



# Longing for Life



**9 Days of Prayer  
for Young People**

# Longing for Life

On the way with **Father Joseph Kentenich**

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A novena for youth who are not satisfied with things as they are, but have the courage to initiate change and achieve goals, who dare to dig more deeply and investigate life's meaning



We thank all youths and young adults  
who have contributed to the creation of  
this novena.

#### IMPRINT

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If Father Kentenich is considered „holy“ in this novena, it is merely an expression of private opinion. The official decision of the Church is not thereby anticipated.

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## Getting started

*„We have many questions and few answers.“*

(Johannes, age twenty-one)

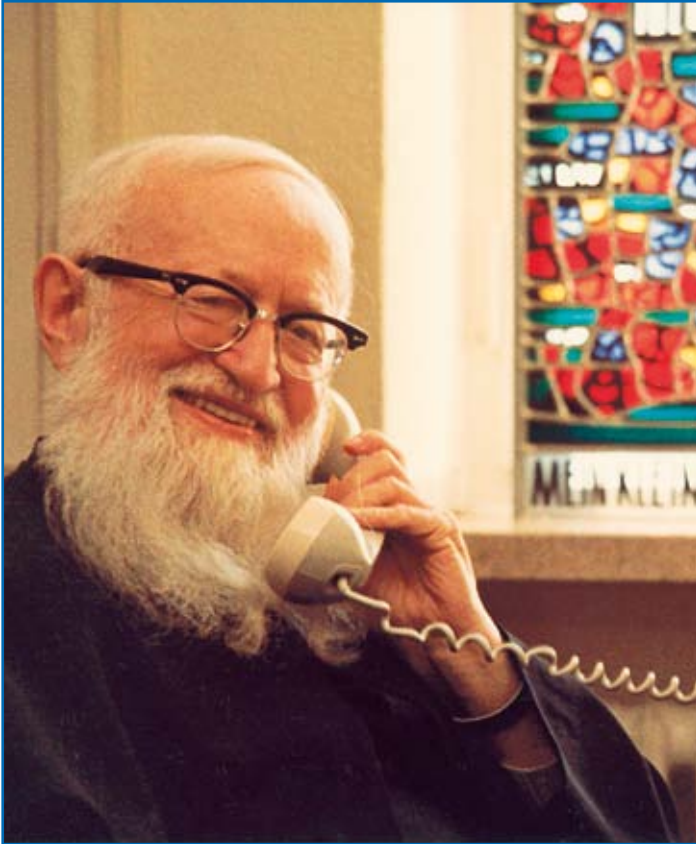
This prayer for nine days is an attempt to give answers. Better yet, it accompanies you for nine days on your very personal search for answers pertaining to your life. Not only answers to what actually bothers you and are not easy to handle: exams, the right professional and vocational decisions, the next step in a relationship, overcoming a weakness...

All of these involve questions that go to the core. Each person must confront them sooner or later:

Who am I? From where do I come and where do I belong? What is meaningful and what gives depth to life? Is there a God and am I worthy of him? If yes, how do I deal with opinions formulated short and clear like this one by a young person today:

„The human person is a product of evolution. He is small, predictable, and physically insignificant. Some day (hopefully soon) he will be extinct or will destroy himself. Is that the meaning of life?“

Our life and our happiness depend on the answer to this last question. Not only our own lives, but also the lives of those with whom we are united.



While praying this novena allow the next nine days to be a time to listen attentively and intensely to the longing of your heart.

On our life's journey, much depends on the persons who accompany us. In this novena, Father Joseph Kentenich will be your companion: someone totally there for those he meets, someone who really listens. Someone happy about the originality of each human being and in whose presence everyone senses their own self-worth. Someone who makes others strong and challenges them to choose a great goal for life: holiness. Father Kentenich shows us the simple way, how to live in the midst of our modern world as a happy person holding the hand of God and Mary, the Mother of God, and thus to change the world.

Father Kentenich guides you by the example of his life and his words, and above all through his intercession at the throne of God.

When he was a twenty-eight-year-old young priest, he became the spiritual director at a minor seminary, a large high school for boys in Schoenstatt, Germany. He was responsible for the education and spiritual life of the boys outside classroom instructions. The words he spoke during his first talk to the students on October 27, 1912, are timeless. Now, at the beginning of the novena, they are addressed to you:

*„I now place myself completely at your disposal with all that I am and have: my knowledge and ignorance, my ability and inability, but above all my heart.“*

Father Kentenich never took back these words. They are his promise, his offer, to us, to you!

In one of his books – created fearlessly in the concentration camp of Dachau, written on small scraps of paper, and smuggled out under mortal danger – Father Kentenich quoted Albert Schweitzer with the following words:

*„In the idealism of youth, man sees truth. In it, he possesses riches that he should not exchange for anything. We must be aware of the fact that life wants to rob us of faith in the good and true and our enthusiasm for it. But we need not relinquish it.“*

Father Kentenich tells us:

Do not worry, you and I, both of us together, will examine what burdens you, your problems. But at the same time, we will use them as steppingstones to build a new world. You do not live to be pitied (who would want that), but for the strength that lives in you and to help love attain the victory.



## Before you begin the novena

### • Be clear!

**What is the question I seek answers to right now?**

For what situation do I expect light and help from Father Kentenich? For what intention do I say the novena? Try to tell Father Kentenich about it or write a letter to him.

### • Reserve time!

**It's best to set aside a definite time each day**

for when you will pray the novena.

### • Be attentive!

**Watch for what happens in and around you during the coming days:**

for ideas you get and the insights that you receive, even if they are uncomfortable. God speaks to you through events and through all that is alive in your heart.

### • Ask yourself in the evening:

**What did I learn today?**

What experience, what word is important for me? You may want to write a „journal of your rays of hope.“

### • Choose one!

**Take one of the inspirations „concretely from everyday life“**

and try to implement it – on one or several days.





## „Father Kentenich is good for me“

Young people experienced Father Kentenich

### Back then

„Back then I was a student and invited to visit Father Kentenich.

