

Meeting of the Friends of TfE via ZOOM

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The virus encounters the Charism – Schoenstatt Movement's response to the Coronavirus

Sr. M. Vernita Weiß

Looking back at these last months and at our Movement, I can share three experiences.

I would entitle the first: **“The ear on God's heart, the hand on the pulse of time”**.

Did we do what is in line with our “vision of the world”? Did we ask ourselves: what is God trying to tell us through this pandemic?

God is speaking to us through this pandemic, and we need to try to understand what he is saying. We may call this ‘looking out for the traces’.

It is an approach to this pandemic based on faith. We are part of a sacred history of alliance between God and humanity. The presence of God is strong and real. As we cautiously interpret God's actions, we become aware that we are in the middle of an epochal transformation of the Church, of culture and of society. Our Founder, Fr Joseph Kentenich used to describe it as “an old world that is burning”.

A month after lockdown, the Schoenstatt Movement in Germany launched an initiative titled: “May the Lord bless and keep you in his care”. Every family could receive, or print, this card and attach this ‘I pray for you’ to the house door. In spite of the lockdown, our gaze was directed outside. The symbol on the main door recalled the Hebrew Easter, the Passage of the Lord.

The second experience carries the name: **the culture of alliance or a deeper alliance of love**.

As members of the Schoenstatt Movement, we live in the Alliance and live an Alliance of love with the Trinity, with Mary and among us.

This alliance was amply manifested through the Movement's response, on a world level, to the pandemic. We wanted to live out what characterises our being together. Thus, in April 150,000 families of the international Schoenstatt Movement got in contact with each other, either in person or digitally, to form our Alliance of love. The solidarity among us, and with those who joined us, was strengthened. This was indeed a strong sign of communion between heaven and earth, and between generations and cultures.

The third experience is called. **The domestic church**

The domestic church, a pathway toward tomorrow's Church

The virus makes it difficult or impossible for us to meet, to share and to celebrate our faith. Then, all of a sudden, our domestic churches became alive. The families and the communities started celebrating at home with a greater awareness, as well as praying together and sharing the faith. We discern this to be a sign from God for the entire Church: the living out of Christianity takes place 'at home'. Circumstances lead us to appreciate the faith in the daily life of the family: the 'domestic church', and that the fact that homes are the meeting places for the Christian community cannot be limited to the nascent Church. This is the journey that the coronavirus is indicating to us. This pandemic has injected this pastoral praxis, which is typically ours, with a true dynamism. Let us welcome Jesus and Mary in our homes, and we will thus become places of the presence of God.

The spiritual places, starting from the original place where the Schoenstatt Movement originated, are united and become hotspots of the faith.

We hope that, through a concretely lived out culture of Alliance, we can contribute to the renewal of society and of the Church.