

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in this issue you will find a summary of another talk from our Day of Reflection on April 5th. This talk was given by Sister Ann Astell and thank you, Janine Reklaitis, for summarizing it. May our Mother's blessings abound as you honor her in this month of May. Questions? Comments? Contributing articles? contact me at csdmi@aol.com or 538-2979 Carole DiFabio

FROM [200 Questions About Schoenstatt](#)

#50 What are the three pilgrim graces (of our shrines)? The three pilgrim graces are the most typical graces received by any pilgrim to the Schoenstatt Shrine. They are also known as the "graces of the Shrine"

1. [the grace of a home](#)
2. [the grace of inner transformation](#)
- 3 [the grace of apostolic zeal of fruitfulness](#)

#51 What is the grace of a home? The grace of a home is the grace of knowing that Mary totally accepts me and gives me a home in her heart and in her Shrine. This is communicated on the natural level by such things as the small size and homey atmosphere of the Shrine. It is communicated on the supernatural level through the motherly presence of Mary, who takes in each person just as he or she is.

The fact that the daughter shrines are all replicas of the Original Shrine enhances the grace of a home. Pilgrims traveling from one daughter shrine to another feel at home right away because the soul recognizes the family spirit through the familiar forms. The MTA picture allows this grace to be further extended to wherever it is revered, for even this one point of familiarity helps the soul rapidly feel at home and among family.

The importance of the grace of a home is underscored by the deep longing in modern man for a home, security and deeper relationships. The uprooted and set-adrift qualities of modern life, compounded by the breakdown of the family and basic attachments, make this grace an especially important one in our times.

NEST ISSUE [What is the grace of inner transformation?](#)

PERSONAL TESTIMONY – *The grace of a home is a great comfort given us by our Father in these shrines. I have been to three different Schoenstatt Shrines and like their name says – they are a “beautiful place” and my heart truly feels it is home when I enter. I will attach a couple pictures of one for those you do not have dial up connections, however pictures do not do our Mother’s shrine justice, so I would encourage you to see for yourself – those of you who are graced to have the Schoenstatt Rosary Campaign shrines come to your home – come see for yourself and know in an even more intimate way the graces poured out on us from our Mother and experience first hand the love that comes from the eyes of our Mother Thrice Admirable.*

One of the attributes of the picture chosen for our shrines is that wherever you are Mary’s eyes are looking right at you and you somehow know that you are also in her arms with her son Jesus. There are two opportunities to visit an actual daughter shrine – see the pilgrimage box below and the Journey of Love box. Please pray about these offerings and come see.

If that is not possible you might plan a pilgrimage to the Schoenstatt Wayside Shrine in Delphi. I have heard of a couple families that have gone in preparation for a big event in their family, like a wedding or First Communion. In our Covenant, Carole DiFabio

Please consider contributing your own testimony of finding a home in the shine for the next issue

Our Consecration Prayer

Our Queen, our Mother, we give ourselves entirely to you. And to show our devotion to you we consecrate to you this day our eyes, our ears, our mouths, our hearts, our entire self without reserve. As we are your own, good Mother, guard us and protect us as your property and possession. Amen.

Journey of Love

If May is not a good month for you to visit a Schoenstatt shrine consider the annual Journey of Love in Wisconsin in June. email Carole for more details csdmi@aol.com or 538-2979

PILGRIMAGE TO SCHOENSTATT IN WISCONSIN

If you have not yet been to a Schoenstatt shrine and experienced the grace and beauty found there, please consider going **May 24th-26th** on a pilgrimage offered by Lion and Lamb Journeys with **Sister Ann Astell as the spiritual director**. Besides the Schoenstatt Exile Shrine, the tour will stop at the St. Therese shrine in Darien, Ill, Holy Hill, the St. Joan of Arc Chapel and the Notre Dame Grotto. Cost \$274 Call or email as soon as possible if interested. 463-505 or taiwl@lion-lamb.com

Summary of talk by Sister Ann Astell, Ph.D given on April 5, 2008

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHILDREN AND OF HEROIC CHILDLIKENESS

During the Schoenstatt Day of Recollection on April 5, Sr. Ann Astell, a Schoenstatt Sister of Mary and Professor in the Dept. of Theology at Notre Dame, presented an inspiring, and indeed heartwarming talk, in keeping with the theme of Childlikeness. She alternated with comparisons on the qualities of children and childlikeness in the psychology and theology of Father Joseph Kentenich and of Professor Robert Coles.