Although he had much work, we took a walk with one another almost every morning. He simply listened. For hours. I could talk and talk. I experienced that he listened to me like nobody had ever listened in my life. The whole world was far away. Only he and I. I had the right of domicile in his heart.“

After a first encounter with Father Kentenich, a young theology student walked for a long time silently down the mountain with his friend. Trying to express what he had experienced, he broke the silence, „Pedro, how close God was to us!“ Later he wrote about this encounter with Schoenstatt’s founder, „That day I understood what it means to be a child, the joy and happiness of having a father. A father who knows and understands me, who waits for me, who rejoices with me, is near me... God is like this and much more.“

„I didn’t experience Father Kentenich very often, but through those few encounters he became for me like a



rope on a rocky ridge that I can firmly grip hoping to find God through him.“

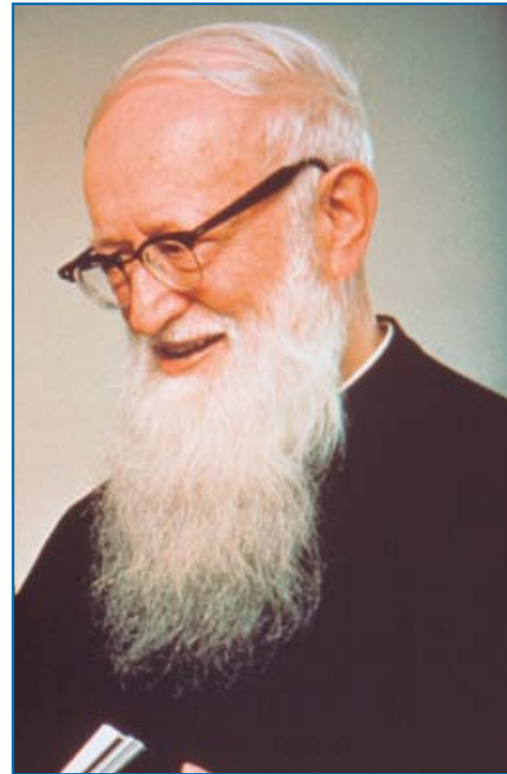
A young woman who had a brief conversation with Father Kentenich a few months before his death relates, „He so convincingly embodied the divine that a great longing awakened in me to be able to love God as he did.“

## Today

„For me Father Kentenich is the person who tells me that heaven is within me; God lives in me.“

„What Father Kentenich means for me, what he actually has to do with my daily life, is becoming apparent only gradually, but ever more and more. For instance, it does me so much good to rest in his gaze; to simply let everything take its course in the hectic and excitement that a day often has. Something in me changes when I look at his eyes. I am again able to meet life more serenely. I can really rest near him; there is no need for much action. Something happens in me that brings me closer to ME... There I can be simple. Father Kentenich is good for me.“

„‘Do not stop halfway.’ With these words, Father Kentenich drew me out of being so dreadfully down.“





## First day: I want to live

*„One thing first: I want to live. This way.“*

Filippa Sayn-Wittgenstein  
(Diary entry at age 18)

*To live – finally.*

*That’s what I wish.*

*A full, abundant, liberated life.*

*I have allowed myself to be lived long enough,  
wedged between school, deadlines, obligations.*

*Everybody wants something from me – me too –  
expecting me to perform,  
be cool, be on top of everything.*

*But I am not a machine. I am a human person. And I  
want to live.*

At age eight, Joseph Kentenich’s mother brought him to an orphanage in Oberhausen. She felt compelled to do this due to family circumstances. The urge for freedom, already typical for young Joseph Kentenich, was now subject to a strictly regulated life that offered no room for personal interests and individual development. In her distress, Joseph’s mother prayed with her son before a statue of the Virgin Mary in the chapel of the orphanage. A moment of grace for Joseph: He sensed the overwhelming love of his heavenly Mother who affirmed him and would never leave him alone. He consecrated his heart to her. Through Mary, God’s love was tangibly



near him. Joseph never forgot this lightfilled moment. On the contrary, this meant more and more to him as his life progressed. Later, as a student, when the question whether truth existed plunged him into a serious inner crisis, love for the Mother of God supported him. He knew with certainty to whom he belonged and whom he believed. The love between him and the Mother of God became his life's secret and spiritual source of strength. „She (the Mother of God) personally formed and educated me from the ninth year of my life.“ To know what gives me strength and keeps me alive. Where the root of my life is. To know to whom I belong: I am chosen to be a child of God, sheltered in his unimaginably great love. Unconditionally. A light deep within my heart. Mary is my mother, with her I can be at home – and deeply, truly find my way to God, to truth, and to life.

„Keep your place in the heart of the Mother of God. That is where you belong no matter what.“

„God's personal interest in us is endlessly attentive and endlessly tender.“

“

J. Kentenich

#### Concretely in daily life

- Was there a moment in my life till now when I felt that God was close to me and loves me?
- Sit before a picture of Mary and simply let her look at me

God, you my Father in heaven,  
I believe that you are here. You – the love, the joy, the fullness of life. I may belong to you.  
In the midst of my everyday life I look to you and seek your gaze. I lift up to you my nameless longing for life, for freedom, for happiness, for you. Who but you can fulfill it? Please don't leave me alone. Hold me and strengthen me. Bind me more firmly to you and to Mary whom you have given to me as mother. Allow the certainty to grow in me: Inwardly you are always near me. Amen.



## Second day: Looking forward

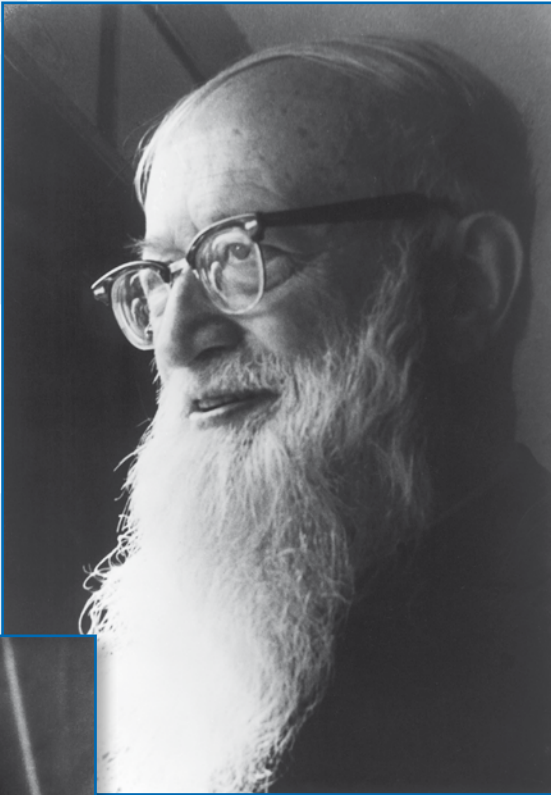
*Before me lies the future, my life;  
everything is open, full of fascinating possibilities.  
I would like to know  
what I should do,  
what really makes sense,  
what is worthwhile.*

