine. Looking at our Mother Thrice Admirable, we are sure that this covenant is good enough and strong enough, even if our contributions are very limited. Even if our contributions and our devotion sometimes lie in our helplessness. In the face of the challenges of the times, it is a sign of healthy realism to feel the limits of our possibilities and also helplessness. Already in the founding charter, our founder puts it in words: "Do not worry". "Just prove your love to me." "It's all about your cause," was often his word to the Blessed Mother when challenges increased.

Dear Blessed Mother, with the renewal of our Covenant of Love, we place before you all the couples of Europe. All families and children. All efforts for a society that values and protects marriage and family. Dear Blessed Mother, give us the experience far beyond our Congress that marriage and family is hope for Europe.

RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT OF LOVE

The 21st century should be a century of the family. We are committed to the mission of our founder, Father Kentenich, that the renewal of the Church and society should come from "holy islands of marriage and family" (Letter from Santa Maria).

Following the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth, we want to live family in today's world. Family in which the spouses, parents and children are bound together by the bond of love.

The Covenant of Love with you, dear Blessed Mother, gives us the strength to do this. You educate us so that our marriage itself becomes more and more a covenant of love.

You reach out your hand to us and we gladly take it.

Be effective in our home and go with us into the future.

Be you effective in the many homes of Europe where Christian families live.

Be you the Mother, Educator and Queen of all families!

Short silence

We pray together - each couple in their own language:

O my Queen...

SONG Magnificat anima mea dominum. (Taize)

EVENING BLESSING

We ask God for his blessing.

We commit this day, this evening and this night and all that is to come into his hands.

All Our Father who art in heaven...

So through the intercession of the Blessed Mother, Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt, bless us the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn Let us come together

Lyrics and Music: Wilfried Röhrig

1. Bb F Cm7 F
Let us come to - ge - ther un - der the rain - bow a - bove.

2. Bb F Cm7 F
Let us feel the spi - rit, the po - wer of love. Your

3. Bb F Cm7 F
co - ve - nant our mis - sion, your shrine our home.

4. Bb F Cm7 F
Here we are, here we go.

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