

Schoenstatt Leadership Certificate Program

Readings in preparation for meetings

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February 14, 2025

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1 Text for First Encounter: The Pre-Founding Document

October 27, 1912

(*excerpts - see New Vision and Life for complete text*)

1 What is your reaction to my appointment as spiritual director? You are astounded and disappointed. What was our former relationship?¹ We had nothing to do with each other. I wished to hunt down the so-called “Easter lambs.” It was my greatest priestly joy whenever one of these came to confession, so heavily laden with the old refuse he had collected over the years that the confessional creaked.

2 Then came my appointment as spiritual director. It was entirely without my doing; hence it must be God’s will. I now place myself entirely at your disposal with all that I am and have—my knowledge and ignorance, my ability and inability, but above all, my heart. Only the time left over will be used for the fulfillment of my favorite idea.

3 I hope we will get along with each other; I hope that we will do everything to achieve our common aim as perfectly as possible.

4 What is our aim then? Our future relationship depends on it. I will therefore state it, short and to the point:

**Under the protection of Mary
we want to learn to educate ourselves
to become firm, free, priestly personalities².**

The fulfillment and practice of this fundamental idea will occupy us for the course of the entire year. Today I only want to explain a few aspects.

5 We want to learn. Not only you, but also I. We want to learn from each other. For we are never done learning, especially not the art of self-education, which represents the work, the activity which will absorb our whole lifetime.

6 We want to *learn*, not merely in *theory*: this and that would be good, or nice, or even necessary. No, we must also learn in *practice*, we must put our hand to the plow every day, every hour. How did we learn to walk? Can you still remember how you learned to walk? Or at least how your little brothers and sisters learned? Did your mother give them a long lecture: Look here, Tony or Mary, this is how you have to do it. If that were so, none of us would be able to walk yet. No, she took us by the hand and we started. One learns to walk by walking, to love by loving; therefore we have to learn to educate ourselves through the constant practice of self-education. We certainly do not lack for opportunities.

7 We want to learn *to educate ourselves*. That is a noble, a royal activity. It is an imperative for religion, an imperative for youth, an imperative for our time. I do not want to elaborate on these thoughts now, but merely touch on the last point.

¹The right attitude for the things we don’t comprehend to the extent we would want.

²Firm: men of real character. Free: not enslaved by inordinate drives or by what other people think. Priestly: bridgebuilders between this world and God.

8 *Self-education is an imperative for our time.* One does not need much knowledge of the world to realize that our time, with all its discoveries, cannot remove our inner emptiness. All our attention, all our activities are exclusively directed to the macrocosm, to the world at large, to the world outside ourselves. truly, we do not hesitate to pay tribute to human genius with our admiration. Human genius has conquered the mighty powers of nature and taken them into our service. We have spanned the globe, explored the depths of the ocean, penetrated the mountains of the earth, and flown through heights of the heavens. The drive to explore urges us even further. We have reached the North Pole and unlocked dark continents. With X-rays we can see through to all our bones. The telescope and microscope uncover new worlds daily.

9 However, one world, one that is eternally old and yet eternally new, remains unknown and unexplored—the microcosm, the world in miniature, our own interior world.

10 There are no, or at least no new methods of penetrating the human soul. “All the realms of the intellect are cultivated, all capabilities enhanced, only the deepest, the most intrinsic, the most essential realm of the immortal soul is all too often untilled soil,” as even the newspapers complain. That is why our age is so terribly poor and empty on the inside.

And even more. Some time ago an Italian statesman described as the greatest danger of our modern development that the primitive and half-civilized races are gaining more and more possession of the technical means of modern civilization, without receiving the intellectual and moral culture which would enable them to make correct use of these achievements.

At that, however, I would rather turn the tables and ask: Are even our more developed nations able and mature enough to make proper use of the enormous exterior advances of our age? Or has not our time rather become a slave to its achievements? It has indeed. Our command of the gifts and powers of nature around us has not gone hand in hand with the subjection of the elemental and animal forces in our own human breast. The powerful discord, this immeasurable cleft, is becoming ever greater and wider—and in that state we will stand before the spectre of social justice, before societal bankruptcy, unless we invest all our strength in initiating a change soon. Instead of becoming masters of our achievements, we are becoming their slaves; we are becoming slaves, too, of our own passions. Either—or! Either forwards or backwards!

11 Well, then backwards! So, let us return to the Middle Ages, tear up the railroad tracks, cut the telegraph lines, leave electricity to the clouds, return the coal to the earth, and close the universities! No, never. We do not want that, we may not and cannot do that.

12 Then forwards! Yes, on with the exploration and subjection of our inner world through dedicated self-education. The greater the exterior progress, the greater the deepening of our inner life. That is the call, the slogan which will be transmitted everywhere, not only in the Catholic, but also in the enemy camp.

We, too, want to join with these modern aspirations—as the level of our education allows.

In the future we can no longer allow ourselves to be ruled by our knowledge but must rule our knowledge. It can no longer happen that we know foreign languages with the proficiency expected in class but remain purest midgets in the knowledge, the understanding of

the language of our hearts. The deeper our insight into the mysteries of nature, the more we have to be able to stand up to the demonic powers within ourselves.

Our progress in knowledge must be matched by our progress in spiritual growth, our spiritual development. Otherwise an immense emptiness will exist in our soul, a mighty cleft which will make us deeply unhappy.

13 We must learn how to educate ourselves. We must educate *ourselves*; ourselves with *all* our faculties. We will later discover which are the faculties we must educate.

14 We must educate ourselves to become **firm** personalities. We took off our baby shoes long ago, when our actions were determined by how we felt. But now we must learn to act on the basis of firm, clearly recognized principles. Everything within us may waver. Times will come when only one thing will help: our principles.

15 We must be **free** personalities. God does not want galley slaves. He wants free rowers. Others can grovel before their superiors, lick their feet and be grateful when they are trodden upon. We are fully aware of our dignity and rights. We submit not out of fear or force, but because we freely want to. After all, every act of reasonable submission makes us interiorly free and independent.

16 We want to place our self-education under **Mary's protection**. We promised this on Sunday. Now we must put our hand to the plow. Yes, in this connection there is a great task awaiting us. Our statutes tell us to foster a community love of Mary. It is already there in the externals, in the beautiful banner and medal. But the main thing is still missing: an internal organization fitting our situation in the style of the sodalities.

17 We want to create this organization. We—not I. For in this regard I will do nothing, absolutely nothing without your full consent. Here it is not a matter of a momentary work, but of a foundation which can be useful for all future generations.

18 With this I wish to bring my introduction to an end. You have surely understood me. You know why I was so reserved; you also know my plans for the future. We want to learn to educate ourselves to become firm, free, priestly personalities. For that may God give us the blessing. Amen.

2 Text for First Encounter: On Grace and Free Will

Written by St. Augustine of Hippo in A.D. 426 or 427 (Addressed to Valentinus and the monks of Adrumetum, and completed in one book).

2.1 Chapter 1: The Occasion and Argument of This Work

With reference to those persons who so preach and defend man's free will, as boldly to deny, and endeavor to do away with, the grace of God which calls us to Him, and delivers us from our evil deserts, and by which we obtain the good deserts which lead to everlasting life: we have already said a good deal in discussion, and committed it to writing, so far as the Lord has vouchsafed to enable us. But since there are some persons who so defend God's grace as to deny man's free will, or who suppose that free will is denied when grace is defended, I have determined to write somewhat on this point to your Love, my brother Valentinus, and the rest of you, who are serving God together under the impulse of a mutual love. For it has been told me concerning you, brethren, by some members of your brotherhood who have visited us, and are the bearers of this communication of ours to you, that there are dissensions among you on this subject. **This, then, being the case, dearly beloved, that you be not disturbed by the obscurity of this question, I counsel you first to thank God for such things as you understand; but as for all which is beyond the reach of your mind, pray for understanding from the Lord, observing, at the same time peace and love among yourselves; and until He Himself lead you to perceive what at present is beyond your comprehension, walk firmly on the ground of which you are sure**³. This is the advice of the Apostle Paul, who, after saying that he was not yet perfect (Phil 3:12) a little later adds, *"let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded"* (Phil 3:15) — meaning perfect to a certain extent, but not having attained to a perfection sufficient for us; and then immediately adds *"And if, in anything, you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule"* (Phil 3:16). For by walking in what we have attained, we shall be able to advance to what we have not yet attained — God revealing it to us if in anything we are otherwise minded — provided we do not give up what He has already revealed.

2.2 Chapter 2: He Proves the Existence of Free Will in Man from the Precepts Addressed to Him by God.

Now He has revealed to us, through His Holy Scriptures, that there is in a man a free choice of will. But how He has revealed this I do not recount in human language, but in divine. There is, to begin with, the fact that God's precepts themselves would be of no use to a man unless he had free choice of will, so that by performing them he might obtain the promised rewards. For they are given that no one might be able to plead the excuse of ignorance, as the Lord says concerning the Jews in the gospel: *"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin"* (John 15:22)". Of what sin does He speak but of that great one which He foreknew, while speaking thus,

³The right attitude for the things we don't comprehend to the extent we would want.

that they would make their own — that is, the death they were going to inflict upon Him? For they did not have no sin before Christ came to them in the flesh. The apostle also says: The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold back the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him are from the creation of the world clearly seen — being understood by the things that are made — even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are inexcusable. Rom 1:18-20 In what sense does he pronounce them to be inexcusable, except with reference to such excuse as human pride is apt to allege in such words as, If I had only known, I would have done it; did I not fail to do it because I was ignorant of it? or, I would do it if I knew how; but I do not know, therefore I do not do it? All such excuse is removed from them when the precept is given them, or the knowledge is made manifest to them how to avoid sin.

2.3 Chapter 3: Sinners are Convicted When Attempting to Excuse Themselves by Blaming God, Because They Have Free Will.

There are, however, persons who attempt to find excuse for themselves even from God. The Apostle James says to such: Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. James 1:13-15 Solomon, too, in his book of Proverbs, has this answer for such as wish to find an excuse for themselves from God Himself: The folly of a man spoils his ways; but he blames God in his heart. Proverbs 19:3 And in the book of Ecclesiasticus we read: Say not, It is through the Lord that I fell away; for you ought not to do the things that He hates: nor say, He has caused me to err; for He has no need of the sinful man. The Lord hates all abomination, and they that fear God love it not. He Himself made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of His counsel. If you be willing, you shall keep His commandments, and perform true fidelity. He has set fire and water before you: stretch forth your hand unto whether you will. Before man is life and death, and whichsoever pleases him shall be given to him. Sirach 15:11-17 Observe how very plainly is set before our view the free choice of the human will.

2.4 Chapter 4: The Divine Commands Which are Most Suited to the Will Itself Illustrate Its Freedom.

What is the import of the fact that in so many passages God requires all His commandments to be kept and fulfilled? How does He make this requisition, if there is no free will? What means the happy man, of whom the Psalmist says that his will has been the law of the Lord? Does he not clearly enough show that a man by his own will takes his stand in the law of God? Then again, there are so many commandments which in some way are expressly adapted to the human will; for instance, there is, Be not overcome of evil, Rom 12:1 and others of similar import, such as, Be not like a horse or a mule, which have no understanding; and, Reject not the counsels of your mother; Prov 1:8 and, Be not wise in your own conceit; Prov 3:7 and, Despise not the chastening of the Lord; Prov 3:11 and,

Forget not my law; Prov 3:1 and, Forbear not to do good to the poor; Prov 3:27 and, Devise not evil against your friend; Prov 3:29 and, Give no heed to a worthless woman; Prov 5:2 and, He is not inclined to understand how to do good; and, They refused to attend to my counsel; Prov 1:30 with numberless other passages of the inspired Scriptures of the Old Testament. And what do they all show us but the free choice of the human will? So, again, in the evangelical and apostolic books of the New Testament what other lesson is taught us? As when it is said, lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth; Mt 6:19 and, Fear not them which kill the body; Mt 10:28 and, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself; Mt 16:24 and again, Peace on earth to men of good will. Luke 2:14 So also that the Apostle Paul says: Let him do what he wills; he sins not if he marries. Nevertheless, he that stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well. 1 Cor 7:36-37 And so again, If I do this willingly, I have a reward; 1 Cor 9:17 while in another passage he says, Be sober and righteous, and sin not; 1 Cor 15:34 and again, As you have a readiness to will, so also let there be a prompt performance; 2 Cor 8:11 then he remarks to Timothy about the younger widows, When they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they choose to marry. So in another passage, All that will to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; 2 Tim 3:12 while to Timothy himself he says, Neglect not the gift that is in you. 1 Tim 4:14 Then to Philemon he addresses this explanation: That your benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but of your own will. Servants also he advises to obey their masters with a good will. Eph 6:7 In strict accordance with this, James says: Do not err, my beloved brethren ... and have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons; and, do not speak evil one of another. James 4:11 So also John in his Epistle writes, do not love the world, 1 John 2:15 and other things of the same import. Now wherever it is said, do not do this, and Do not do that, and wherever there is any requirement in the divine admonitions for the work of the will to do anything, or to refrain from doing anything, there is at once a sufficient proof of free will. No man, therefore, when he sins, can in his heart blame God for it, but every man must impute the fault to himself. Nor does it detract at all from a man's own will when he performs any act in accordance with God. Indeed, a work is then to be pronounced a good one when a person does it willingly; then, too, may the reward of a good work be hoped for from Him concerning whom it is written, He shall reward every man according to his works. Mt 16:27

2.5 Chapter 5: He Shows that Ignorance Affords No Such Excuse as Shall Free the Offender from Punishment; But that to Sin with Knowledge is a Graver Thing Than to Sin in Ignorance.