*Faster, noisier, harsher – is that my life?  
No. That's not enough. It simply is not enough.  
I want to know why I am.*

Joseph Kantenich knew exactly what he wanted. At age twelve, on the day of his first holy Communion, he told his mother that he wanted to become a priest. In her circumstances his mother couldn't see how this would be possible. But Joseph could not be dissuaded from his wish. Instead it became clearer and stronger in time. A poem – by the way, the first autobiographic testimony that we have of Father Kantenich – reflects his inner struggle to follow his calling.

*“ O Lord! I commend myself to you!...  
Guide the thoughts of my mother  
whom I do not want to hurt,  
so that she will give me permission.  
I am to become a priest...”*

*Let me rather die  
than not follow your call  
and embrace the vocation  
for which you, Lord, have created me.  
O God, I hear you calling me.”*



At age fourteen, Joseph enrolled in the high school of the Pallottine Society in Ehrenbreitstein which prepared him to study theology and for the novitiate. He wrote as reason for applying: „I would like to work for the conversion of pagans.“ He followed the star of an unmistakable life's vision. His life shows clearly: Great is the person of one single idea, the person of one love.

God has placed something within me that belongs only to me and that characterizes me alone: my „personal ideal,“ my innermost secret, my vocation.

For every human being, also for me, there is a very personal meaning to life.

A personal mission from God for this world.

Unique. I alone can fulfill it. There is a reason why I exist.

It is not easy in our noisy world – to listen consciously to the voice of my longing: Who would I like to be – in relation to myself, for God, for others? I carry the answer within me. I must follow it. Father Kenterich advised many young people who were discerning their vocation to pray the short prayer to Mary: „Dear Mother, there lead me, where you would best like me to be.“

*„In a perfect way, you are to become the noble and the great that is within you.“*

*„Through longing, a mysterious power begins to be effective in the soul.“*

*“Have indeed the longing for holiness, for real holiness!”*

J. Kenterich

#### Concretely in daily life

- Keep a diary and write my thoughts and feelings in it. It helps me to become more sensitive to my own life's dreams.
- What makes me radiate, flourish, where do I feel at home? Where am I completely „myself?“ That's what I'm going after.

Father in heaven, it is often dark within me. I do not know how my path should continue. Basically, it is so simple: You have thought of me, created me, equipped me, and sent me into life with a mission. And you go with me. If only I could understand more deeply that you with your Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit live in me, are my energy, my source of strength, my security. Let me feel your tranquility and bundle my whole life in it so that I, in your power, deploy my life for something great. Help me to trust my longing and show me for what you want to use me in this world. Help me become the person that I am to be. Amen.



## Third day: Never give up!

*And then somehow everything turns out different than what was imagined, planned, desired.*

*I did not imagine it like this. Why so many difficulties?*

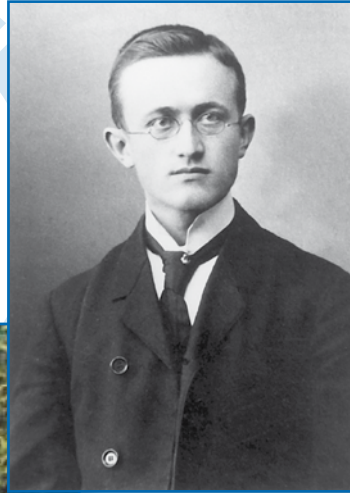
*There are situations that I cannot understand. Plans are shattered. Conjectures. Dreams.*

*It's not in my power.*

*Am I going anywhere?*

**1909.** Joseph Kntenich looked toward his final acceptance into the Society of the Pallottines, which precedes the ordination to priesthood. His great giftedness and his independent thinking had led him to a certain loneliness. Misunderstandings between him, his teachers, and superiors were the result. Reservations about him were voiced. The proceedings of a teacher conference read that he was on a dangerous path. The competent province councilors decided against admitting Joseph Kntenich to final profession, and thereby for his dismissal. At the same time this meant that he would have no chance of being ordained to the priesthood. His life's plan – suddenly destroyed. The director of the house, Father Kolb, described the conversation that he had with Joseph Kntenich at the time:

„‘Have you heard the result of the council?’ The brief



answer, ‚Yes.‘ ‚What do you say?‘ ‚God’s dispensation.‘ ‚What do you intend to do now?‘ ‚First finish my college entrance certification.‘ He stood there gaunt, pale, and sickly. In spite of it, he was, as it were, composed.“ Father Kolb obtained another vote that gave the required majority, however with the condition that the „young man“ was not to be sent to a university after finishing his normal theology studies, in spite of his outstanding intellectual gifts. – After his ordination in 1910, his path first led to Ehrenbreitstein as Latin instructor, then in 1912 to Schoenstatt as spiritual director, that is, to the place where God needed him for a great work.

## Go along with life’s dynamics.

**Don’t oppose them and don’t give in to resignation.**

## See new chances.

**God has a plan for me and for my life.**

**It is a plan of love,  
and God will fulfill it beyond doubt.**

## Entrust myself to God’s guidance.

**He can write straight on crooked lines.**

**„Do not give up – God still has possibilities where human beings no longer see them.“**

**Faith in God’s providence „is the simple faith that our dear God has designed a plan from all eternity. And we like to add: It is a plan of wisdom, a plan of love, a plan of omnipotence. God has designed a plan from all eternity. Whatever happens in life is not accidental.“**

J. Kentenich

### Concretely in daily life

- No matter what happens, do not give up!
- Do not be dejected, but take a small meaningful step that brings you forward.

