

VOICES OF TIME

TIGHT DEFINITION

Refer to video: *Voices of the Time*.

What we read or “hear,” perceive or interpret, from the present or recent events of the world (large scale) or of our own life (small scale), as the will of God for our course of action. Also known as the signs of the time.

IN THE GOSPELS

Father Joseph Kentenich would often say *Vox temporis, Vox Dei*. The voice of the time is the voice of God! Already in the Gospels we find Christ drawing our attention to this fact.

Signs of the Times.

He also said to the crowds, “When you see [a] cloud rising in the west you say immediately that it is going to rain—and so it does; and when you notice that the wind is blowing from the south you say that it is going to be hot—and so it is. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time? (Lk.12:54).

WORDS FROM FATHER KENTENICH

Upon looking back before looking ahead, Father Kentenich admonishes us to have great courage, while being deeply convinced of our mission, of our decision to help the MTA build the Father Kingdom, here in the USA.

Vox Temporis, vox Dei! The voice of our time is the voice of God! “The tragedy is not that the bad are bad, but that the good lack the courage to be good!” Do we have the courage to cast ourselves headlong into the surging tide and leave the rest to God? What we lack is the spirit of conquest, mission consciousness, the strong desire to shape and form and perfect ourselves and others... Today we find ourselves pushed back into the sacristy. We must plunge into the stream of life and work... all we can. (...)

Our cooperation is indispensable! A strong desire to shape, form, and perfect ourselves and others must be part of our life. We must have the courage to make a decision. If we wait and wait, who will operate the switches of our time? Each one in his own place must be willing to take the responsibility for the job God has for him to do (Father Kentenich, *Conference for Catholic Educators*, 1950).

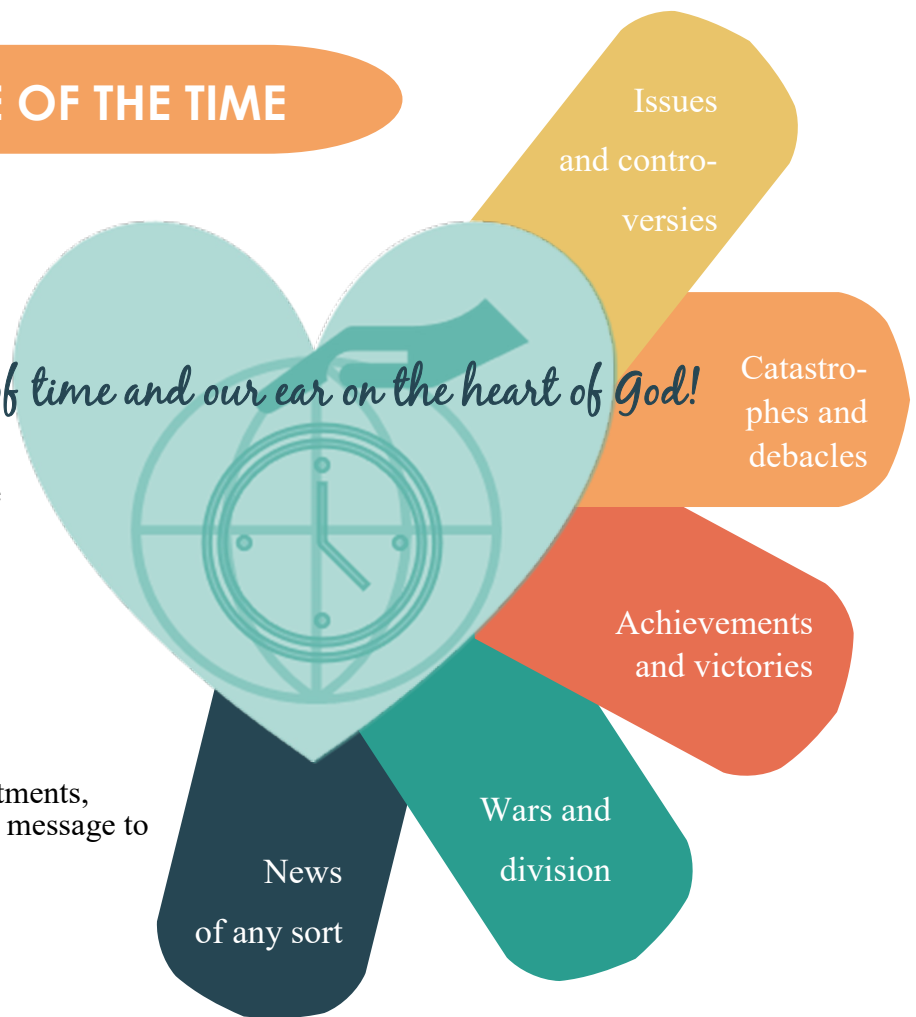
ON THE VOICE OF THE TIME

Father Kentenich encouraged us to go through life

With the hand on the pulse of time and our ear on the heart of God!