The excuse such as men are in the habit of alleging from ignorance is taken away from those persons who know God's commandments. But neither will those be without punishment who know not the law of God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. Rom 2:12 Now the apostle does not appear to me to have said this as if he meant that they would have to suffer something worse who in their sins are ignorant of the law than they who know it. [III.] It is seemingly worse, no doubt, to perish than to be judged; but inasmuch

as he was speaking of the Gentiles and of the Jews when he used these words, because the former were without the law, but the latter had received the law, who can venture to say that the Jews who sin in the law will not perish, since they refused to believe in Christ, when it was of them that the apostle said, They shall be judged by the law? For without faith in Christ no man can be delivered; and therefore, they will be so judged that they perish. If, indeed, the condition of those who are ignorant of the law of God is worse than the condition of those who know it, how can that be true which the Lord says in the gospel: The servant who knows not his lord's will, and commits things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; whereas the servant who knows his lord's will, and commits things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many stripes? Luke 12:47-48 Observe how clearly, He here shows that it is a graver matter for a man to sin with knowledge than in ignorance. And yet we must not on this account betake ourselves for refuge to the shades of ignorance, with the view of finding our excuse therein. It is one thing to be ignorant, and another thing to be unwilling to know. For the will is at fault in the case of the man of whom it is said, He is not inclined to understand, so as to do good. But even the ignorance, which is not theirs who refuse to know, but theirs who are, as it were, simply ignorant, does not so far excuse any one as to exempt him from the punishment of eternal fire, though his failure to believe has been the result of his not having at all heard what he should believe; but probably only so far as to mitigate his punishment. For it was not said without reason: Pour out Your wrath upon the heathen that have not known You; nor again according to what the apostle says: When He shall come from heaven in a flame of fire to take vengeance on them that know not God. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 But yet in order that we may have that knowledge that will prevent our saying, each one of us, I did not know, I did not hear, I did not understand; the human will is summoned, in such words as these: Wish not to be as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding; although it may show itself even worse, of which it is written, A stubborn servant will not be reproved by words; for even if he understand, yet he will not obey. Prov 29:19 But when a man says, I cannot do what I am commanded, because I am mastered by my concupiscence, he has no longer any excuse to plead from ignorance, nor reason to blame God in his heart, but he recognizes and laments his own evil in himself; and still to such an one the apostle says: Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good; Rom 12:21 and of course the very fact that the injunction, Consent not to be overcome, is addressed to him, undoubtedly summons the determination of his will. For to consent and to refuse are functions proper to will.

2.6 Chapter 6: God's Grace to Be Maintained Against the Pelagians; The Pelagian Heresy Not an Old One.

It is, however, to be feared lest all these and similar testimonies of Holy Scripture (and undoubtedly there are a great many of them), in the maintenance of free will, be understood in such a way as to leave no room for God's assistance and grace in leading a godly life and a good conversation, to which the eternal reward is due; and lest poor wretched man, when he leads a good life and performs good works (or rather thinks that he leads a good life and performs good works), should dare to glory in himself and not in the Lord, and to put his hope of righteous living in himself alone; so as to be followed by the prophet Jeremiah's

malediction when he says, Cursed is the man who has hope in man, and makes strong the flesh of his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord. Jer 17:5 Understand, my brethren, I pray you, this passage of the prophet. Because the prophet did not say, cursed is the man who has hope in his own self, it might seem to some that the passage, cursed is the man who has hope in man, was spoken to prevent man having hope in any other man but himself. In order, therefore, to show that his admonition to man was not to have hope in himself, after saying, cursed is the man who has hope in man, he immediately added, and makes strong the flesh of his arm. He used the word arm to designate power in operation. By the term flesh, however, must be understood human frailty. And therefore, he makes strong the flesh of his arm who supposes that a power which is frail and weak (that is, human) is sufficient for him to perform good works, and therefore puts not his hope in God for help. This is the reason why he subjoined the further clause, and whose heart departs from the Lord. Of this character is the Pelagian heresy, which is not an ancient one, but has only lately come into existence. Against this system of error there was first a good deal of discussion; then, as the ultimate resource, it was referred to sundry episcopal councils, the proceedings of which, not, indeed, in every instance, but in some, I have dispatched to you for your perusal. In order, then, to our performance of good works, let us not have hope in man, making strong the flesh of our arm; nor let our heart ever depart from the Lord, but let it say to him, Be Thou my helper; forsake me not, nor despise me, O God of my salvation.

2.7 Chapter 7: Grace is Necessary Along with Free Will to Lead a Good Life.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, as we have now proved by our former testimonies from Holy Scripture that there is in man a free determination of will for living rightly and acting rightly; so now let us see what are the divine testimonies concerning the grace of God, without which we are not able to do any good thing. And first of all, I will say something about the very profession which you make in your brotherhood. Now your society, in which you are leading lives of continence, could not hold together unless you despised conjugal pleasure. Well, the Lord was one day conversing on this very topic, when His disciples remarked to Him, if such be the case of a man with his wife, it is not good to marry. He then answered them, all men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. Mt 19:10 And was it not to Timothy's free will that the apostle appealed, when he exhorted him in these words: Keep yourself continent? 1 Tim 5:22 He also explained the power of the will in this matter when He said, having no necessity, but possessing power over his own will, to keep his virgin. 1 Cor 7:37 And yet all men do not receive this saying, except those to whom the power is given. Now they to whom this is not given either are unwilling or do not fulfill what they will; whereas they to whom it is given so will as to accomplish what they will. In order, therefore, that this saying, which is not received by all men, may yet be received by some, there are both the gift of God and free will.

3 Text for Second Encounter: Why We Do Things the Way We Do Them

2. Our system, The new man

3.1 The kind of man we want to form

“The new person is the independent man or woman who involves heart and soul in what they are doing, who are happy and willing to take decisions, who take responsibility for their actions, and who are inwardly free personalities who distance themselves equally from a strong enslavement to forms and an arbitrariness that results from being completely unattached”.

How to form free-generous personalities: pedagogy of ideals (attitudes)

1. The goal (creating the attitude): Creating a fundamental attitude that enables people to influence their lives positively in freedom and generosity, and to seek God’s will and answer it. Every act and practice should be the outflow of a fundamental attitude, and should serve to form the personality in its originality-through the personal ideal, and the special resolution as its concrete application.
2. How do I create an attitude (classical definition and our perspective according to the signs of the times). The individual acts undertaken by the person being educated create an attitude. This is ‘obvious’ (philosophy) but we know that today that is not something we can take for granted. How many people we know that attended catholic schools, are cradle Catholics, and today, they are no longer active members of our Church?
3. The key word is freedom: I am only free if I know who I am, and as we learn from our Christian anthropology, we discover who we are in our interaction with others. That applies mostly and specially to God. In our relationship with him we find out who we really are. Prayer (especially mental prayer) is essential to grow in this aspect. That’s why Father Kentenich talks so much about the microcosmos, we need space and time to understand our interior life. That’s where we can cultivate stronger attitudes.

3.2 The context in which we live

Fr. Kentenich elaborated a vision of his time, we should also try to understand deeply our own time

The diagnosis: the ‘problem’ lies in the soul. “The present-day soul is so ill that psychologists today say that no mentality is created by a repetition of acts, it only happens if deeply meaningful acts are repeated. How do we describe that illness? ‘People today do things as a result of unrelated acts, the mind acts without first reflecting on what is being done, there is no personal decision’. There is no ‘core’, decisions are not made from within.

Maybe we could use the concept ‘buffered self’ (as opposed to ‘porous self’, Charles Taylor). In secular times, the ‘buffered self’ perceives a strong boundary between the internal and

external words, people create meaning for themselves, and so they're basically isolated from anything deeper or bigger. In a nutshell, disconnected from the transcendent.

Bishop Barron uses the term 'ideological secularism': a philosophical view that effectively excludes God from the equation, although it might acknowledge God as a side reality. It sees the very idea of God as a threat to human flourishing.

Mass-minded people but not just on the natural level. There are also religious people with a crowd mentality. They submit without restraint to the general climate without allowing it to inspire them to come to a new, personal decision. It's very common to have people that are completely dependent of the 'atmosphere' that takes place in most of the ministries offered to youth. You see that they were not prepared leave that protected environment when they face life after college.

3.2.1 According to that context: how do we even get to meaningful acts?

How do we get there? With regard to the common climate atmosphere, ensure that our actions are always accompanied by a personal decision. Today we are inclined to copy whatever people show us. 'unless we consciously oppose that tendency we will for a time appear to live a high ethical and religious level outwardly, but there will be no elemental, developed strength that has grown organically'.

We see that not only in the amount of people that leave the church the minute they are out of their catholic atmosphere, but we can also see that in the tendency to scrupulosity, weariness in our leaders, burn outs, and, in general, in people that seem stuck in their relationship with God (we can give examples in order to understand). We also see that in 'leaders' that have little autonomy.

How! "Obligations (only, but also) as far as necessary, as much freedom as possible, cultivation of the spirit in a perfect and secured way".

1. Provide the possibilities for our young people to decide within what is good or bad. That means, we must also give them the opportunity to do something that is less good at times.
2. Stress the spirituality of attitudes (pedagogy of ideals): of course, there's a risk of subjectivism (that will have to be balance with the explanation of authority and duty).
3. The battle against all actions that are expression of outward formalism (habit, thoughtlessness, routine, fear of sanctions).
4. There must be room for creativity and generosity. That means, for the educator, to leave room for mistakes. They are there not only to execute faithfully what is commanded by the authority, but also to discern God's will for their lives, group or branch.
5. That does not mean that there are no obligations, forms, structure. It means that there is enough of that to form people that freely and inwardly, out of love, choose a way of life translated into concrete actions
6. Concretely, we have to make time to understand the reasons behind our practices or choices. That's why we spend time in dialogue, discerning mottos, capital of graces,

evaluating.

7. We have to make sure that that discernment is properly done. For that, participation is paramount. We need to have an atmosphere that allows us to know and express our motivations, the things that really touch our hearts. That means we can't jump directly to the 'practical' or 'moral' aspect of the thing we do (only because they are the right things). That, of course, involves patience and time.

3.3 Risks

Father Kentenich says that the weakness of our system can be found in the strong emphasis we place on a person's attitude, because we could then forget the actions. I think we all had this experience: neglecting and undervalue our religious exercises. "We are easily inclined to reduce them, or let them drop in certain circumstances, for petty reasons".

The principle is: we should arrange our day's work in such a way that there is no longer period without a secured religious exercise. The reason for that is to maintain our attitude (ideal). A habit is born through repeating individual acts. Such acts exercise an influence on our attitude, but they are also a means to deepen the inner attitude.

One way to know how deeply rooted we are in the ideal is to see what happens to us when the circumstances change. For example, the summer. What happens when I am not close to my life group, or the catholic center? What happens when I don't have a time to get up or things to do? What happens with my spiritual life when my job is too demanding and not religious in any way? What happens when I am around people that don't share my faith or life style?

A mentor, a moderator, or any other authority in Schoenstatt should give the space for this to happen. If I am exposed to excessive external activity and never have "free time", I will never know, as an educator, what really moves the hearts of the people under my responsibility. They will be frustrated with their freedom and, as a group, we will never have the space to observe in life (reality) what God is trying to tell us (life streams).

At the same time, if there is no habit or secured spiritual life, it will only stay in the level of emotions. Spiritual life needs hard work. Showing up even when our emotions are telling us something different. When I am around a strong community, this becomes a means of accountability, but it is not enough.

3.4 Our pedagogy proposes a balance

a. repetition of meaningful acts (and not just acts). Everything we do (specially the things we have to do) must be permeated, interiorized, super naturalized and imbued with heart and soul. This is very important when we decide resolutions or a capital of grace. Why we do it (discernment of voices of the soul, order of being, signs of the times) and then make sure, that the motivations are being remembered and renewed.

b. the second balance is between community and person. Especially in young branches, the community becomes a strong source of life, happiness and support. It also becomes

a community that helps you strive for sanctity even when you are going through very difficult times. They remind you from your commitment, sustain you in your suffering and share their joys with you. A formator needs to know, not only, what moves the community as a whole, but what moves the members individually. That is not always easy because there are stronger personalities that tend to talk “in the name” of others. The mentor, should help to produce such an atmosphere, where everyone is heard.

3.4.1 Cultivation of the spirit

Taking freedom as a starting point creates a new interplay of forces between freedom and bonding. F. Kentenich minimized institutional obligations, however, he placed all the more emphasis on setting up freely chosen bonds to ideals. This free attachment does not arise spontaneously, it needs to be cared for. The spirit has to be cultivated.

A community needs a measure of definite opportunities to foster upward bonds (it can't be just obligations: downward bonds). What does that mean concretely?

1. To help create the Marian atmosphere. We invest energies and time in creating the proper atmosphere for a religious experience. That's why we care so much about the apartment, dinner, the language we use, the balance of natural and spontaneous interactions and a respectful exchange of ideas. We educate through every detail.
2. Life group meetings should start and finish with prayer. That we take time for prayer is essential to what we are trying to form. Prayer should have a preponderant place. The mentor (or moderator) should be a specialist in guiding the conversation, allowing everyone to participate and share.
3. What is the topic of the conversation? The living God. a meeting should always be an exercise of practical faith in Divine Providence. We can talk about many things: signs of the times, ideas, apostolate. The relevant question is: where do I see the hand of the living God in all that? (of course, that does not mean we can't be intellectually rigorous).
4. A clear theological formation is relevant when it comes to cultivating the spirit (fr. K about clarity of ideas). Any educator should be able to understand where they are. Don't take things for granted. Some students didn't receive a proper catholic formation growing up. If you see they are in different places on this regard, make sure you take time to fill the gaps.
5. Opportunities to grow in upward bonds. Is good to try many things out until you know what they more disposed to. Serenade the Blessed Mother, hiking-mass, silence retreat, overnights as a life group, apostolate, service, debates. Anything that will help them build their friendships (sports, vacations) if connected to a religious experience. It is a temptation to be a friend, but never talk to them about God. “You were always very interested in my life, thank you for that, why did you never talk to me about Jesus Christ?”.
6. If you find in some of those things a positive disposition, don't transform them too fast in obligations or resolutions, but do make them happen. At the beginning, you will need to share more guidelines, but be careful to be giving them instructions the whole time.