Father in heaven, help me not to give up. I sense that I am at the end of my strength. I can’t anymore. There is so much I do not understand. Allow me to still believe in your love – even now. I cannot do it alone. I would like to go the ways that you lead, but sometimes I have the feeling that I cannot do it. Send me your help, the Holy Spirit, the power from on high. Let me become calm in the awareness that you will direct everything to the best. Amen.







## Fourth day: Now

*Sometimes life simply carries me away. I squander the time, today this, tomorrow that. Miscalculating, totally chaotic, just plain stressed.*

*When does life actually begin – my life?*

**Now!**

Father Kentenich didn't play games. Right away in his first talk on October 27, 1912, he challenged the students by suggesting to them a clear goal for their common task:

„Under the protection of Mary, we want to learn to educate ourselves to become firm, free, priestly personalities.“

It was important to him that the boys begin at once to live as new persons – not sometime later, perhaps when the conditions were more favorable – but today! (The rules of the boarding school were very strict and allowed only minimal free reign.) Begin today to be a Christian who loves God-given freedom and also uses it in order to realize great goals. Take life in hand responsibly here and now. And how is that done? Very simply: „You learn to walk by walking, to love by loving...“ I will become a free person when I practice making independent, free decisions – every day, every hour. With this program Father Kentenich struck the lifeblood of a young person.

He could not change the exterior conditions in the boarding school, but he helped change the inner attitude: I do not allow myself to be lived, but I live – now. Even the smallest everyday decision that I consciously make strengthens my personality and allows me to blossom. A wrong decision is better than no decision at all. Because every decision releases energies and connects me with the best in me. I become the person I really am. The closeness of Mary, Mother of God, the woman who freely decided for God, ensures greater determination and consistency.

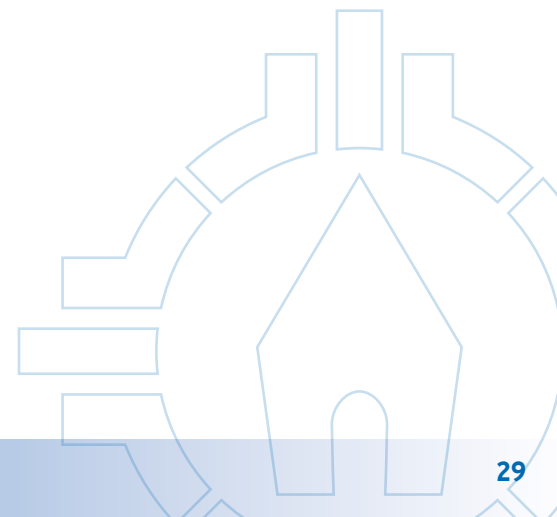
Father in heaven, help me live my life, to become a person who rejoices in making decisions. Don't let me wait for the great punt, the great change in my life, but use the moment that is offered to me to shape my life. Grant me the experience that Father Kentenich and his students had in the covenant with Mary: A new and great life is beginning as I try to give you joy here and now. Amen.

*“And after we make a decision,  
we follow through with that  
to which we said yes.”*

J. Kentenich

**Concretely in daily life**

- Training for daily decision making: Conquer myself in one concrete point and choose the better!
- I do not say yes if I actually should say no.
- Before making a decision: reflect – pray – wait a little – then decide for that to which my conscience draws me.





## Fifth day: And the fear...?

„Somehow, I'm afraid I won't find happiness.“

**Afraid** to make the wrong decision.  
to be abandoned and alone, worth nothing.  
to commit myself permanently.  
not to be able to manage.  
to miss the boat.  
to lose myself.

What do I do with this fear?

**October 18, 1914** – Schoenstatt's founding hour. Father Kentenich gave his first talk in a little chapel, later called the Original Shrine. He and several students made themselves available to the Mother of God so that she could be especially effective from this place. During the previous months, Father Kentenich struggled with the question: Does God want to make Schoenstatt a place of pilgrimage and grace, and does he call me to be an instrument for this? Or is it all a fantasy, a fixed idea? According to Father Kentenich's own testimony, this decision was the most difficult of his entire life. Later periods, such as the concentration camp and the exile, demanded serious personal sacrifices, but this founding experience became a source of light and hope on which he could rely for the rest of his life.

But at the time, the future was veiled in darkness. The „light of faith“ that shone for him was nothing but a narrow crack. There was no certainty that he moved in the right direction. Father Kentenich spoke of a „death leap for his mind“ being demanded of him. In faith he dared the leap with great, genuine love for God and Mary. What would have happened if he had hesitated or had not jumped?

There is also a way for me to overcome fear and uncertainty effectively:

Let go. Jump courageously – like a child into the arms of my Father who loves me boundlessly and who wants only what is good for me. He waits for me in the darkness, he is love that gives me life.

I do not bear the ultimate responsibility over my life! I can entrust myself and my decisions to God. He has the broader view.

Therese of Lisieux said: „My nature is such that fear throws me back. With love I not only move forward, I fly.“

*„God has a clear goal, even when the way leads through darkness.“*

*„I only have to do one thing: unconditionally throw myself into his arms and filled with trust direct my vision upward.“*

*„If it becomes an inner experience for you that we are not surrendering to fate, not to an ‚it‘ but to a personal, endlessly loving Father, then we have a position that cannot be shaken by*

*anything in the world. Then we will see everything, the greatest and smallest, the most pleasant and the most difficult in a very different perspective. Eternity reaches into our transitory thinking, loving, and living, and our little heart expands into endless universes.“*

*„What holds you is the Father’s hand.  
What shelters you is the Father’s heart.  
What rests on you with joy is the Father’s gaze.“*

J. Kentenich

#### Concretely in daily life

- Seek a word of God addressed to me that will encourage me when I am afraid.
- Deepen faith in divine love in my life by examining where God has spoiled me, enriched me with bright moments and joys – today.

My Father, through the intercession of Father Kentenich help me to believe in you and your help even in total darkness. Do not allow fear to become great and overpowering in me and rob me of all energy. Calm my anxious heart. Come what may, I cannot fall deeper than into your arms. Truly, I am your child. Father Kentenich tells us that we cannot always understand you, but we may be convinced that you are always love. Strengthen my weak faith. I trust in you. Amen.