She began by pointing out that children are at crisis – morally and physically today. For example, while very young, they are dressed as adults, forced into competitive, stressful activities and, most sadly, abused and aborted at alarming rates. Despite such circumstances, their resilience and heroism is admirable. Perhaps that is because the true source of childlikeness, according to Father Kentenich, is wisdom! This may seem counterintuitive, but makes sense when, as Sister explained, Father Kentenich identifies the five essential qualities of wisdom as: wonder-filled, focusing on the essence of things, relying on personal experience, having a charismatic knowledge of God, and as knowledge which leads to transformation in God.

In relating this to the research findings of Dr. Coles, she said that Coles described children as “seekers, as young pilgrims...anxious to make sense of [life].” Coles wrote: “In children one finds God-given spiritual wisdom based on our capacity as the creatures that we are...who through language ask questions about the meaning of life.”

Sister Ann then, in a most endearing and beautiful way that all of us could relate to, gave examples of each of these qualities in the words of children as transcribed by Coles. To keep this summary short, I will give her examples of just a few of these essential qualities.

The words of a 12 year-old girl from a poor Boston area illustrate that openness to the graces of wisdom depends on a genuine and reverent wondering. Dr. Coles quotes her as saying: “I wonder about God, who He is and whether He’s just someone who got made up a long time ago by people – and if He’s real, and what He thinks we should be like.” Children have unique ways of expressing their longing for God and for Heaven. This following example, by a migrant worker child, is a beautiful image of yearning for a transformative union with God: “In church we’ll pray to God, and when I do, I think of Him as a man with a smile, and He puts His arms out and wants you to go running until He can hold you close. God wants us to be near Him, and if we are, we’re lucky.”

The child running to God to be held, the child saying to God: "There will be days...when I feel low...I look up at the sky, and I say I wish you'd come, dear God..." are all images of longing for a final, transformative perfection in God.

So too, Father Kentenich in his day encouraged adults to regain childlikeness by talking things over with God in a simple and natural way. Both men also had a tremendous appreciation of the value of acknowledging human guilt and weakness. They knew the healing power of contrition and confession. An example of having a personal knowledge of God, and thereby experiencing ourselves with our imperfections is seen in the words of a Catholic girl named Ann tenderly talking to Jesus in the sunroom of her parents' home:

"I just think of Him and I talk to Him. It's not like my regular prayers. It's like – well, I say, 'Dear Jesus, I'm a little tired and I can feel myself getting moody, and I'm not charitable the way they tell you...to be, like you were, and so, if you can, help me.' Sometimes I'll just get up and go back where I was, and that's that. Other times I'll close my eyes and I'll picture Him....He might say, 'Anne, you've got to think of others and not just yourself...' But He's kind and I get the feeling He's on my side. He understands what I'm going through." These words show that wisdom is not only a matter of insight, but it is also a matter of love and of trust. Sister Ann added that our "sunroom" can be a Schoenstatt Shrine or certainly and most often it is our "heart shrine".

Father Joseph well knew the crisis facing us today and liked to focus on these words by the Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi:

"Mankind's lost sense of childlikeness toward God is the greatest misfortune of the world, because it makes impossible all God's fatherly education. And the restoration of this lost sense of childlikeness is the redemption of the lost children of God here on earth."

Sister concluded her talk by saying that Father Kentenich saw our Blessed Mother as the primary example of childlikeness. He taught that Mary is the one who most perfectly educates and forms us to become what we have been created to be: children of God. Sister Ann's talk was followed by lively discussion on prepared questions in small groups with much laughter and amazement at the great wisdom of small children. We came away praying for the graces to become more childlike and knowing that this is what we need in order to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:3).

For further study, you can consult two of the major works this talk was based on: Joseph Kentenich, *Childlikeness Before God: Reflections on Spiritual Childhood*, translated by J. Niehaus (Waukesha, WI: The Schoenstatt Fathers, 2001) and Robert Coles, *The Spiritual Life of Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990).

Submitted by Janine Reklaitis

**MOTHER TAKES PERFECT CARE
MATER PERFECTUM HABIT CURAM**