They will learn to please you (to ask your opinion) and they won't learn to be autonomous. Sometimes, they will even do what they think is wrong, just because you like it that way.

4 Text for Second Encounter: The Life Group

4.1 Community of brothers

A Life Group constitutes a wholesome community of brothers. Beyond human likes, the reality of being brothers in Christ and Mary must prevail and, therefore, so must our responsibility of one for the other. The bonds of love, responsibility and faithfulness that bind the members of SUM find their core and deep source in the Covenant of love with our Mother and Queen of Schoenstatt.

This community aims to give men a healthy and edifying place in the midst of a society characterized by indifference and spiritual solitude. The group's goal is to achieve a deep and profound unity of hearts that goes beyond material interests and appearances. A group, where you can find and develop authentic friendship and spiritual growth.

4.2 Community of formation

To form that community of brothers we emphasize personality formation: A Schoenstatt Life Group is not an intellectual academy nor a mere group of friends; it's an educational workshop for one's own personality, a forge of the new man and new community. Here we strive together to become firm, free and priestly personalities, integrating the natural and supernatural worlds that we participate in. We choose Mary as our Mother and Educator and ask her to help our little group become who God created us to be, offering her our efforts in pursuit of this goal.

We must state that "formation" for us does not mean reflection, ideological formation, or intellectual interchange in the first place. For us, "formation" means first and foremost the formation of one's character towards the perfection of charity, and therefore education of the heart. Schoenstatt wants to educate men and women of today so that they achieve real and profound conversion. Part of the conversion of the heart involves a change in fundamental attitudes and mentality.

4.3 Community of ideals

Fr. Kentenich defined Schoenstatt's ideal as: "A new community based on new men, both driven by the fundamental strength of love." We want to help God and the Blessed Mother renew society and renew the Church. The Life Group is a means to participate in that mission. It is a living cell of the new society forged among personalities capable of loving, that have learned to open up to one another in respect and service, and who have made "God's Law" their own.

Renewal of society starts on the individual level. We will be new men and a new community only - and only when - we decide to take the initiative to change and improve the current/previous version of man. But why does man need to be renewed? Who is the 'new man'? Man needs to be renewed because he is born with original sin and subsequently burdened with all his personal defeats. He is being weighed down, in addition, at all times,

by the environment that surrounds him: what we watch, what we hear, by the criteria and lifestyles that dominate society today.

There must be a constant struggle within us to transform in unison with what St. Paul asks of us, "...[lay] aside the old self with its evil practices, and put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him." (Col.

3). "So, I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph. 4, 17-24)

To become a new man then, we must detach ourselves from the "old" man, the man characterized not only by all that is not holy in us, but also all the good in us that has simply not had the chance to develop and flourish. This process requires an arduous effort of self-formation, and it simultaneously requires us to surround ourselves by a community that will foster for us the adequate environment where all the nobility and sanctity within us can awaken and develop, where the new self can breathe.

4.4 Why do we work in Life groups?

The Benefit of Striving in Community:

We build ourselves up within the community, because that is the best place to do it. The Life Group provides the adequate atmosphere to discover and reach for our potential. Forming oneself, in an individualistic manner, is condemned to failure (How many saints do you know of who became saints by themselves?). Personal transformation is encouraged, accelerated, and secured when we practice self-formation in the group. Alone we do not possess the strength nor the sufficient clarity to change. With a group that will help us, stimulate, and push us we can - in effect - achieve that which seems impossible. Here we want to help each other to improve ourselves. In this way we cooperate with the educational task of God and the Blessed Mother within us.

In the Life Group we want to build gradually and organically a space for the greatest longings of our hearts to be recognized and validated, those God-given ideas and dreams inside of us that run the risk of being suppressed and negated if they are not confided. In the life group we want to listen and respond to that restlessness that we have deep down that St. Augustine talks about: "Because God has made us for himself, our hearts are restless until they rest in him." The fruitfulness of the Life Group depends on the degree to which each one gives their "yes" to undergo formation and to walk with each other on this journey.

For this reason, in the Life Group we do not want to be only theoretical, or philosophers of change: we want to be practical also, changing our hearts and our concrete forms of life. The new man cannot remain on the level of ideas; the goal is to bring our ideals and what we are striving for down to earth, to practical application. Our meetings fundamentally reside in arriving at concrete life and in taking on resolutions that take a “bite” out of life. We must unite great ideals with ordinary life, otherwise we would be cheating ourselves. The meetings, in this sense, are a means, not an end; they’re a checkpoint, not the finish line. If ‘life’ spontaneously arises in the meeting, that’s great! We should also try to connect that life with God and his plan for our lives.

Personality Formation at the Service of Evangelization: It is equally important for the group to be a workshop where we can transform personalities, a place where the new society of tomorrow is in fact being constructed, for modern man cannot be convinced with mere ideas or complaints. If you do not see the Gospel embodied in people, faith will never come nor keep its hope up. The Church needs men who testify to Christ with their way of living.

Organic Development: In the beginning the Life Group generally receives support from a mentor from an older Life Group, who introduces them to the spirituality and testifies to his own experience in SUM and the experience of his Life Group. He accompanies them in their first meetings and helps them to ‘get off the ground’. As the Life Group progresses and grows it tends to create a ‘life’ of its own, apart from the support of the mentor, and this is a most welcome development! Indeed, this is the long-term goal, that each member of the group freely makes the group their own to the extent that they no longer depend on the mentor to organize meetings (meal included), and that they have a sense of where the group is and a say in where it should be heading. The group eventually should elect a life group leader who helps to coordinate the meeting with the mentor. The Life group is generally introduced little by little to the other SUM members that make up the Branch, and naturally integrated into the life and mission of the SUM community in Austin.

The Formation trajectory that each life group takes will be different depending on the needs and interests of the group at the moment when they come together. The first few meetings of the life group will be about what is SUM, what is the life group, what is the mission of SUM, and a motivation for self-education, a short history of Schoenstatt and the shrine. The content for the rest of the meetings will come from the SUM Curriculum, exceptions permitted. The SUM Curriculum is divided into 7 Parts: Introduction to Catholic Faith and Spirituality, Self-Knowledge and Education, Covenant of Love, Group Name and Branch Identity, Everyday Sanctity, Instrument Spirituality, Personal Ideal & Vocation. Life groups typically choose one of these parts to focus on for a semester, taking the meeting content more or less in the order in which it is organized in the Curriculum.

5 Text for Second Encounter: Shepherds in Accordance with the Heart of Christ

A New Commission

5.1 Possible reactions in our spirit to being named leaders

Upon being chosen as leaders, or having been designated to carry out a special task in the community, it is natural for us to question: What should I do? What demands will be made on me as a leader? In what way should I take on this task in order to carry it out in the best possible way? In the face of this new situation, we may experience different inner reactions.

For some - perhaps for those with a melancholic disposition - the first reaction may be of wonder or of a certain timidity or insecurity: Am I good enough for this charge? I believe that there are others who are more qualified and experienced than I am. How will I be able to lead the group when I am so limited and do not feel sufficiently prepared? When we react in this manner, we must believe that we have been chosen because we have the necessary aptitude to assume the task; also, we are not alone: we may count on the Lord, on our Mother and Queen, and on the Father of our Family. Truly, they are the ones who command the ship. As leaders, we are merely instruments in their hands. We, therefore, must make true the words of our Father and Founder: *Mater perfectam habetis curam*, the Mother will care for us perfectly; *Tua res agitur*, it is about your cause. We must, therefore, have enormous confidence. Others, perhaps, might react differently, as they believe that they will be able to meet the demands of the commission, that they are prepared and they lack nothing in order to carry it out: "I will try to do it in the best manner possible," they tell themselves, "and I will take advantage of this opportunity that I have been given." It is not a sign of pride or of self-sufficiency to have a positive and optimistic attitude - an attitude that is characteristic of sanguine and driven people. However, this optimism must be accompanied by a deeply held attitude of service and humility

There will always be people who receive this commission with a certain worry: "This new position complicates things, requires a great deal of time, dedication, and sacrifice; and I already have enough to do. I do not wish to commit to so much at this time. I would prefer to support somebody else." Truly, we should not accept a task if we believe, after thinking and praying about it, that the Lord does not wish it for us. Yet, if we have been duly chosen in the proper way, and in the absence of a truly great obstacle that hinders us, then we must conclude that it is indeed God's will for us to assume the task, remembering the words of the Apostle Paul: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." These, and other similar reactions, may invade our spirit. The important thing, once we have accepted the responsibility, is that we take on the job with all our heart, conscious that Divine Providence has given it to us as a gift, and will deliver the graces necessary to carry it out.

Our commission is a calling, a commission given to us by the Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and our Father because they need us. They trust in us and wish to be glorified in our

helplessness. In addition, the life of the community is the responsibility of all members: a good leader never acts alone. Let us not forget that he who gives the most also receives the most. Our commission will doubtlessly be a fount of great blessing upon ourselves because our tasks bring growth.

5.2 The Importance of our Commission

The growth and development of the “flock” commended to us depends on our cooperation. The Lord needs us and wishes to use us to carry out His mission: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you,” (Jn 20: 21). He loves and values us so much that He entrusts us with His great desire: to build the Kingdom of God the Father here on Earth. He has given us each a particular responsibility in the building of the Kingdom. “God acts and rules the world through secondary free causes;” in other words, through His free creatures. This “law of world governance” was always the norm for Fr. Kentenich. Indeed, in each parcel of the Kingdom, God has placed somebody who is responsible: a servant to whom He confides the care of His own, that they may grow and have life. Therefore, the growth and development of the flock entrusted to us depends on our cooperation. We understand the enormous repercussions of a leader on the lives of his or her community. The structure, functioning, environment, community relationships, actions - in short, all of the community’s life - are conditioned in essence by the quality and behavior of the leader. A family depends on its parents, a country on its government, a parish on its pastor, a sports team on its coach, a company on its president, etc. We could continue to name other realities: the life of the Church and of society is radically conditioned by the way that authority is exercised in them.

This is a central tenet of Fr. Kentenich’s program. He embodied a new type of authority and insistently called attention to the need for a renewal of this sense. We will not have a new Church or a new society if we do not concern ourselves with developing a new ethos of authority; in other words, as he so often repeated, it is necessary that “educated educators” emerge.

We understand, therefore, that carrying out our charge not only concerns the group or community that has been directly entrusted to us, but that our group or community is an important part of the larger prophetic message of Fr. Kentenich for our times. A prophetic leader is he who has been sent by God, and is deeply committed to the divine mission; in addition to this divine mission, he also has a divine inner strength, and, motivated by these, he has the courage and longing to allow himself to also be crucified, if necessary, by this divine mission. (Fr. Kentenich)

5.3 Possible Distortions of the Image of a True Leader

A light shine brightest when contrasted with the darkness. Therefore, before concerning ourselves with the ideal image of a Schoenstatt leader, we wish to outline some of its possible distortions. In the interest of further clarity, we shall generalize. It is difficult to find these distortions exactly as we describe them, but this exercise will be useful to call our attention to certain dangers.

5.3.1 The Ideologue

It is not the possession of many ideas that makes us fruitful as leaders. Above all, we must embody the truth that we proclaim. One might think that a Schoenstatt leader must be, above all, an ideologue, a “professor.” We, therefore, encounter leaders who constantly proclaim doctrine, or who tend to monopolize the discussion without allowing others to speak. Constantly displaying their knowledge, they overwhelm with their words.

When an “ideologue” does not back his words up with his effort to embody the truth that he proclaims, the effect is even more negative: a lack of authenticity does not stir up any enthusiasm, nor does it inspire a following. He can, at times, dazzle or illustrate, but he does not educate. “Ideas illustrate, but examples attract,” preaches an ancient adage. A true Schoenstatt leader knows to listen more than to speak. He inspires. He is receptive to the opinions of others. While he must surely know the doctrine of the Church and the ideology of Schoenstatt, which lends security and guides his labor, he knows that educating consists of more than proclaiming truths.

5.3.2 The Organizer

The danger of activism in our leadership is always present. This occurs at the expense of the cultivation of the life of the community and its personal relationships, and of its inner life of prayer. The organizing leader or activist leader is characterized by a constant state of movement, by doing things, proposing initiatives, and demanding effectiveness. His principal concern is whether the group is well organized and functioning with order and efficiency. Unfortunately, this generally occurs at the expense of the cultivation of community life and personal relationships, at the expense of an inner life of prayer. A community certainly needs to undertake actions and to prove itself efficiently. However, a leader must not sacrifice his people for this. Above all, concerning life processes and personal and community growth, he must not focus on the product, on an impeccable result. Life requires time, respect and patience to develop in a healthy manner. This is why a leader must not drain his own people by placing expectations on them. He must not do everything nor bombard the others with tasks. Rather, he must assure that ideas arise from his people, whom he encourages and motivates, leaving the fulfillment of those ideas to them. Since the very beginning, Fr. Kentenich coined the following educational principle: “One achieves autonomy through one’s own activity.” In other words, the educator must promote people’s assumption of concrete tasks and, through this, their personal development.