## Sixth day: (Fear) ... becomes confidence

*Yes, I want to trust.*

*But doubt creeps in again and again.*

*What will happen if things go wrong – my life, the appointment, the next assignment?*

*Can one learn to trust?*

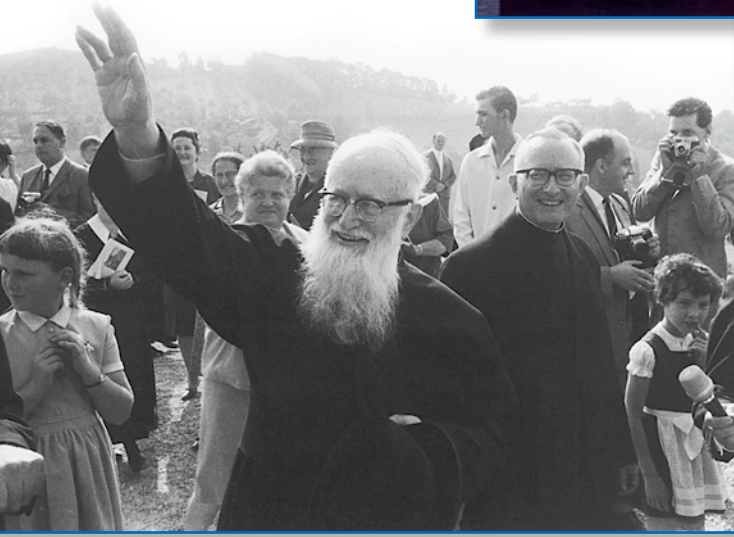
*Yes, one can. But not without much patience.*

*Growing slowly.*

*Confidence is not simply something one has; confidence develops.*

**In 1941**, Father Kntenich became a prisoner of the Nazis and was later admitted to the concentration camp in Dachau – that meant to expect death. A fellow prisoner approached Father Kntenich and asked him the obvious question: „Will we ever get out of this mess, Father?“ He received the answer: „That isn't even the question. The real question is whether or not we are doing God's will here!“

Father Kntenich faced the situation calmly and serenely. He could do that because he trusted in someone greater: God. In this situation, it is precisely the only prospect – and he uses it: Dear God, do with me as you please; I am ready for anything. He called this blank check: Life is comparable to a blank sheet of paper with only my signature. And God may write on it what



he wants. Surrender and trust. Hope carries me: God is good and he has the power to intervene. „Boundless confidence receives boundless help.“ – Help in the little wars of everyday life, when bread, a pair of shoes, money, etc. are needed. Help when hope is the last resort in a tangled situation. On May 20, 1945, Father Kentenich returned to Schoenstatt from Dachau.

That is confidence: strength that sustains in the midst of all. And if I have to walk through fire – I am equipped for it.

I can depend on God. Miracles are also possible today. Father Kentenich's code word for trust was Mphc, *Mater perfectam habebit curam* (Mother will take perfect care). She will not disappoint me. She doesn't always give what I request, but always more: greater love, greater freedom, greater joy. Life becomes easy.

*„You must always be aware that a higher power watches over you, sustains, and carries you.“*

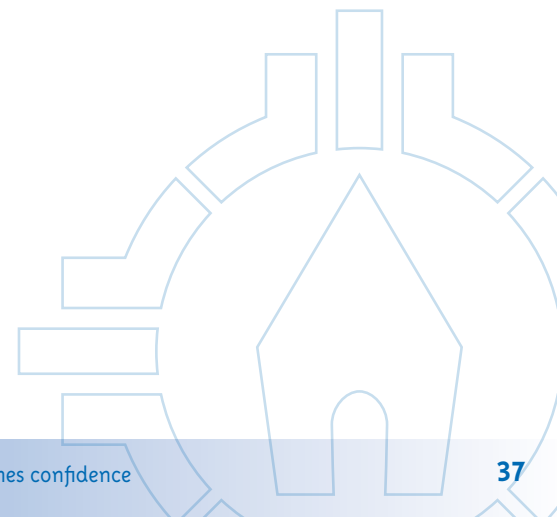
*„One of the most important reasons why we shouldn't be anxious is that we are to give our loving God an opportunity to do something, too.“*

J. Kentenich

#### Concretely in daily life

- Take a few minutes and savor deeply Father Kentenich's words: „There was never a time when God did not think of me. And there will never be a time when he will not think of me.“
- Do not want to do everything on your own, but ask the Mother of God concretely: Help me...

Father in heaven, I cannot live without confidence. Strengthen my trust in you. You can do anything! Open me for all the little miracles that you work so that I recognize them and am joyful and grateful. Help me, I ask you, through the intercession of Father Kentenich, regarding the request for which I pray this novena. Let me never be without hope. Amen.





## Seventh day: Yes



*To be able to accept myself completely. To be a radiating personality.*

*That is my longing.*

*I would like to be authentic, consistent, sovereign, not forced into a role, without a mask, free. – At any rate, not weak, not limited.*

*But what do I do with my limitations and weaknesses?*

*Can I identify with them, too?*

*Is there a key to accepting myself?*

*It does exist.*

„My health is weak, my demeanor awkward, clumsy – the result of upbringing and nervousness – my knowledge is insignificant, both the general as well as the classical schooling. All in all, lack of the most necessary natural prerequisites, and because of my overwhelming amount of work, I lack the time and opportunity to acquire them...“ That was Father Kentenich’s sober self-evaluation written in the first years of his activity as spiritual director. But no reason for resignation: „Was it not always like this that our good God loved to choose the small in contrast to the great in order to work



exceedingly great things through the small?“  
Weakness and guilt are no hindrance for God to work through me and to give meaning to my life.  
Naturally, I suffer under my limitations. But I can use them to grow through them. This happens if I am open and allow God to give me his merciful love.  
John Paul II tells us, „We are not the sum of our weaknesses and defeats, on the contrary! We are the sum of the Father’s love for us. We are really capable of becoming the reflection of his Son.“

If I say God’s absolute yes to myself with him, then I say a word of eternity.  
It is like a bright ribbon on the horizon when the sun rises and all fog vanishes.  
The yes to myself is clarity, serenity, and peace.  
Because I am beginning to live the reality that I am, and nothing else.