Interpreting the events on the large scale of world events as well as the events that take place on the small scale of our lives is listening to the voice of God in our times.

What world events represent for humanity can be felt or reflected in the individual's experience, here and now. The joys and sorrows of routine, commitments, surprises, and frustrations convey God's message to us.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

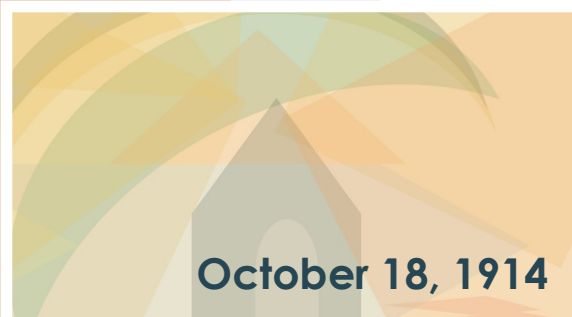
- Where have I, (or we – if part of a group discussion) with all good intentions, lacked the courage to be good, “to surge into the tide,” and reach out to the members of my group? Have I shown willingness to adjust my calendar, to come out of my comfort zone, and take initiative? Do I need to pray more, ask for more help, or just simply move?
- Recall at least the last the three most important events or encounters of your group or branch. Were you satisfied with the preparation, with the actual event, and with the outcome? Did you do any follow up?
- When Father Kentenich speaks of daring to plunge headlong into the “surging tide” do you think he is referring to the most complicated issues of our society or simply about the common, ordinary, and yet challenging needs of the human person? Would you ever consider having a simple conversation about faith with a close relative as a deed of plunging into the surging tide?
- Father Kentenich shakes us out of our complacency by telling us that we need to plunge into the stream of life and work. For that particular purpose, we must make a decision to give shape and form to our everyday life and – when possible – share our very unique views on life to those entrusted to our care. In other words, we are called to fulfill our mission as Schoenstatt leaders wherever we go. Are we willing to do this in a simple and gentle way? Where are those opportunities? How do I make an effort to help other Schoenstatt members increase their knowledge and deepen their commitment?

TUNING IN TO GOD

Schoenstatt will always emphasize contemplating God in history. (This is the hardest!) Because we cannot understand God we ponder on his guidance, and because God cannot be contained in one thought or in one place, we seek God in everything. In other words, we must move towards God, at all times. In our daily lives, every inspiration, encounter, event, and place, is an opportunity to grasp something of God's presence, work, favor, and blessing. In short, we must sharpen our spiritual senses, much like tuning our hearing to a soft background sound or voice.

God's voice is found

- in the way things are made (voice of being),
- in the way things happen (voices of time), and
- in the way we judge and perceive things (voices of soul).



In Schoenstatt's History First Milestone

Father Kentenich lived and taught this practice. Through a childlike connection to God we are better able to listen to his voice and interpret the signs of the times correctly. This is how Schoenstatt came into existence.

The Blessed Mother has used me to make the founding of this pilgrimage place possible. Her wish was not revealed to me in a vision, but by Divine Providence: first, through the signs of the time; secondly, through the workings of grace in souls which showed me the way. And now, the Original Shrine has been duplicated many times all over the world! (Father J. Kentenich, *On Monday Evenings*, #1, p. 88, November 16, 1955).

October 18, 1914, is the founding day of Schoenstatt. This is when Father Kentenich concluded a time of much discernment and deliberation. He tried to discover the will of God with regards to the young men who were about to be enlisted in World War I. The small chapel in the valley became their spiritual home where they learned to increase their spiritual efforts to overcome their rebellious spirit. Father Kentenich felt impelled to take them further. The divine light he received through his faith in Divine Providence was a key component in formulating the founding words.

...to make this place a place of pilgrimage, a place of grace for our house and for the whole German province, and perhaps even further afield. (...) Prove to me first that you really love me, that you take your resolution seriously... Then I will draw youthful hearts to myself from here, and I will educate them to become useful instruments in my hand (Father J. Kentenich, *Founding Document*, October 18, 1914).

LEARNING FROM OUR HISTORY

Father Kentenich's fatherly concern for the students and the extraordinary inbreak of the divine that took place in the small chapel in Vallendar in 1914, gave way to a source of grace and to a new charism. In the covenant and in the three contact points we capture this truth and grasp God's voice (cf. Sr. M. Nurit, 2013).