5.3.3 The Boss

Bossiness is another ailment of many leaders. The true leader does not seek himself. The bossy leader is the one who seeks, above all, to be always at the center. He wants others to follow his plans and to identify with his interests. With a certain vanity, he likes to shape and absorb his people, counting on their unrestricted loyalty. In general, bossy leader does not coordinate his efforts with others. He seeks his own paths and even promotes a rebellious attitude among his own people to the presence of other authoritative figures.

They should only follow him. In this way, he tends to transform his group into a group that mimics him.

5.3.4 The Little Dictator

Nothing is further removed from the Gospel than authoritarianism and paternalism. These should disappear forever from all leadership. At times, the bossy leader has a good dose of “the little dictator.” He imposes his authority without respecting the realities, differing opinions, nor the needs of his people. He does not listen. He is not interested in what others think, since he is convinced that he knows everything and improves everything. He only cares that others follow his instructions and do what he says. In his depths, he is enormously paternalistic: he looks down on others and does not know how to encourage their participation.

Bossiness, paternalism, dictatorial tendencies are all distortions of the true authority: they are forms of authoritarianism that awaken rejection and disfigure the type of man and community that Schoenstatt aspires to.

5.3.5 The Democratizing Leader

The “democratizing” leader is not conscious that he is called to be a personal center and fount of life for the community in his care. This is the type of leader who does not know how to assume his authority, whether it is due to a type of “democratism,” a product of weakness, or as an oppositional reaction against authoritarian or paternalistic tendencies. Again, this type of democratizing leader is not aware that he is called to be a personal center and fount of life for the community in his care. He wants every disagreement to be resolved by voting; he does not seize the initiative, insisting instead that he is at the same level as everyone else. He is not able to achieve cohesion in his group and generates insecurity. His horizontal zeal leaves the group without a reference point and assured support. He seeks to avoid the rifts and lack of communication characteristic of authoritarianism, instead placing himself on an equal footing with all. He seeks to go beyond the “I’m in charge” and “I decide” to the other extreme of “let it be.” In short, he does not assume his role of leadership and instead forfeits it to the community, which ultimately leads to the disintegration of the group.

5.3.6 The “Anemic” Leader

Only he who possesses life can beget life. Hence the need for “educated educators.” Something similar occurs with the “anemic” leader. He not only wishes to avoid authority but also lacks it himself. He lacks confidence in himself and in God. He feels overwhelmed by his charge and is stymied by obstacles. Therefore, he easily “disappears” from the group and abandons his responsibilities to the group. Insecurity and weakness in leadership result in anarchy. Group initiatives never become ingrained, nor is there a progressive group development. It is not rare for him to resort to complaining that everyone is against him, that they do not support him, or that they are passing him by. At times he erupts with

flashes of authoritarianism that, instead of demonstrating confidence, merely underscore his weakness.

These are some of the typical distortions of the true image of a leader. As we said, we may not find them in these same forms in real life. In explaining them, we have exaggerated their central tendencies in order to highlight possible distortions. This protects us from the erroneous conceptions we might have of the commission, and, at the same time, leads us, by means of contrast, to the true image of the Schoenstatt leader.

5.4 The Image of the Schoenstatt Leader

5.4.1 The Good Shepherd: The Ultimate Ideal of all Leaders

The true leader must always look toward his embodied ideal: Christ, the Good Shepherd. Whoever receives a commission of communal responsibility that, in whatever way, places him at the head of his own people must look to Him who is the Head: Jesus Christ. All leadership depends on Him and receives from Him its prototype and ultimate ideal.

This is what our Father and Founder did. He constantly refers to the image of the Good Shepherd to explain the ideal of the Schoenstatt leader. For this reason, we will now let our Father and Founder himself speak to us. What follows, until the end of this chapter, is a transcription of a talk that he gave in a pedagogical course at the end of 1949 in Polesine, Brazil. On that occasion, Fr. Kentenich spoke in Latin, and the transcript in our possession is in Portuguese. Some stylistic corrections have been made in order to facilitate the comprehensibility of the text. Thus says Fr. Kentenich: The object to which we dedicate our efforts is the Apostolic Movement of Schoenstatt. We assert, and we repeat it often, that this labor is, above all, an educational labor. Therefore, whoever works in the Movement must be an educator. However, we cannot achieve this on our own. We require immense grace: the grace of education. We, therefore, turn to Mary, with open hands, to ask for this gift, telling her: give us this grace of the charism of education. We must assure that of ourselves we also may be able to say, "I am the Good Shepherd. I give my life for my sheep. What is the result of this grace? The answer is quite simple: we wish to be like Christ. Christ is the ultimate educator; He is the Good Shepherd. Therefore, if we ultimately await the grace of transformation in Christ, then we await it as the grace of transformation in Christ, the Good Shepherd and the Good Teacher. We are called to be apostles par excellence. Additionally, some of us must teach other shepherds; we all can and must be good shepherds. Many times, we have asserted that the Schoenstatt Movement is not only a movement of education, but also of educators. And if we are called to be educators par excellence, when shall we attain this? When we clothe ourselves in the image of the Good Shepherd. Hence the question: what is that image? Christ Himself shows us his image of a teacher. We, therefore, have a double task. We must first analyze how the Good Shepherd describes Himself. In the second place, we must interpret what He is telling us when He describes

5.4.2 Himself as a shepherd.

We must first read what the Apostle John wrote in Chapter 10 of his Gospel, a text that we already know well: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and runs away, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; he runs away because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep." (Jn 10:11-15, N.J.B) This text is of utmost importance. Consider what we have read: How does the Good Shepherd describe Himself? The characteristics of the Good Shepherd are the characteristics of the good teacher. We must assure that we be able to say of ourselves, "I am the Good Shepherd; I lay down my life for my sheep." Jesus enumerates, in the first place, the general characteristics of "the Good Shepherd." If we ourselves desire to be good shepherds also, we must possess an awareness of a divine mission. All prophets, all of the great apostles of the Church had this deep and explicit awareness of their divine mission.

5.4.3 General Characteristics of the Good Shepherd

The Lord possesses an acute awareness of mission. A leader is an instrument of God with an acute awareness of mission, great humility, and certainty of victory. The affirmation, "I am the Good Shepherd," could be understood in two different ways: highlighting I am the Good Shepherd, or I am the Good Shepherd. I am the Good Shepherd: Whoever listened to Jesus understood Him quite well, since they knew the history of Israel. Israel de-sired kings, but the time came in which those kings, charged with ruling the people, were more concerned with their own good than with the good of their people. They were not good shepherds; rather, they were cruel shepherds. Yahweh, then, said through his prophets, "Now you have what you wanted." However, Yahweh later promised, "I will send my people a Shepherd to rule them forever" (read Chapter 34 of the prophet Ezequiel). This is the background against which Jesus proclaims, "I am the Good Shepherd. I am the Good Shepherd, predestined by God since before all time and announced by the prophets. I am that Good Shepherd who will gently govern His People for all eternity."

We must possess a deep awareness of divine mission because as the Father sent Christ, so too has He sent us. Let us examine the consciousness of divine mission manifested in the affirmation, "I am the Good Shepherd, predestined since all eternity and announced by the prophets." If we ourselves also wish to be good shepherds, we must possess such awareness of this divine mission. All of the prophets, all of the great apostles of the Church, possessed this deep and explicit awareness of their divine mission. You may study this for yourselves. St. Paul, for example, says, "I am sent!" In other words, it was not I who sent myself, but rather, it was God who sent me. He especially asserted this during times when his difficulties worsened: "God sent me. I am an instrument in the hands of the Most High."

This same awareness is found in the prophets. They had to face great challenges from the people, from the kings, and even from their own hearts. Why did they triumph? "I am

sent by God; I am an instrument; God holds me in His hands." We are instruments in the hands of the Lord. It is not I who teaches; the principal teacher is Jesus Christ. It is only when I am moved and carried by his strength that I can carry out my mission. If only we could become fully immersed in the essence of this thought, in the victorious confidence and in extraordinary humility.

I am a secondary agent. As the instrumental cause always depends on the principal cause, so also must all of my works be carried out dependent on the strength of the principal cause. Therefore, we speak of an instrumental ascetic and of an instrumental shepherding. If I am charged with the task of a teacher, what consciousness must I cultivate in my heart? This one: I am not the one who teaches; the principal teacher is the Lord. Therefore, solely moved and carried by the strength of this cause, I must carry out this mission. God is always the principal agent. What I must do is to consider myself dependent on Him and engrave on my mind and heart that I am an instrument, an instrument of the principal cause. At times we feel that things are not so, that God is not the principal agent. However, we must remember that, sooner or later, God always prevails. This instrumental awareness always implies great victory. Am I sufficiently united to the principal cause? This is the first thing we must ask ourselves.

The greatest tragedy comes from the instrumental cause separating itself and becoming independent of the principal cause. If my educational task, for example, does not produce the desired results, I quickly tend to tell myself, "The problem lies in the people who are in my care." However, if we truly live with an instrumental consciousness, our first question should be, "Am I truly united to the principal cause?" This is the first thing that we should ask ourselves. The other question, whether it is our flock that is at fault, is secondary. Primarily, I am the cause by which my own people are not well, especially because I am not sufficiently tied to the principal cause.

In the consciousness of divine mission is contained a great certainty of victory. On this is also founded a great humility. If my labor produces excellent fruits, from what fount do they spring? Above and before all, from the principal cause, because the instrumental cause not only acts dependently, but also relies on the strength of the principal cause. The fruit belongs to both agents, but the causality of the principal cause is greater. Therefore, I must always be humble when I obtain excellent fruits from my labor. The instrumental consciousness also produces great confidence. I am not the sole teacher; Christ is the principal cause to whom I am united. If we wish to emerge victoriously from difficult circumstances, if we wish to possess humility and confidence, we must always cultivate an instrumental consciousness and mentality: "I am the Good Shepherd predestined by God since all eternity." Can I say this of myself? In fact, I have received a commission; but can I say that I am sent? In other words, while my commission endures, do the fortunes of my people depend entirely on me? I cannot say that I am not interested in what affects my people... During a collectivist age such as the present, there is a great danger that we will lack this awareness of mission. Immersing ourselves into this mentality of mission is much more important than any other method, regardless of its excellence. As teachers, this is the spirit that we must always primarily master. For this reason, we pray: "Grant me the spirit of an instrument, the awareness of a divine mission." God has sent me. We do not desire,

nor can we allow ourselves to become merely cogs in a machine. Our society today aims to convert us into that: into interchangeable parts of a great machine. No, we are sent by God. It is necessary for us to know the individual characteristics of those whom we teach, and that we gather them with all affection into our hearts.

A leader does not seek himself; rather, he generously gives himself to those who are entrusted to him. The affirmation "I am the Good Shepherd" could be stressed in the following way: I am the Good Shepherd. Those who listened to Christ understood what he meant in this sense, since they were familiar with the history of Israel. What had happened with the shepherds of Israel? They should have been ensuring the well-being of their sheep, but they instead sought the milk and wool of the sheep. When Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd," He is acting as a completely different type of shepherd. He did not live for Himself, but lived instead for His sheep. He gave all that He had; He gave Himself for them. "He denied himself and gave himself for me," says St. Paul of Jesus. It is so easy to become a monster instead of being a good shepherd! When does one begin to become a monster? Whenever the teacher seeks to find himself, whenever he seeks only his own honor, his monetary advantage... This applies to all educators, to professors or to any equivalent charge. We must always seek the good of those whom God has confided to us, be they children or adults. We must learn the art of leading souls. Hence our prayer: "Give me souls, and take everything else for You." (Heavenwards) To summarize, then, whoever wishes to have the gift or charism of education must cultivate the consciousness of instrument, and constantly harbor the desire to be a good shepherd; he must always have this desire at the forefront of his mind: "Give me souls, and take everything else for Yourself.

5.4.4 Particular Characteristics of the Good Shepherd

Jesus Himself, in the Gospel of John, expounds on the particular reasons a Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep..." What characteristics does he underscore here? Pastoral fidelity. If I am to be an educator, then I also need that quality... I know my mine and they know me, just as the Father knows me." This is pastoral love. "I have other sheep..." He underscores a third quality: pastoral care. If I wish to be a good educator, if I wish to possess the charism of education, I must ask for the grace of these three qualities: love, fidelity, and zeal or pastoral care. We shall discuss something of each. Shepherd's Love Knowing each person and gathering them into one's heart. Jesus Christ was describing himself when He said, "I know my own as my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father." What degree of pastoral charity was Jesus speaking of? He spoke of a knowing: "I know my sheep..." But he was not speaking of a scientific way of knowing. He spoke of a knowledge that was intimately united to an enormous pastoral love. This is why he specified, "I know my sheep as the Father knows the Son and the Son knows the Father." This knowledge is united to the great affection of the Son for the Father and vice-versa, resulting in the Holy Spirit, the Ultimate Love.

From this we can infer the direction of pastoral love: we must know the individual characteristics of those whom we teach, and gather them in with all the affection of our hearts. It would be useful to analyze the life of Jesus from the following point of view: how He

adapted to the individuality of each of His apostles, and how He exercised His love. His pastoral love was true and intimate with each of them. Pastoral love is characterized by being a personal, respectful and comprehensive love.