*„What matters is that I learn to believe that God loves me immensely, personally in my peculiarity.“*

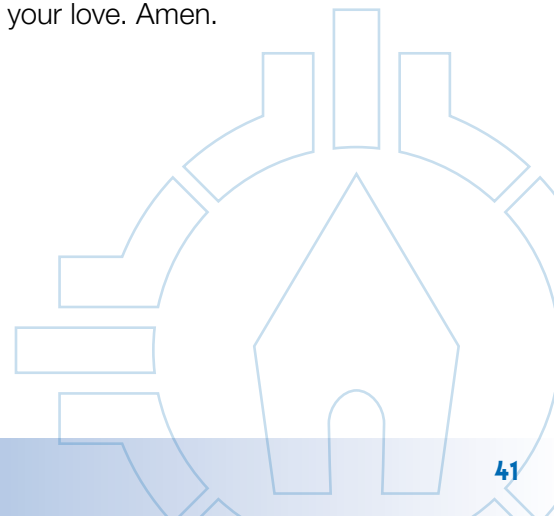
*„In a unique way, through our insignificance, through our smallness, through acknowledging our weakness and limitations, our faults, we draw the eyes of the merciful Father down upon us.“*

J. Kentenich

#### Concretely in daily life

- Take a deep breath and tell myself: Yes, I may be as I am, I really may be this way.
- An exercise of correct self-evaluation that Father Kentenich suggested to a student: For each finger of the right hand list a personal strength. For each finger of the left hand list a weakness. Just like both hands, strengths and weaknesses also belong to me and define my originality.

Father in heaven! „I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you“ (Jer 31: 3). That is what you tell me. I would like to believe in your love. But it is often difficult for me because so much in me says no to myself. Please, let me feel your boundless love. Let me believe that you love me the way I am, and therefore need not depend on being accepted by those around me. Help me to develop the best within me under the sun of your love. Amen.



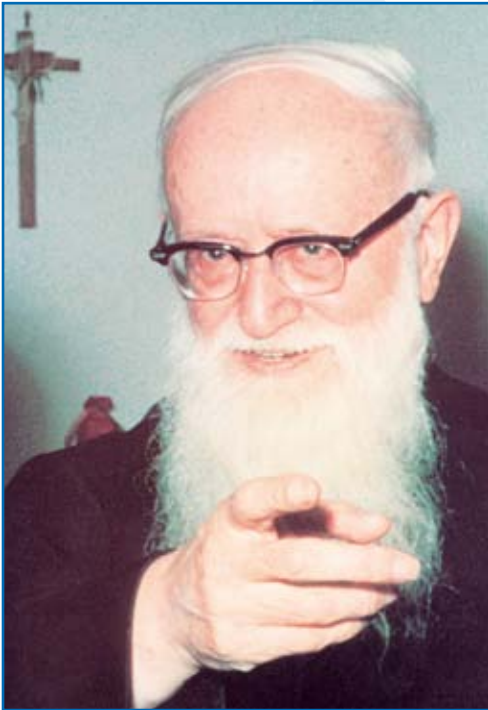
## Eighth day: Dare to risk

*Walk a very independent path.  
Defy the pressure of the masses.*

*„I am almost twenty-two years old, and now I am convinced that one either thinks contrary to the stream, or not at all.“*

*It is often like this for me:  
Some malice happens right in front of my eyes, and I am silent. I do not have the strength to decide, to get involved, to act courageously.*

One day in Dachau, Father Kentenich, together with two other priests, was confined to a narrow bunker that allowed the prisoners standing room only. The next day, the SS interrogated him. He was accused of writing illegal mail. Fully composed he responded that he wrote neither white nor black mail. – The SS didn't know that he dictated his letters for others to write. When he returned to the barracks, he told his fellow prisoner: „This afternoon we will continue to write.“ Because he was unjustly incarcerated, Father Kentenich did not allow the SS to tell him what he may and may not do, and he prudently used any free zone to work for Schoenstatt, even in the concentration camp.



I can set the course myself or be washed away, change things or be changed, have influence or be influenced. It is a constant back and forth, a struggle. True, it costs much to remain faithful to oneself and one's conviction, faithful to God. Be ridiculed, considered stupid, bullied by others?

It's like walking on spiky pebbles, at times dangerous, part of the way of the cross of Jesus Christ. But the cross, stretching to the sky, gives height, expansion, depth.

This is my survival training in surroundings with a different mentality:

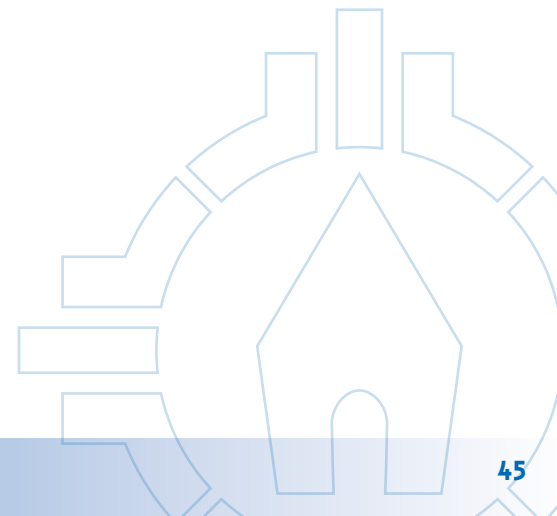
*„The person who has not learned to swim against the stream and to swim vigorously against the stream, who did not learn to execute by all means the principles that were recognized as true, who did not learn, as it were, to be crucified for such a contrast, must always count on it that he will be classified as a „wholesale product“ tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. He must always count on becoming a mass man, a massified person in the foreseeable future; he must count on it that he can be sold cheaply everywhere tomorrow, the day after tomorrow.“*