LEARNING FROM OUR FOUNDER

Schoenstatt is a work of Divine Providence designed by God from all eternity. He made his plans known through Mary, the Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt and her chosen instrument, Father Kentenich. God communicated his plans to his instruments in ordinary ways through the law of the open door. The founder of Schoenstatt was very keen in perceiving the doors which God constantly opened for him. He admitted, however, that these doors were at times rather small and hardly ajar; consequently, he could not clearly see what awaited him beyond. He had to be very alert in order to be aware of the open doors and it took great courage and strength to go through them (Sr. M. Thomasine Treese, *Schoenstatt Divine Providence*, #1).

LEARNING TO LEAD WITH TRUST IN DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The history of Schoenstatt shows that Schoenstatt did not come about as a result of a great, strategic human mind or of a visionary's insights. It came about through the constant search for God's plan and his holy will which he revealed to us, step by step, through circumstances, events, and people. The driving force in the history of Schoenstatt is the living, practical faith in divine providence and the unconditional surrender of human instruments to God to be used by him as he sees fit... (Ibid).

In Schoenstatt God never laid out his whole plan before the founder in clear, unmistakable terms... [From the beginning,] the founder of Schoenstatt was alone with his ideas. Carefully he planted the seed into the hearts of young boys and then waited patiently, trusting that God would make it grow. Then he continued making himself completely dependent on God's guidance through the many doors which were opened for him. The situation of the time, the life of the people, the countless blessings and tremendous difficulties which always kept pace with each other, were open doors that related God's message to him. He never worried anxiously about the next step or about the growth and the fruit of the seeds which had been planted. His only interest was to search for God's will and never deny him even his slightest wish. His unconditional trust and confidence in God gave him serenity and strength (Ibid).

What about others?

Other movements of renewal usually claim to have recognized God's will through extraordinary revelations, which became the source of their foundations. St. Francis, for instance, received his great mission directly from Christ. One day when St. Francis was kneeling in contemplation before the crucifix, Christ spoke to him from the cross and made his plan known to him. St. John Bosco was inspired by special dreams to embark upon his great work. Lourdes and Fatima were founded upon actual apparitions of the Blessed Mother in which she gave clear, distinct and firm directions to the children (Ibid).

WHICH DOORS DID GOD OPEN...

Watch video: *Which Doors Did God Open?*

... so that Schoenstatt could come into existence, grow, and bear fruit?

1. A great goal ahead: Father Kentenich recognized his task.
2. Appointment as spiritual director: "I presume it is God's will!" JK
3. Need for education and formation: A chance to realize his life's task.
4. Enthusiasm for the missions: He helped the young focus their strength on others.
5. Growth on a religious level: This led to the founding of the Marian Sodality.
6. The chapel of St. Michael was an answer to the expressed desire for a meeting place.
7. Possibility of a pilgrimage place: Father perceived God's intention upon reading about the shrine in Valley De Pompeii and Bartolo Longo.
8. The founding hour of Schoenstatt: After a long inner struggle Father Kentenich shares his favorite idea and invites the young to turn the small chapel into a place of grace, their cradle of sanctity. God then took over!
9. The First World War became the field where the young men could share Schoenstatt.

QUESTIONS & PRACTICAL EXAMPLES



Do we read in the signs of the time what God wants from us?

- ◆ Are we caught up in behind-the-scene struggles and forget to keep in mind the goals? Do we pay so much attention to insignificant details and therefore miss the great vision we part of: Schoenstatt?



What can we learn from our founder, as we see him trusting in Divine Providence on October 18, 1914? What can we learn from the doors God opened in our history?

- ◆ Are we willing to commit time and strength, guarding ourselves from complacency? Do we communicate our goals clearly and on time? Do we keep our people well informed about events, but also about the meaning of those events, dates, and celebrations?



What is Schoenstatt's driving force? Is it my driving force, too?

- ◆ Do we let obstacles block our vision of the goals, refusing to adapt to new circumstances? Are we able to see difficulties as opportunities to show our MTA that we really love her, and opportunities for her to show us that she can glorify herself?



Do we hear God's voice in those entrusted to our care, in our groups, branches or dioceses?

- ◆ Do I keep my eyes open to see the progress that takes place around me? Are we childlike and humble enough to discover who to continue climbing "high, higher, highest"?



In Schoenstatt, Father Kantenich did not act by himself.

- ◆ Do I try to work single-handedly and consider the rest in my team to busy, to weak, less committed, and lacking purpose? Are we trusting enough in God's guidance as it comes to us through those who are in Schoenstatt with me, here and now?