5.4.5 A personal love

A love that knows each one, listens, and responds to the other's concerns, and serves without selfishness. Our motivation is this: educators do not produce life. Through philosophy, we are aware that we cannot produce life; we merely serve it. This is the calling of the educator: to serve life that already exists. All life is unique. There is no such thing as general life; only living individuals exist. Our duty is to love in a personal way. In other words, we must envelop all people with a love that is useful to each and every one's individual life. We must commit the following to memory: the educator cannot produce life, be it natural or supernatural. We might be able to say that, in some way, we can produce a supernatural life, but this happens only indirectly. Jesus is the One who generates supernatural life. We are merely His instruments. If this supernatural life, then, already exists, we can only serve it. Therefore, we must know how to receive this life that already exists in those whom we teach. We do not only transmit the life that is within us, but we also receive all that is alive in our student. Receiving in order to give produces a circle of life. Let us observe how Jesus had this personal love. His call to the apostles was individual. Think of how He called Peter, John, Andrew... How did He adapt to the personal nuances of each? Remember how he treated Peter: not only did. He allows his temptation, but also his mortal sin. His love was personal. He wanted Peter to be the foundation of His church, and the foundation required great humility. Because Peter would not learn this in an ordinary way, He taught him in an extraordinary way. Peter fell into a great sin, and later Jesus received him with such great kindness! He did not reprimand him; He merely looked upon him and Peter broke into tears. In spite of committing such a great sin, Jesus granted him the papacy. What conditions did Jesus attach to this commission? He asked for a profession of love and humility. "Simon, do you love me above all others?" Why did Jesus ask this three times? Because Peter had denied him three times. It is because of this that Peter was able to understand what the Lord wanted of him.

Jesus treated John and the others in this very same individual and personal way. There is also another way of teaching: teaching only generalities, without paying attention to the nuance and the needs of each person. This is not the way of Jesus... If I do not recognize the individuality of each of my own or his particular needs, I cannot find my way into his heart; I cannot help his life. Pastoral love is the art of opening hearts, the art of listening and inferring what is not said with words. Some teachers do not know how to listen; more specifically, there are many shepherds that do not possess the art of listening. They speak of their own troubles... But I do not wish to write of these things to my own. I merely need to do one thing: serve them. I shall not be able to listen if I do not constantly fight against my own selfishness. All that is mine belongs to those who are mine. This personal battle against selfishness must always be intimately united with pastoral charity. Why do I love my own? Do I do it because I like them? No, that is not the primary reason that I do it, but rather because they are images of God. Their fate is in my hands. They depend on me.

This responsibility must remain deeply ingrained in my heart. And not only in my heart, but also in my mind, in all of my being: "Give me souls, and take everything else for You." We know from experience that many do not need anything else but to be heard; they only wish to find somebody to listen to them.

5.4.6 Personal pastoral love is also a respectful love

Pastoral love highly values those people in our care, and attempts to embody the values aspired to by our own. It knows how to make itself "needless." I have neither the mission nor the right to "produce" life, but only to serve it. My task is to serve. Therefore, I must cultivate an attitude of respect before life, before each individual instance... A true educator is always characterized by an attitude of love and respect. Without these, nothing can be accomplished. This attitude of love and respect awakens in my people as a response, as a similar attitude. Where this double attitude is lacking, education is impossible. On the other hand, wherever this attitude exists, education is always possible. It is one thing to instruct or to teach a class; it is an entirely other thing to educate. What, then, must we do? On the one hand, we must increase love, and, on the other hand, we must increase respect. He must hold those we teach in high esteem. I awaken in my own a respect towards my person by the degree in which I assume their ideals and attempt to live them. I must also strive to make myself "dispensable." In other words, I must use all necessary means to have my own exist without me: I must make myself unnecessary. This means that I must strive for them to be wiser and nobler than I am. The greatest testimonial to the effectiveness of an educator is when he can say, with all his heart, "They are much wiser and much nobler than I am." Shakespeare said that respect is the hinge of the world. If a door is not on its hinges, the wind can bring it down. If, in our times, respect does not exist we shall experience a worldwide disaster.

Pastoral love is also a comprehensive love Believe in the good of our own and in their personal vocation. An educator's love is destined to foment and exalt the latent qualities of the learner. The learner must perceive that the educator believes in and has faith in his or her good qualities. The learner must feel, in the depths of his or her heart, this attitude and conviction of the educator. This faith must not only be in the good that exists in the soul of the learner, but also in the special mission that he or she has. It is of utmost importance to find a teacher in our lives who has faith in our good qualities and in our mission! That is why it is so important to know when to reprimand and when to praise. In general, we never praise enough. It is essential to praise more, just as Jesus did. To summarize: we hope, from the Blessed Virgin in our Shrine, for the grace of transformation in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd and Good Teacher. We, therefore, have considered what Jesus says of Himself as the Good Shepherd, having observed the general characteristics of His pastoral love. We now shift our focus to another quality:

5.4.7 The Shepherd's faithfulness

Faithfulness is the perpetuation of Primary Love. The Good Shepherd is Faithful. The Good Shepherd does not merely have an initial love for his sheep, not at all. He is always willing to give his life for them. Therefore, if his sheep are in danger, instead of fleeing,

he gives his life for them. This is why we speak of pastoral faithfulness. Faithfulness is a perpetuation of primary love. It is possible for us to begin to love somebody, even with a pastoral love. However, difficulties may emerge later; tedium invades our soul; we suddenly discover things about that person that we did not expect. Pastoral faithfulness, on the other hand, loves completely, as if God Himself placed that person in our hands. The fount of such pastoral faithfulness is paternity, or paternal love. We do not refer to biological paternity, but to a spiritual paternity that is directed to all people, whoever they may be. What does Scripture say about this central, general and universal attitude of the educator? In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul says: "I am writing all this not to make you ashamed but simply to remind you, as my dear children; for even though you might have ten thousand slaves to look after you in Christ, you still have no more than one father, and it was I who fathered you in Christ Jesus, by the gospel" (1 Cor, 4:14,15). St. Paul affirms: you are my spiritual children, and I am your spiritual father. We all, in some way, are fathers; in addition, we will later see that we are also mothers. Indeed, St. Paul speaks to us in a similar way in the Epistle to the Galatians: "My children, I am going through the pain of giving birth to you all over again, until Christ is formed in you..." (Gal 4:19). What, then, is my task? I can and must beget Christ in my own; I must honor Him and serve Him through them. St. Paul continues, writing, "and how I wish I could be there with you at this moment and find the right way of talking to you: I am quite at a loss with you..." (Gal 4:20). St. Paul truly has courage to say these words. Would we also be able to say these things? As an educator, I am always a father and mother to my sheep, and not only during the teaching moments. Father and mother always! This is why I must always be imbued with a sense of paternal responsibility that is reflected in all of my actions; all that I do has pedagogic value: whether it is celebrating Mass, eating or playing... Paternal responsibility is inseparable from my being. This is precisely the distinction between being an educator and an instructor. If an instructor is not carrying out his function, he can easily live his life. On the other hand, an educator can never live his life because the good shepherd always lays down his life for his sheep. This responsibility is more efficient than any educational method. This is why we again implore: Grant me, Mary, a great paternal responsibility; Lord Jesus, grant me that responsibility for those you have entrusted to me.

All of my actions must have an apostolic flavor. This does not refer to a mere general sense, such as being a contribution to the Capital of Grace, but in a concrete way. We wish to embody the ideal educator according to the example of Christ. If I think or study, it is to serve my sheep. The good shepherd lays down his life... He cultivates his intelligence, learns, not only because these things bring satisfaction to his intellect, but also because it enables him to serve better. I must also give my corporal life for my own. All of the strength of my body must serve my sheep. This is why, if I sleep, it is to have enough strength to serve my own. And if I do not sleep, it is also to serve my sheep. For them I sacrifice my will, and, above all, I give my heart for my sheep. The good shepherd lays down his life... I do not exist for myself, I exist for my own. I was sent to them by God the Father.

Finally, what does Scripture say about the Good Shepherd? "And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold..." (Jn 10:16) This Gospel verse reveals another characteristic:

5.4.8 The Third Characteristic of the Good Shepherd

Consider, brothers, how you were called; not many of you are wise by human standards, not many influential, not many from noble families. No, God chose those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise; he chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong, those who by human standards are common and contemptible -- indeed those who count for nothing — to reduce to nothing all those that do count for something, so that no human being might feel boastful before God. (1 Cor, 1:26-29). Knowing the good and not so good of the people confided to us, we must be sure that “positive leaders” be yeast for the whole community, who introduce values that inspire the so-called “negative leaders.”

I am responsible for all of my sheep: for those who are in the flock and for those who are outside of it. We may distinguish between conductive sheep and seductive sheep. Every community is composed of three types of people: conductors (positive leaders), seducers (negative leaders), and the masses. This latter group is pulled, at times, by the conductors and at other times by the seducers.

Who are the conductors and seducers in my community? The conductors always pull toward the heights. The seducers always pull toward the depths. The masses depend on whoever is guiding them. If the conductors are doing the pulling, then things are well; but when the community is influenced more by the seducers, corruption reigns.

In this sense, leaders require special care. We must focus on fomenting their spiritual lives. If they are not able to live an intense spiritual life, they cannot carry out their task well. Therefore, it is imperative to introduce them into self-formation and the practice of the Spiritual Daily Order; we must teach them to perform spiritual reading and meditation. It is my responsibility to provide them with all that may help them to live an intense spiritual life. The Apostolic League and the Federation exist for these people. We must strive that all of them have the chance to participate in spiritual retreats where they are fed - in other words, where they are able to positively recharge their spiritual life.

As for the seducers, we must, above all, attempt to “baptize” them. In other words, we must try to baptize the forces that possess such people. There is a great art to conquering seducers and providing values that attract them: once converted, they become optimal conductors. Through the conductors, we are able to influence the masses. From the best of them, we must attempt to form an elite. We must provide the conductors with apostolic action goals which may apply to the seducers or to the masses. It is essential to develop conductors to be yeast for the whole community. If the yeast comes from the seducers, then very little will be achieved in the community. We must, therefore, be sure that our conductors are optimal. A community walks the correct path when they are guided by people who possess a good spirit. Therefore, we must constantly pray for them, and think of how to win them over.

6 Text for Third Encounter: A Stranger On The Road, chapter 2

56. The previous chapter should not be read as a cool and detached description of today's problems, for "the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts". [53] In the attempt to search for a ray of light in the midst of what we are experiencing, and before proposing a few lines of action, I now wish to devote a chapter to a parable told by Jesus Christ two thousand years ago. Although this Letter is addressed to all people of good will, regardless of their religious convictions, the parable is one that any of us can relate to and find challenging.

"Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.' But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (Lk 10:25-37).

6.1 The context

57. This parable has to do with an age-old problem. Shortly after its account of the creation of the world and of man, the Bible takes up the issue of human relationships. Cain kills his brother Abel and then hears God ask: "Where is your brother Abel?" (*Gen 4:9*). His answer is one that we ourselves all too often give: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (*ibid.*). By the very question he asks, God leaves no room for an appeal to determinism or fatalism as a justification for our own indifference. Instead, he encourages us to create a different culture, in which we resolve our conflicts and care for one another.

58. The Book of Job sees our origin in the one Creator as the basis of certain common rights: "Did not he who made me in the womb also make him? And did not the same one fashion us in the womb?" (*Job 31:15*). Many centuries later, Saint Irenaeus would use the image of a melody to make the same point: "One who seeks the truth should not concentrate on the differences between one note and another, thinking as if each was created separately and

apart from the others; instead, he should realize that one and the same person composed the entire melody". [54]

59. In earlier Jewish traditions, the imperative to love and care for others appears to have been limited to relationships between members of the same nation. The ancient commandment to "love your neighbour as yourself" (*Lev* 19:18) was usually understood as referring to one's fellow citizens, yet the boundaries gradually expanded, especially in the Judaism that developed outside of the land of Israel. We encounter the command not to do to others what you would not want them to do to you (cf. *Tob* 4:15). In the first century before Christ, Rabbi Hillel stated: "This is the entire Torah. Everything else is commentary". [55] The desire to imitate God's own way of acting gradually replaced the tendency to think only of those nearest us: "The compassion of man is for his neighbour, but the compassion of the Lord is for all living beings" (*Sir* 18:13).

60. In the New Testament, Hillel's precept was expressed in positive terms: "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (*Mt* 7:12). This command is universal in scope, embracing everyone on the basis of our shared humanity, since the heavenly Father "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good" (*Mt* 5:45). Hence the summons to "be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (*Lk* 6:36).

61. In the oldest texts of the Bible, we find a reason why our hearts should expand to embrace the foreigner. It derives from the enduring memory of the Jewish people that they themselves had once lived as foreigners in Egypt:

"You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex 22:21).

"You shall not oppress a stranger; you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex 23:9).

"When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lev 19:33-34).

"When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the sojourner, the orphan, and the widow. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt" (Deut 24:21-22).

The call to fraternal love echoes throughout the New Testament:

"For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' " (Gal 5:14).

"Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness" (1 Jn 2:10-11).

"We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death" (1 Jn 3:14).

"Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen" (1 Jn 4:20).

62. Yet this call to love could be misunderstood. Saint Paul, recognizing the temptation of

the earliest Christian communities to form closed and isolated groups, urged his disciples to abound in love “for one another and for all” (*1 Thess* 3:12). In the Johannine community, fellow Christians were to be welcomed, “even though they are strangers to you” (*3 Jn* 5). In this context, we can better understand the significance of the parable of the Good Samaritan: love does not care if a brother or sister in need comes from one place or another. For “love shatters the chains that keep us isolated and separate; in their place, it builds bridges. Love enables us to create one great family, where all of us can feel at home... Love exudes compassion and dignity”. [56]

6.2 Abandoned on the wayside

63. Jesus tells the story of a man assaulted by thieves and lying injured on the wayside. Several persons passed him by, but failed to stop. These were people holding important social positions, yet lacking in real concern for the common good. They would not waste a couple of minutes caring for the injured man, or even in calling for help. Only one person stopped, approached the man and cared for him personally, even spending his own money to provide for his needs. He also gave him something that in our frenetic world we cling to tightly: he gave him his time. Certainly, he had his own plans for that day, his own needs, commitments and desires. Yet he was able to put all that aside when confronted with someone in need. Without even knowing the injured man, he saw him as deserving of his time and attention.

