The Fruitfulness of January 20th

Father Kentenich, founder of the Apostolic Schoenstatt Movement, while incarcerated, is declared fit for the Dachau Concentration Camp. He suddenly has the possibility of saving himself if he asks for a new medical examination, and on January 20th, he makes the decision to not make use of that possibility and to go freely to Dachau. This decision renders an immense fruitfulness. Of all the fruits, I only want to name two: inner freedom and solidarity of destinies.

1. Inner freedom. Schoenstatt has commenced its journey through history as a Movement of freedom. A peak epoch in the Family’s struggle for freedom is the period of incarceration and Dachau. Father Kentenich relates, after his return: The desire for exterior freedom was totally shut down in me, for love of the Family. The goal of securing for the Family true inner freedom, made it easy for me to bear the exterior chains. I wanted to secure this inner freedom for the Family for all times. Therefore, God gave me inner freedom to such an extraordinary degree that I left the concentration camp so healthy – physically and psychically.

He writes in one of his letters: “I am imprisoned for you; with the surrender of my exterior freedom, I am paying for your inner freedom; and you will have to pay for my exterior freedom with your inner freedom, that is, striving to become interiorally free men, disposed to accept all God wants at whatever moment.”

January 20th and the entire Dachau period is a triumph of freedom, of inner freedom over the forces of evil; the total surrender of the heart to the Divine plan, also to the Will of the Father and especially amidst the Cross, in spite of a lack of exterior freedom. To achieve true freedom has remained, since then, as a high ideal for all times in the history of our Schoenstatt Family.

2. Solidarity of destinies. Father Kentenich makes clear: “We must understand the decision of January 20th through the tight community of destinies of the members of our Family.”

And the Family becomes aware that the Founder is truly their FATHER, that he gives his life for his Family. And that experience of paternal love awakens in his children a strong childlike love toward him, an insoluble union, faithful, solidary. This is how Schoenstatt really becomes FAMILY.

And it is in this way how an extraordinary eruption of graces begins. But it is only experienced by those who have carried the Cross with him.

2.2 Fraternal solidarity. Furthermore, the Family becomes aware of the mutual dependence of the brothers and sisters. And as fruitfulness, a strong fraternalism emerges, from great fidelity and solidarity with one another. The community of hearts begins to become a reality in which one embraces one another fraternally and renders a privileged place in each other’s own heart. This reality becomes strong in the Family since January 20, 1942.

Dear brothers and sisters, I believe January 20th should not only be a remembrance but also a renewal of the mystery of that date. It is an invitation for each one of us to examine: his attitude toward the Cross, his inner freedom, his childlikeness with Father Kentenich, his fraternal solidarity.

Questions for reflection
1. What do I understand by inner freedom?
2. Are my actions in solidarity?

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