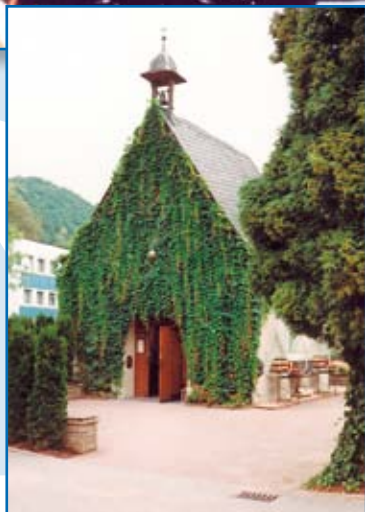
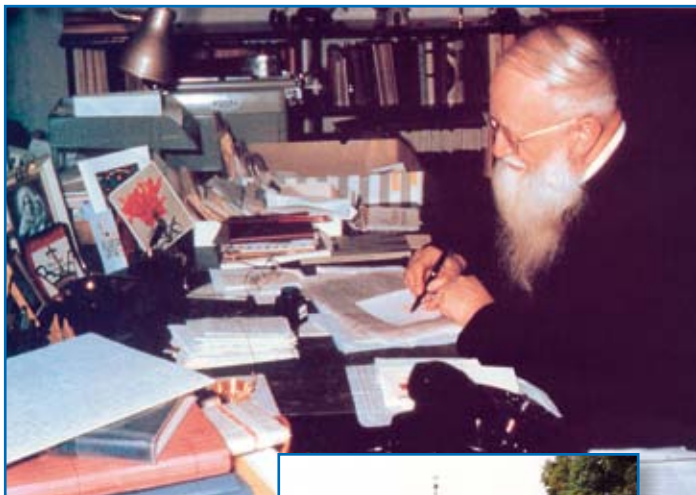
J. Kentenich

#### Concretely in daily life

- Do not think of what others think of me, but of what God wants of me. And consciously say or do something independent of the opinion of others.
- For everyday decisions ask myself: How would Jesus or Mary act now?

Father in heaven, Father Kentenich fearlessly went his way in the imitation of your Son Jesus Christ. He staked everything, his whole life, on one card – on you! Help me go my way consistently, no matter what others may say. Give me inner strength and – if necessary – courage to dare, even if it hurts. Help me realize something of what being human means: to live my freedom! I want to risk it again today – with you. Because it gives joy. Amen.





## Ninth day: We can change things

*„Interesting personalities are absent everywhere. Society, economy, politics, entertainment and religion, culture... But that also may be our opportunity, and we are still young.“*

*Wars, terror networks, climate catastrophes, economic disaster, aging Europe and world, etc., etc.  
Exposed to everything helplessly at an insignificant post?  
Or, is it indeed possible for me to do something, to bring about change, to begin to move things, find new ways?  
Yes, I can give all.*

**1914**, the outbreak of World War I. The students in the minor seminary in Schoenstatt would soon be in contact with many young people at the front lines of the war. What could be done? Concerned questioning. Father Kentenich received the old Saint Michael's chapel down in the valley near the house of studies in Schoenstatt as a meeting place for his young co-workers. On October 18, 1914, he gave the first talk there. Quite unspectacular. And yet – the birth hour of a great vision. Yes, it is true, it was war, but the point of the battle then and now is that a new world with new persons will be born. People who are able to love, who can freely and independently think and act. Not as competitors, but with one another. That is what Mary wants to do from

this place. She needs our cooperation: „Nothing without you – nothing without us.“ Covenant of love.

The newly renovated chapel was more than a beautiful meeting place. Much more. It was to become a home for many people. And even that was not enough. „In the shadow of this shrine the destiny of the world and Church will be essentially influenced for centuries.“ As it were, Father Kentenich lent his voice to Mary, the Mother of God, on October 18, 1914, when he said: „It will please me (Mary) to dwell in your midst and dispense gifts and graces in abundance. Then from here I will draw youthful hearts to myself and educate them to become useful instruments in my hand.“

To sense that I am needed: my words, my engagement, my courageous action, my stamina, my pain, my sacrifices, my struggling...

*... so that others will be strengthened through me.*  
*... so that at least where I am, there will be more love, more joy, more peace.*  
*... so that Father Kentenich's vision will remain alive and continue.*

What I think and say, the way I act is not indifferent. My little contribution is valuable.

To be a person with a central theme for life: to love. That I make what I do a gift. For you – God, Mother of God.

So that God's grace can touch, strengthen, and transform others.

It is possible to change the world. Here, now, and in my immediate surroundings, not somewhere collectively on the globe. The future belongs to those who collaborate with God and the Mother of God.

„*We work for the Mother of God, and she works for us. We give ourselves to the Mother of God, and she gives herself to us. We suffer for her, and she guides us.*“

*„You may feel small and be in the background. But it depends on you...“*

„*True love urges us to deeds.*“

J. Kentenich

#### Concretely in daily life

- Today, do something a little better than before, more committed, more consciously – not just for myself, but for a better world.
- Give the Mother of God the gift of a job well done, a pain, a joy: For you, Mary. So that blessings flow from it.





Father in heaven, I am still young and curious about this world and everything that life has in store for me. Many terrible things happen that I cannot change, where I must watch helplessly. But you send me into my surroundings each day to work for a new world where you and your will are the standard and where every person is respected. You need me, need my heart, my hands, my words. Mary tells me and countless people who come to her in the shrine: Nothing without you – nothing without me. Yes, I am ready. I give myself and all I do today to you. Amen.



## Prayer for the beatification of Father Kentenich

„God loves me  
with eternal love!“

From all eternity when nobody knew me or thought of me, when nobody was interested in me, he already loved me, I already lived in his mind, similar to the picture that lives in the mind of the artist before he creates it.“

Father Joseph Kentenich

„Actually a very  
beautiful thought.  
God loves you.“

Filippa Sayn-Wittgenstein  
Diary entry at age 15

Father in heaven, I have come to know Father Kentenich as a person who understands me and goes with me. He is called founder, prophet, master, but above all, father. Perhaps it's because Father Kentenich is able to help sketch your truth into my often torn heart and your faithfulness into my restless life. I sense that I can find serenity and clarity near him. New perspectives open up. I thank you that I may place my concerns, my worries into his hands so that he will intercede for me before you. Help me and many others experience what it means to live out of the covenant of love with Mary like Father Kentenich: Nothing without you – nothing without me! I do what I can – but turn everything over to her, too. Give me some of Father Kentenich's confidence that Mary is always near me and helps me in everything that is difficult for me. Let me experience: You never leave me alone. With you, the future can be a success. Father Kentenich said that we should have „confidence as firm as a rock: Everything will be wonderful!“ Answer my petition through his intercession and grant him soon the honors of the altar. Thank you for everything. Amen.