64. Which of these persons do you identify with? This question, blunt as it is, is direct and incisive. Which of these characters do you resemble? We need to acknowledge that we are constantly tempted to ignore others, especially the weak. Let us admit that, for all the progress we have made, we are still “illiterate” when it comes to accompanying, caring for and supporting the most frail and vulnerable members of our developed societies. We have become accustomed to looking the other way, passing by, ignoring situations until they affect us directly.

65. Someone is assaulted on our streets, and many hurry off as if they did not notice. People hit someone with their car and then flee the scene. Their only desire is to avoid problems; it does not matter that, through their fault, another person could die. All these are signs of an approach to life that is spreading in various and subtle ways. What is more, caught up as we are with our own needs, the sight of a person who is suffering disturbs us. It makes us uneasy, since we have no time to waste on other people’s problems. These are symptoms of an unhealthy society. A society that seeks prosperity but turns its back on suffering.

66. May we not sink to such depths! Let us look to the example of the Good Samaritan. Jesus’ parable summons us to rediscover our vocation as citizens of our respective nations and of the entire world, builders of a new social bond. This summons is ever new, yet it is grounded in a fundamental law of our being: we are called to direct society to the pursuit of the common good and, with this purpose in mind, to persevere in consolidating its political and social order, its fabric of relations, its human goals. By his actions, the Good Samaritan showed that “the existence of each and every individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions”. [57]

67. The parable eloquently presents the basic decision we need to make in order to rebuild our wounded world. In the face of so much pain and suffering, our only course is to imitate the Good Samaritan. Any other decision would make us either one of the robbers or one of those who walked by without showing compassion for the sufferings of the man on the roadside. The parable shows us how a community can be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion, and act instead as neighbours, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good. At the same time, it warns us about the attitude of those who think only of themselves and fail to shoulder the inevitable responsibilities of life as it is.

68. The parable clearly does not indulge in abstract moralizing, nor is its message merely social and ethical. It speaks to us of an essential and often forgotten aspect of our common humanity: we were created for a fulfilment that can only be found in love. We cannot be indifferent to suffering; we cannot allow anyone to go through life as an outcast. Instead, we should feel indignant, challenged to emerge from our comfortable isolation and to be changed by our contact with human suffering. That is the meaning of dignity.

6.3 A story constantly retold

69. The parable is clear and straightforward, yet it also evokes the interior struggle that each of us experiences as we gradually come to know ourselves through our relationships with our brothers and sisters. Sooner or later, we will all encounter a person who is suffering. Today there are more and more of them. The decision to include or exclude those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project. Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders. And if we extend our gaze to the history of our own lives and that of the entire world, all of us are, or have been, like each of the characters in the parable. All of us have in ourselves something of the wounded man, something of the robber, something of the passers-by, and something of the Good Samaritan.

70. It is remarkable how the various characters in the story change, once confronted by the painful sight of the poor man on the roadside. The distinctions between Judean and Samaritan, priest and merchant, fade into insignificance. Now there are only two kinds of people: those who care for someone who is hurting and those who pass by; those who bend down to help and those who look the other way and hurry off. Here, all our distinctions, labels and masks fall away: it is the moment of truth. Will we bend down to touch and heal the wounds of others? Will we bend down and help another to get up? This is today's challenge, and we should not be afraid to face it. In moments of crisis, decisions become urgent. It could be said that, here and now, anyone who is neither a robber nor a passer-by is either injured himself or bearing an injured person on his shoulders.

71. The story of the Good Samaritan is constantly being repeated. We can see this clearly as social and political inertia is turning many parts of our world into a desolate byway, even as domestic and international disputes and the robbing of opportunities are leaving great numbers of the marginalized stranded on the roadside. In his parable, Jesus does not offer alternatives; he does not ask what might have happened had the injured man or the

one who helped him yielded to anger or a thirst for revenge. Jesus trusts in the best of the human spirit; with this parable, he encourages us to persevere in love, to restore dignity to the suffering and to build a society worthy of the name.

6.4 The characters of the story

72. The parable begins with the robbers. Jesus chose to start when the robbery has already taken place, lest we dwell on the crime itself or the thieves who committed it. Yet we know them well. We have seen, descending on our world, the dark shadows of neglect and violence in the service of petty interests of power, gain and division. The real question is this: will we abandon the injured man and run to take refuge from the violence, or will we pursue the thieves? Will the wounded man end up being the justification for our irreconcilable divisions, our cruel indifference, our intestine conflicts?

73. The parable then asks us to take a closer look at the passers-by. The nervous indifference that makes them pass to the other side of the road – whether innocently or not, whether the result of disdain or mere distraction – makes the priest and the Levite a sad reflection of the growing gulf between ourselves and the world around us. There are many ways to pass by at a safe distance: we can retreat inwards, ignore others, or be indifferent to their plight. Or simply look elsewhere, as in some countries, or certain sectors of them, where contempt is shown for the poor and their culture, and one looks the other way, as if a development plan imported from without could edge them out. This is how some justify their indifference: the poor, whose pleas for help might touch their hearts, simply do not exist. The poor are beyond the scope of their interest.

74. One detail about the passers-by does stand out: they were religious, devoted to the worship of God: a priest and a Levite. This detail should not be overlooked. It shows that belief in God and the worship of God are not enough to ensure that we are actually living in a way pleasing to God. A believer may be untrue to everything that his faith demands of him, and yet think he is close to God and better than others. The guarantee of an authentic openness to God, on the other hand, is a way of practising the faith that helps open our hearts to our brothers and sisters. Saint John Chrysostom expressed this pointedly when he challenged his Christian hearers: “Do you wish to honour the body of the Saviour? Do not despise it when it is naked. Do not honour it in church with silk vestments while outside it is naked and numb with cold”. [58] Paradoxically, those who claim to be unbelievers can sometimes put God’s will into practice better than believers.

75. “Robbers” usually find secret allies in those who “pass by and look the other way”. There is a certain interplay between those who manipulate and cheat society, and those who, while claiming to be detached and impartial critics, live off that system and its benefits. There is a sad hypocrisy when the impunity of crime, the use of institutions for personal or corporate gain, and other evils apparently impossible to eradicate, are accompanied by a relentless criticism of everything, a constant sowing of suspicion that results in distrust and confusion. The complaint that “everything is broken” is answered by the claim that “it can’t be fixed”, or “what can I do?” This feeds into disillusionment and despair, and hardly encourages a spirit of solidarity and generosity. Plunging people into despair closes a

perfectly perverse circle: such is the agenda of the invisible dictatorship of hidden interests that have gained mastery over both resources and the possibility of thinking and expressing opinions.

76. Let us turn at last to the injured man. There are times when we feel like him, badly hurt and left on side of the road. We can also feel helpless because our institutions are neglected and lack resources, or simply serve the interests of a few, without and within. Indeed, “globalized society often has an elegant way of shifting its gaze. Under the guise of being politically correct or ideologically fashionable, we look at those who suffer without touching them. We televise live pictures of them, even speaking about them with euphemisms and with apparent tolerance”. [59]

6.5 Starting anew

77. Each day offers us a new opportunity, a new possibility. We should not expect everything from those who govern us, for that would be childish. We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes. Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies. Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people’s troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment. Like the chance traveller in the parable, we need only have a pure and simple desire to be a people, a community, constant and tireless in the effort to include, integrate and lift up the fallen. We may often find ourselves succumbing to the mentality of the violent, the blindly ambitious, those who spread mistrust and lies. Others may continue to view politics or the economy as an arena for their own power plays. For our part, let us foster what is good and place ourselves at its service.

78. We can start from below and, case by case, act at the most concrete and local levels, and then expand to the farthest reaches of our countries and our world, with the same care and concern that the Samaritan showed for each of the wounded man’s injuries. Let us seek out others and embrace the world as it is, without fear of pain or a sense of inadequacy, because there we will discover all the goodness that God has planted in human hearts. Difficulties that seem overwhelming are opportunities for growth, not excuses for a glum resignation that can lead only to acquiescence. Yet let us not do this alone, as individuals. The Samaritan discovered an innkeeper who would care for the man; we too are called to unite as a family that is stronger than the sum of small individual members. For “the whole is greater than the part, but it is also greater than the sum of its parts”. [60] Let us renounce the pettiness and resentment of useless in-fighting and constant confrontation. Let us stop feeling sorry for ourselves and acknowledge our crimes, our apathy, our lies. Reparation and reconciliation will give us new life and set us all free from fear.

79. The Samaritan who stopped along the way departed without expecting any recognition or gratitude. His effort to assist another person gave him great satisfaction in life and before his God, and thus became a duty. All of us have a responsibility for the wounded, those of our own people and all the peoples of the earth. Let us care for the needs of every man and woman, young and old, with the same fraternal spirit of care and closeness that marked

the Good Samaritan.

6.6 Neighbours without borders

80. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan in answer to the question: Who is my neighbour? The word “neighbour”, in the society of Jesus’ time, usually meant those nearest us. It was felt that help should be given primarily to those of one’s own group and race. For some Jews of that time, Samaritans were looked down upon, considered impure. They were not among those to be helped. Jesus, himself a Jew, completely transforms this approach. He asks us not to decide who is close enough to be our neighbour, but rather that we ourselves become neighbours to all.

81. Jesus asks us to be present to those in need of help, regardless of whether or not they belong to our social group. In this case, the Samaritan *became a neighbour* to the wounded Judean. By approaching and making himself present, he crossed all cultural and historical barriers. Jesus concludes the parable by saying: “Go and do likewise” (*Lk 10:37*). In other words, he challenges us to put aside all differences and, in the face of suffering, to draw near to others with no questions asked. I should no longer say that I have neighbours to help, but that I must myself be a neighbour to others.

82. The parable, though, is troubling, for Jesus says that the wounded man was a Judean, while the one who stopped and helped him was a Samaritan. This detail is quite significant for our reflection on a love that includes everyone. The Samaritans lived in a region where pagan rites were practised. For the Jews, this made them impure, detestable, dangerous. In fact, one ancient Jewish text referring to nations that were hated, speaks of Samaria as “not even a people” (*Sir 50:25*); it also refers to “the foolish people that live in Shechem” (*50:26*).

83. This explains why a Samaritan woman, when asked by Jesus for a drink, answered curtly: “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (*Jn 4:9*). The most offensive charge that those who sought to discredit Jesus could bring was that he was “possessed” and “a Samaritan” (*Jn 8:48*). So this encounter of mercy between a Samaritan and a Jew is highly provocative; it leaves no room for ideological manipulation and challenges us to expand our frontiers. It gives a universal dimension to our call to love, one that transcends all prejudices, all historical and cultural barriers, all petty interests.

6.7 The plea of the stranger

84. Finally, I would note that in another passage of the Gospel Jesus says: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (*Mt 25:35*). Jesus could speak those words because he had an open heart, sensitive to the difficulties of others. Saint Paul urges us to “rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (*Rom 12:15*). When our hearts do this, they are capable of identifying with others without worrying about where they were born or come from. In the process, we come to experience others as our “own flesh” (*Is 58:7*).

85. For Christians, the words of Jesus have an even deeper meaning. They compel us to recognize Christ himself in each of our abandoned or excluded brothers and sisters (cf. *Mt*

25:40.45). Faith has untold power to inspire and sustain our respect for others, for believers come to know that God loves every man and woman with infinite love and “thereby confers infinite dignity” upon all humanity. [61] We likewise believe that Christ shed his blood for each of us and that no one is beyond the scope of his universal love. If we go to the ultimate source of that love which is the very life of the triune God, we encounter in the community of the three divine Persons the origin and perfect model of all life in society. Theology continues to be enriched by its reflection on this great truth.

86. I sometimes wonder why, in light of this, it took so long for the Church unequivocally to condemn slavery and various forms of violence. Today, with our developed spirituality and theology, we have no excuses. Still, there are those who appear to feel encouraged or at least permitted by their faith to support varieties of narrow and violent nationalism, xenophobia and contempt, and even the mistreatment of those who are different. Faith, and the humanism it inspires, must maintain a critical sense in the face of these tendencies, and prompt an immediate response whenever they rear their head. For this reason, it is important that catechesis and preaching speak more directly and clearly about the social meaning of existence, the fraternal dimension of spirituality, our conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person, and our reasons for loving and accepting all our brothers and sisters.

7 Text for Fourth Encounter: Laws of Organic Growth

(Leading Through Love, by Fr. Rafael Fernandez, Chapter 5)

An educator is faced with concrete people and with a concrete community; all are living, organic beings. They are not inanimate, nor are they machines or mere functional organizations. A machine may have pieces added or taken away; it is programmed in some form or another in order to obtain a determined product with the most efficiency and speed possible. A machine is driven, commanded and utilized. This does not happen with a living organism, much less with a person or a community. An organism would not tolerate the treatment given to a machine. Plants, animals and men have their own life. Therefore, their lives are cultivated and fed. Their life is not created; the organisms themselves are in possession of their life. This life can only be encouraged, favored and served. In its seed is found the potentiality of all that it could become later as a developed and mature plant. This is why the educator who respects and serves life, who acts according to the pedagogy of Movement, knows how to adapt to the laws of growth of all organisms. Fr. Kentenich has formulated the following six laws of organic growth:

- Organic growth is slow.
- Organic growth occurs from the inside out.
- Growth proceeds from an organic whole toward an organic whole.
- Organic growth is always simultaneous, but is not uniform.
- Organic growth is rhythmic.
- Organic growth accounts for leaps or surprising changes.