# Pray with Father Kentenich

## Consecration to Mary

My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you, and to show my devotion to you I consecrate to you this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my entire self without reserve. As I am your own, my good Mother, guard me and defend me as your property and possession. Amen.

## Prayer of Confidence

I trust your might, your kindness, Mother dear.  
I do believe that you are always near.  
Schoenstatt's great Queen, O Mother mild,  
I blindly trust in you and in your Child. Amen.

*(USA)*



I trust your might, your kindness,  
Mother dear.  
I do believe that you are always near.  
Whatever happens, Mother mild, I blindly  
trust in you and in your Child. Amen.  
*(South Africa)*

## Brief biography: Father Joseph Kentenich

### Childhood

Joseph Kentenich was born in Gymnich near Cologne in 1885.

In 1894, he went to the Saint Vincent orphanage in Oberhausen. At his admittance to this orphanage, his mother dedicated him to Mary, the Mother of God. Eight-year old Joseph very consciously went along with this dedication as his mother spoke. Mary took over his education and care from then on. In retrospect, Father Kentenich professed: „What I am and what developed in Schoenstatt I owe to the Mother of God.“

### Youth

In 1904, he joined the Society of the Pallottines and successfully completed his novitiate and theology studies in Limburg. For several years he endured a severe inner crisis that led him to the edge of his strength. The highly gifted Joseph Kentenich was driven by the question: What is truth, and can I recognize it? The doubts and uncertainties that beset him never touched his love for Mary. The Mother of God led him out of his inner torment. In an indescribably deep way, she shared her love for the Triune God and for people with him.

### Priest / Spiritual Director

He was ordained to the priesthood in 1910 and at first taught in the high school of his community in Ehrenbreitstein. Beginning in 1912, he was the spiritual director for the students of the newly erected seminary high school in Schoenstatt / Vallendar. It became apparent that Father Kentenich was a gifted educator. His goal of education was clear and filled the students with enthusiasm: to be firm, free personalities, to live holy lives in the midst of the modern world. Father Kentenich guided the students to serious self-education, and above all, offered them Mary as Mother and Educator.

## Founding of Schoenstatt

On October 18, 1914, with some students he dared the first step to found the Schoenstatt Movement. They sealed a covenant, „a covenant of love,“ with Mary in a small chapel in Schoenstatt. Its content is the petition to the Mother of God to be present in this chapel in a special way and to work as the educator of the free person. Father Kentenich and the boys trusted that a place of pilgrimage and grace for many people would develop here. They wanted to give their own contributions toward this goal through a radical life based on faith and engagement for Schoenstatt. „Nothing without you – nothing without us“ was the short formula for the intensive communal life with Mary that now began.

The vision of the founding hour gradually became reality. Today the chapel in Schoenstatt is the place of origin of a worldwide movement of men and women, children and youth, families and priests. Meanwhile there are ca. one hundred and eighty Schoenstatt Shrines in more than thirty countries all over the earth. Many people make pilgrimages there and ask Mary for the grace to realize their Christian calling in the midst of all the challenges of life in Church and society.

## Concentration Camp

From 1941 to 1945, Father Kentenich was a prisoner of the National Socialists, first in the prison in Koblenz, later in the concentration camp in Dachau. He continued to work fearlessly in the concentration camp for his life's task to proclaim God's merciful love to people and to help them – with Mary's help – to become great lovers. Through Father Kentenich many prisoners could experience God intimately in the hell of Dachau.

## World Travels

In 1947 / 1948 Father Kentenich began journeys to South America, Africa, and the USA in order to foster international contacts and to help the Schoenstatt members in these countries to build up the movement. His

love for the Mother of God urged him to engage himself for her all over the world.

## Exile 1951 – 1965

From 1951 to 1965, the Church separated Father Kentenich from his work. Milwaukee (USA) was assigned to him as residence. Competent ecclesial authorities examined him and his foundation. Father Kentenich's love for the Church and faithfulness to his work proved themselves during the long years of his absence from Schoenstatt.

## Final Years of Life


On Christmas Eve in 1965, he returned to Schoenstatt. The eighty-year old priest worked continuously to complete the inner and outer formation of the Schoenstatt Movement during the years still left to him. In spite of deadlines, conferences, retreats, and the daily great workload, his first concern was always the individual. His deep union with God and the fatherly kindness that he radiated gave many people an inkling of the love of God, our Father.

## 15. September 1968

God called Father Kentenich home on September 15, 1968, shortly after celebrating holy Mass for the first time in the newly erected Trinity church on Mount Schoenstatt.

Now he can continue his life's work in a new way. That he does so has already been experienced by many people who unite themselves with him and address their concerns to him.





**The Father Kentenich Secretariat** has more information on **Fr. Kentenich and the Schoenstatt Work**. Prayers are available in many different languages:

### **The Courage of Faith**

Novena

(English, German, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish)

### **Father Joseph Kentenich**

Biographical sketch with novena

(English, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Polish, Rumanian, Russian, Spanish)

### **For Peace in the World**

Novena

(English, French, German, Spanish)

### **Longing for Life**

Nine Days of Prayer for Young People

(English, Croatian, German, Portuguese, Spanish)

### **I go to Father Kentenich**

Children's novena

(English, German, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish)

### **Yourself: The Adventure**

A Map to your Personal Ideal

(English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish)

### **Gospel Heroism**

Living in the presence of God

(English, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish)

### **Father Joseph Kentenich**

Folder

(English, Czech, Dutch, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish)

### **What is Schoenstatt?**

Folder

(English, Croatian, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Polish)

### **Home Shrine**

Leaflet

(English, Russian, Spanish)

### **Prayer for the beatification of Father Kentenich**

(English, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovakian, Spanish)

### **Schoenstatt – An Introduction**

Booklet

(English, French, Portuguese)

### **Father Joseph Kentenich – A Provocative Figure**

Booklet

(English)

### **With Mary**

Aspects of the live of Father Joseph Kentenich with novena

(English, Italian)





” One thing first:  
I want to live.  
This way. “

Filippa Sayn-Wittgenstein  
(Diary entry at age 18)