7.1 1. Organic growth is slow

Personal and communal growth is slow; a leader must cultivate patience and never hurry the process by mechanically demanding too much.

Perhaps one of the most difficult things for an educator especially a male one - is to have the patience to wait for vital processes to develop, without attempting to hurry them on in order to obtain results as quickly as possible. Many times, behind this haste is the desire - whether justified or, in some cases, selfish - of success. A person's physical development is extremely slow, and the psychological process of maturation of character (nine months of gestation; twenty years or more of maturational development) is no less so. To hurry process inorganically contains a danger that the result would be a fictitious maturity that, later on, collapses because it lacks a foundation and solid rooting in the person or community. That which is authentic and true is not born overnight. It must be achieved with patience. An educator must possess great pedagogic wisdom and patience. He must not become nervous or discouraged if people or the community do not progress at the pace or rhythm that he wishes for or seems appropriate to him. He must know how to allow time for life to mature. Every seed, in order to sprout, must be softened by humidity and warmth; the first sprouts can only appear slowly. The development of the talents that

God has placed in our souls also requires time. To accelerate the process in an inorganic manner could be deadly; this will exhaust the group, and, as we said, it would create a fictitious reality that, sooner or later, would go by the wayside.

That which is authentic and true is not born overnight. It must be achieved with patience. An educator must possess great “pedagogic wisdom and patience.” An educator must be like a gardener who watches his plants grow in the garden. He does not coax them by force - he would only manage to destroy them - but rather strives to create all of the conditions that would encourage their growth. This is why the educator, with pedagogic tact, must deliver whatever his learner can tolerate at any given moment, adapting to whatever the learner is capable of understanding and assimilating. He does not burn through stages uselessly. He knows how to wait, at times even for months or years. He does not become discouraged when something does not work or does not progress at the desired speed. Each person, each community, each married couple, has its own rhythm, as does the action of grace in each of them. Therefore, patience and that helpful faith to wait go hand in hand. We should also not forget that pedagogic patience is ultimately based on the confidence that it is God who is the author of growth: “If Yahweh does not build a house, in vain do its builders toil. If Yahweh does not guard a city, in vain does its guard keep watch” (Ps 127: 1).

The slow growth of a person, a married couple and the group does not mean that an educator should strive less or take his responsibility calmly, without demanding the best of himself. Growth takes its time in the people or the community in his care, but he should not take his service to and concern for each one lightly. Education is a challenge to the patience and constancy that, together with the power of Mary, produce wonders.

7.2 2. Organic growth occurs from the inside out

Each person and community has its own identity. An educator must serve that concrete life and not “create it” artificially with preconceived notions or schemes.

The educator’s starting point is the base in which the person and the community have their own core, even if this is only found in them in a seminal manner. At this core is found the potential whole, as in a grain of wheat where, since the beginning, the roots, the stalk and the grain are seminally found. This fact presents the educator with the necessity of discerning and uncovering the souls of the person and the community, in order to serve the life contained in them, without imposing schemes that are adverse to their realities. The educator merely encourages and stimulates the seeds that already exist.

Original life manifests itself through the personal interests of each person and couple which might be as discussed previously in our discussion of the pedagogy of Movement of diverse orders. The true educator, therefore, is not a preacher of the objective truth in the abstract. He himself knows that truth, but knows how to present it to his own according to whom they are and are able to assimilate at a given time, according to their interests and personal motivations. He serves a specific life that has its own identity and, therefore, has its own receptivity. The developments that the educator promotes tend to enrich organically, and

do not add elements extrinsically, since the latter deforms and is unfruitful. Only that which is born and is rooted within lasts.

What is not assimilated from within, with a starting point of one's own originality, never becomes "owned." It would always be an alien being. This is why the leader does not "preach" Schoenstatt as a doctrine, in a mechanical way. He is not passing on a "package" or a "brick" that people are not able to digest. A scheme which may have worked for certain people or in certain situations is not always appropriate for others with different sensibilities. In this sense, care must be taken to not introduce the world and life of Schoenstatt as material to be learned, presented by a professor. What is not assimilated from within, with a starting point of one's own originality, never becomes owned. It would always be an alien being. On the other hand, that which is adopted and integrated from one's own originality leads to full identification and enrichment, grasps the person from within, and ignites him or her with an intrinsic dynamism.

7.3 3. Growth proceeds from an organic whole toward an organic whole.

The living being possesses as a seed, since its beginning, that which it will later have in fullness at the end of its development.

An organism is a complex being: it possesses a diversity of organs and functions that, as we have noted, develop slowly from within. Its development is progressive and differentiated, but is always comprised of its totality. In other words, it rejects inhibitions or atrophies that, later on, would result in a deformed or mutilated being, or which would provoke psychological "reactions or revenge" and anxiety of experiencing what had been previously inhibited. A child is already a complete person: he or she possesses intelligence, will, affection, instincts, etc. These may exist in an imperfect or seminal way, but they exist. He or she already has all of the personal dimensions of the human being. A healthy education, therefore, must be whole' it must not neglect the central aspects of the child's personality. For example, you cannot address will or intelligence while neglecting affection or the social dimension. Certainly, as we shall see later, there may be some "organic single-mindedness," but this always exists in the context of the totality. As far as the process of introduction and surrender to Schoenstatt, the educator must take care from the start that the person, couple and group enter into a vital contact with the entire reality.

The living contact with the Family of Schoenstatt awakens and activates the diverse dimensions of the person: his or her individual dimensions, social and communal integration, rooting into the supernatural world, apostolic dimension, etc.

An organism is a complex being: it possesses a diversity of organs and functions that, as we have noted, develop slowly, from within. Its development is progressive and differentiated, but is always comprised of its totality. In other words, it rejects inhibitions or atrophies. This process basically occurs to the degree in which the educator teaches through example and inducts people into a warm Schoenstatt environment or into the organism of ideal, personal and local bonds that are unique to Schoenstatt. This serves as a "cultivation broth" for an organic, whole development. Thus, for example, if from the beginning the three points of living contact of Schoenstatt are not present - knowing Mary, the Shrine

and our Founder - it will be difficult, after three or four years to introduce these central bonds. People will simply become accustomed to not needing to bond with the person of the Founder or to establish a personal bond with the Shrine. Something similar could happen with the apostolic dimension of the Movement. If, from the very beginning, it is not present, people and groups will easily tend to live Schoenstatt merely as a spirituality or a fraternal community, or, using Fr. Kentenich's expression, as a "club of self-formation" as opposed to what it is truly called to be: a Movement of apostolic renewal. To educate in the Schoenstatt way, from an organic whole toward an organic whole, means to establish contact, from the very start, between people and communities, and the three founts of life or vital contacts of the Family: our Mother

To educate in the Schoenstatt way, from an organic whole toward an organic whole, means to establish contact, from the very start, between people and communities, and the three founts of life or vital contacts of the Family. and Queen, the Shrine, and our Father and Founder, in other words, we must introduce them in a living way into the bosom of the Family (in one of the Schoenstatt environments, in the group or in the branch) whose life essentially depends on these three elements. We do not wish to say by this that these bonds must exist in all of their fullness from the very start (which would certainly be inorganic and would often spark rejection), but rather that it should happen in a functional way according to the person's existing receptivity. The educational process will lead, bit by bit, through osmosis, to the full development of the organism of bonding. The important thing is that, from the start, the hook is set for future development, and that we do not need to later begin from the starting point. To educate in the Schoenstatt way, from an organic whole toward an organic whole, means to establish contact, from the very start, between people and communities, and the three founts of life or vital contacts of the Family.

7.4 4. Organic growth is always simultaneous, but is not uniform.

The healthy development of a community requires that a certain aspect be internalized until it is fully assimilated and turns into a true attitude. An educator must know how to guide these life processes.

In an organism, which is a whole composed of multiple parts with diverse functions, growth occurs in a progressive way, concentrating for a time on one organ, and then on another. Thus, for example, at first the roots of a plant develop, growth concentrates on the stalk later, and finally in the leaves, flowers and the fruits. Something analogous occurs in the person and in the community. The organic growth in them is simultaneous, but does not happen in the same measure: growth highlights occur in the discovery of values and the conquest of different attitudes. This is why an educator must keep in mind that everything has its time, that it is not necessary for everything to be understood at once, that it is impossible to assimilate too many things at the same time. To wish for everything to develop simultaneously with equal intensity leads to saturation, to exhaustion of people and groups, and, not in the least, to a great superficiality: roots are not cast. This is reflected in the popular adage: "Whoever encompasses much, grasps little."

For this, it is necessary to cultivate, step by step, with organic single-mindedness, aspects

of the global ideal. The circumstances of the times, the voices of the soul and of the self, indicate the open doors through which one must pass in the mastery of the ideal.

When one picks at the buffet, passing from one topic to another, one does not conform to one's life, nor to develop deep attitudes. One is victim to intellectualism, along with superficiality. Topics are skimmed over; we speak about and reflect upon a large quantity of topics, but without undergoing a serious encounter with life, and without these truths becoming values and embodied realities. The healthy development of a person, married couple and group require going deep until the values are assimilated to the point of becoming attitudes and lifestyles. For this, it is necessary to cultivate, step by step, with organic single mindedness, aspects of the global ideal. The circumstances of the times, the voices of the soul and of the self, indicate the open doors through which one must pass in the master of the ideal. An educator must be constantly attentive to the changes of pedagogic emphasis that might occur, be motivated by the voices of the soul or by the voices of the times or of circumstance. In the same way, the normal process of self-formation implies the necessity of concentrating on the mastery of an attitude, by means of self-examination, or in the life of the group by means of what we have called the group commitment. In this case, centered in this stream, we proceed to value that attitude to the greatest degree, encouraging it from diverse points of view so that it unfurls in complete attraction and motivates people to strive to master it. The sharing of life, prayer and concrete commitments will deepen that master}'': a habit or attitude comes about through the repetition of value-packed actions. This organic single- mindedness or emphasis solidifies, for example, in the mastery of an attitude of prayer, of respect for one's brothers, of simplicity of life, of a sacrificial spirit or of a concrete apostolic commitment, etc. Thus, progressively, as we grow in one aspect, the whole achieves greater maturity and fullness. The educator must help to maintain this course for which he has been chosen by the light of practical faith in Divine Providence, mindful of his motivation and of his grounding in daily life. Normally, especially at the beginning, there will be people who wish to go off topic at every meeting. This is when the leader must be careful, in these cases, to stay the course without falling into rigidity, but rather remaining flexible in order to avoid scorning valuable initiatives and concerns, knowing how to integrate them adequately into the program.

There are now fixed rules to determine the duration of this organic single-mindedness, or shifts of emphases, but one can affirm that it is best to go deep rather than shift courses rapidly. We must consider that, in this sense, besides a person's latent instability - especially when dealing with youth - and changes in mood, the rhythm of modern life weighs heavily in continuous changes, it is for this reason that we speak of the "movie character man," whose main characteristic is discontinuity. Inner growth is not cultivated, roots are not cast and, therefore, our culture lacks soul. Schoenstatt wishes to teach harmonic beings, who have and cultivate deep attitudes and who are capable of maintaining life and work styles in the midst of a changing world and where values are inverted. This educational work, which concentrates on the cultivation of this single-mindedness, or specific areas of growth, as the name implies, is organic. While something specific is mastered and internalized, other aspects, which have remained in the background of the person, couple or group grow simultaneously. Something similar happens with glasses that are joined together: as one fills, the water level rises simultaneously in the other. However, this integration, being

basically functional, in some cases must be consciously promoted. It may happen that a person or group has become so captivated by a partial value that they have managed to turn it into an absolute, forgetting or leaving other equally - or even more important - aspects by the wayside. Fr. Kentenich, thus, states the principle: 'focusing without internalizing leads to paralysis.' One group, for example, might focus so much and so long on their inner life that they neglect their apostolic projection. This, precisely, would be an inorganic single-mindedness. On the other hand, if they internalize and seek, at the same time, to promote community in the world around us, then that internalization of community to the point of apostolate will resound, anchoring the inner Life of the group and giving it more momentum and fruitfulness. Were this not to occur, the group's focus would turn, unfruitfully upon itself.

The leadership of the Holy Spirit and the pedagogic wisdom of the educator must pair up so that the educational process may unify this growth that is simultaneous and, at the same time, differentiated.

"It is God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,¹ that has shone into our hearts to enlighten them with the knowledge of God's glory, the glory on the face of Christ. But we hold this treasure in pots of earthenware, so that the immensity of the power is God's and not our own (2 Cor 4:6-7)".

7.5 5. Organic growth is rhythmic.

Organic growth has certain rhythms of growth. In order to adequately lead a group, it is necessary to keep another aspect of the growth of an organism in mind.

The growth of an organism has rhythms, in nature we can observe this, for example, in the change from winter to spring; within a few days, trees and the fields change. This is similar to what happens in a child as he passes into adolescence; a discontinuity occurs: the slow and steady development characteristic of his or her early phases of development is broken, and he or she passes into another stage of organic growth.

In the same Way, it is important that the leader does not become alarmed that, in the group, nothing happens for a period of time. After autumn (the season in which fruit is borne), comes the winter. Months later, spring will follow. We must be able to distinguish between stopping or going backward and the slow advance toward mastery of ideals in daily life. It is necessary to discern the "rhythms" of the development of people and communities. Just as rhythms or normal stages are found in nature, so too can normal stages be distinguished in the development of people: childhood, adolescence, maturity and old age. Each step encompasses a new situation and a certain crisis of growth. An educator must be aware of these stages which are present in a new, vital situation and require a new response. These stages or moments of growth are also found in couples and in groups, and require our attention.

These "states" are not unsuitable. They are part of God's plan and, therefore, this new growth or stage must become part of the core personality and soul of the group. They are positive crises of growth. They are stages of transition that result in a new vital level

or state. During the moment of change, a new vision or great passion are present, and, in many cases, an initial confusion. A time of re-positioning, a new stage of settling and assimilation, will follow.

7.6 6. Organic growth accounts for leaps or surprising changes

Organic growth also occurs in leaps.

Both in the life of people as well as in that of communities, there tend to be moments and periods of acceleration, interrupting the slow pace of development, which go far beyond the rhythmic processes of growth. These are true leaps in life which lead to other situations that are qualitatively different from those discussed previously. These leaps tend to occur in the lives of people, of married couples and of groups. These leaps are a fundamental response to two possible motives: the action in the group or of the person of the grace of God bind of human freedom. God may burst into an unexpected moment with His grace, either acting within the hearts of people through the action of the Holy Spirit, or encouraging development through circumstances or events. A certain event may drastically change the rhythm of growth and focus that was underway up to a certain moment. This might, under certain circumstances, demolish ways of thinking. It might hurry us and demand more of us than what is considered normal. For example, think of the conversion of St. Paul. These leaps are also influenced by human freedom. Man may open himself up or close himself down to God's gift; he may accept it or reject it. This is how small steps in generosity and surrender may at times, move God to a great flood of graces. God is unsurpassed in generosity.

Thus, slow organic development is interrupted by intense, unexpected bursts of God's grace. They are signals meant to lead us to a higher plain of development or perfection of the person and/or community in which we face higher goals. In these cases, pedagogic wisdom must be used in the art of interpreting God's guidance, and to adequately respond to the challenges presented by Divine Providence.

A group leader must be sensitive to detect those moments or times of grace, and must help them to express themselves in the response and life of the group. In order to be sensitive to the "workings of the Lord," the leader must constantly reflect upon the group, seeking to discover the paths by which the Lord and the Blessed Mother wish to lead him, him being merely a servant of life. The leaps that we have described are organic to the degree in which they are assumed and integrated into the personal or communal life. In the history of the Schoenstatt Family, we can clearly identify those leaps that decisively influenced its development. These are the highlights of the history of our Family: October 18, 1914; January 20, 1942; and May 31, 1949. These are dates that mark an accelerated life process and times of grace

8 Text for Fifth Encounter: Five Dysfunctions of a Team

8.1 The Model

AS DIFFICULT as it is to build a cohesive team, it is not complicated. In fact, keeping it simple is critical, whether you run the executive staff at a multinational company, a small department within a larger organization, or even if you are merely a member of a team that needs improvement. In that spirit, this section is designed to provide a clear, concise, and practical guide to using the Five Dysfunctions Model to improve your team. Good luck.

1. An Overview of the Model

In the course of my experience working with CEOs and their teams, two critical truths have become clear to me. First, genuine teamwork in most organizations remains as elusive as it has ever been. Second, organizations fail to achieve teamwork because they unknowingly fall prey to five natural but dangerous pitfalls, which I call the five dysfunctions of a team.

These dysfunctions can be mistakenly interpreted as five distinct issues that can be addressed in isolation of the others. But in reality they form an interrelated model, making susceptibility to even one of them potentially lethal for the success of a team. A cursory overview of each dysfunction, and the model they comprise, should make this clearer.



1. The first dysfunction is an absence of trust among team members. Essentially, this stems from their unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group. Team members who are not genuinely open with one another about their mistakes and weaknesses make it impossible to build a foundation for trust.
2. This failure to build trust is damaging because it sets the tone for the second dysfunction: fear of conflict. Teams that lack trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. Instead, they resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments.
3. A lack of healthy conflict is a problem because it ensures the third dysfunction of a team: lack of commitment. Without having aired their opinions in the course of passionate and open debate, team members rarely, if ever, buy in and commit to decisions, though they may feign agreement during meetings.
4. Because of this lack of real commitment and buy-in, team members develop an avoidance of accountability, the fourth dysfunction. Without committing to a clear plan of action, even the most focused and driven people often hesitate to call their peers on actions and behaviors that seem counterproductive to the good of the team.
5. Failure to hold one another accountable creates an environment where the fifth dysfunction can thrive. Inattention to results occurs when team members put their individual needs (such as ego, career development, or recognition) or even the needs of their divisions above the collective goals of the team.

And so, like a chain with just one link broken, teamwork deteriorates if even a single dysfunction is allowed to flourish.

Another way to understand this model is to take the opposite approach—a positive one—and imagine how members of truly cohesive teams behave:

1. They trust one another.
2. They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
3. They commit to decisions and plans of action.
4. They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
5. They focus on the achievement of collective results.

If this sounds simple, it's because it is simple, at least in theory. In practice, however, it is extremely difficult because it requires levels of discipline and persistence that few teams can muster.

Before diving into each of the dysfunctions and exploring ways to overcome them, it might be helpful to assess your team and identify where the opportunities for improvement lie in your organization.

UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS

8.2 Dysfunction I : Absence Of Trust

Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. Without it, teamwork is all but impossible.

Unfortunately, the word trust is used—and misused—so often that it has lost some of its impact and begins to sound like motherhood and apple pie. That is why it is important to be very specific about what is meant by trust.

In the context of building a team, trust is the confidence among team members that their peers' intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. In essence, teammates must get comfortable being vulnerable with one another.

This description stands in contrast to a more standard definition of trust, one that centers around the ability to predict a person's behavior based on past experience. For instance, one might "trust" that a given teammate will produce high-quality work because he has always done so in the past.

As desirable as this may be, it is not enough to represent the kind of trust that is characteristic of a great team. It requires team members to make themselves vulnerable to one another, and be confident that their respective vulnerabilities will not be used against them. The vulnerabilities I'm referring to include weaknesses, skill deficiencies, interpersonal shortcomings, mistakes, and requests for help.

As "soft" as all of this might sound, it is only when team members are truly comfortable being exposed to one another that they begin to act without concern for protecting themselves. As a result, they can focus their energy and attention completely on the job at hand, rather than on being strategically disingenuous or political with one another.

Achieving vulnerability-based trust is difficult because in the course of career advancement and education, most successful people learn to be competitive with their peers, and protective of their reputations. It is a challenge for them to turn those instincts off for the good of a team, but that is exactly what is required.

The costs of failing to do this are great. Teams that lack trust waste inordinate amounts of time and energy managing their behaviors and interactions within the group. They tend to dread team meetings, and are reluctant to take risks in asking for or offering assistance to others. As a result, morale on distrusting teams is usually quite low, and unwanted turnover is high.

Members of teams with an absence of trust ...

- Conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another
- Hesitate to ask for help or provide constructive feedback
- Hesitate to offer help outside their own areas of responsibility
- Jump to conclusions about the intentions and aptitudes of others without attempting to clarify them

- Fail to recognize and tap into one another's skills and experiences
- Waste time and energy managing their behaviors for effect
- Hold grudges
- Dread meetings and find reasons to avoid spending time together

Members of trusting teams ...

- Admit weaknesses and mistakes
- Ask for help
- Accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility
- Give one another the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a negative conclusion
- Take risks in offering feedback and assistance
- Appreciate and tap into one another's skills and experiences
- Focus time and energy on important issues, not politics
- Offer and accept apologies without hesitation
- Look forward to meetings and other opportunities to work as a group

8.2.1 Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunction I

How does a team go about building trust? Unfortunately, vulnerability-based trust cannot be achieved overnight. It requires shared experiences over time, multiple instances of follow-through and credibility, and an in-depth understanding of the unique attributes of team members. However, by taking a focused approach, a team can dramatically accelerate the

process and achieve trust in relatively short order. Here are a few tools that can bring this about.

Personal Histories Exercise In less than an hour, a team can take the first steps toward developing trust. This low-risk exercise requires nothing more than going around the table during a meeting and having team members answer a short list of questions about themselves. Questions need not be overly sensitive in nature and might include the following: number of siblings, hometown, unique challenges of childhood, favorite hobbies, first job, and worst job. Simply by describing these relatively innocuous attributes or experiences, team members begin to relate to one another on a more personal basis, and see one another as human beings with life stories and interesting backgrounds. This encourages greater empathy and understanding, and discourages unfair and inaccurate behavioral attributions. It is amazing how little some team members know about one another, and how just a small amount of information begins to break down barriers. (Minimum time required: 30 minutes.)

Team Effectiveness Exercise This exercise is more rigorous and relevant than the previous one, but may involve more risk. It requires team members to identify the single most important contribution that each of their peers makes to the team, as well as the one area that they must either improve upon or eliminate for the good of the team. All members then report their responses, focusing on one person at a time, usually beginning with the team leader.

While this exercise may seem somewhat intrusive and dangerous at first glance, it is remarkable how manageable it can be and how much useful information, both constructive and positive, can be extracted in about an hour. And though the Team Effectiveness Exercise certainly requires some degree of trust in order to be useful, even a relatively dysfunctional team can often make it work with surprisingly little tension. (Minimum time required: 60 minutes.)

Personality and Behavioral Preference Profiles Some of the most effective and lasting tools for building trust on a team are profiles of team members' behavioral preferences and personality styles. These help break down barriers by allowing people to better understand and empathize with one another.

The best profiling tool, in my opinion, is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). However, a number of others are popular among different audiences. The purpose of most of these tools is to provide practical and scientifically valid behavioral descriptions of various team members according to the diverse ways that they think, speak, and act. Some of the best characteristics of tools like the MBTI are their nonjudgmental nature (no type is better than another, although they differ substantially), their basis in research (they are not founded upon astrology or new age science), and the extent to which participants take an active role in identifying their own types (they don't simply receive a computer printout or test score that alone dictates their type). Many of these tools do require the participation of a licensed consultant, which is important to avoid the misuse of their powerful implications and applications. (Minimum time required: 4 hours.)

360-Degree Feedback These tools have become popular over the past twenty years and can produce powerful results for a team. They are riskier than any of the tools or exercises described so far because they call for peers to make specific judgments and provide one another with constructive criticism. The key to making a 360-degree program work, in my opinion, is divorcing it entirely from compensation and formal performance evaluation. Rather, it should be used as a developmental tool, one that allows employees to identify strengths and weaknesses without any repercussions. By being even slightly connected to formal performance evaluation or compensation, 360-degree programs can take on dangerous political undertones.

Experiential Team Exercises Ropes courses and other experiential team activities seem to have lost some of their luster over the course of the past ten years, and deservedly so. Still, many teams do them with the hope of building trust. And while there are certainly some benefits derived from rigorous and creative outdoor activities involving collective support and cooperation, those benefits do not always translate directly to the working world. That being said, experiential team exercises can be valuable tools for enhancing teamwork as

long as they are layered upon more fundamental and relevant processes.

While each of these tools and exercises can have a significant short-term impact on a team's ability to build trust, they must be accompanied by regular follow-up in the course of daily work. Individual developmental areas must be revisited to ensure that progress does not lose momentum. Even on a strong team—and perhaps especially so—atrophy can lead to the erosion of trust.

8.2.2 The Role of the Leader

The most important action that a leader must take to encourage the building of trust on a team is to demonstrate vulnerability first. This requires that a leader risk losing face in front of the team, so that subordinates will take the same risk themselves. What is more, team leaders must create an environment that does not punish vulnerability. Even well-intentioned teams can subtly discourage trust by chastising one another for admissions of weakness or failure. Finally, displays of vulnerability on the part of a team leader must be genuine; they cannot be staged. One of the best ways to lose the trust of a team is to feign vulnerability in order to manipulate the emotions of others.

Connection to Dysfunction 2

How does all of this relate to the next dysfunction, the fear of conflict? By building trust, a team makes conflict possible because team members do not hesitate to engage in passionate and sometimes emotional debate, knowing that they will not be punished for saying something that might otherwise be interpreted as destructive or critical.

8.3 Dysfunction 2: Fear Of Conflict

All great relationships, the ones that last over time, require productive conflict in order to grow. This is true in marriage, parenthood, friendship, and certainly business.

Unfortunately, conflict is considered taboo in many situations, especially at work. And the higher you go up the management chain, the more you find people spending inordinate amounts of time and energy trying to avoid the kind of passionate debates that are essential to any great team.

It is important to distinguish productive ideological conflict from destructive fighting and interpersonal politics. Ideological conflict is limited to concepts and ideas, and avoids personality-focused, mean-spirited attacks. However, it can have many of the same external qualities of interpersonal conflict—passion, emotion, and frustration—so much so that an outside observer might easily mistake it for unproductive discord.

But teams that engage in productive conflict know that the only purpose is to produce the best possible solution in the shortest period of time. They discuss and resolve issues more quickly and completely than others, and they emerge from heated debates with no residual feelings or collateral damage, but with an eagerness and readiness to take on the next important issue.

Ironically, teams that avoid ideological conflict often do so in order to avoid hurting team members' feelings, and then end up encouraging dangerous tension. When team members do not openly debate and disagree about important ideas, they often turn to back-channel personal attacks, which are far nastier and more harmful than any heated argument over issues.

It is also ironic that so many people avoid conflict in the name of efficiency, because healthy conflict is actually a time saver. Contrary to the notion that teams waste time and energy arguing, those that avoid conflict actually doom themselves to revisiting issues again and again without resolution. They often ask team members to take their issues "off-line," which seems to be a euphemism for avoiding dealing with an important topic, only to have it raised again at the next meeting.

8.3.1 Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunction 2

How does a team go about developing the ability and willingness to engage in healthy conflict? The first step is acknowledging that conflict is productive, and that many teams have a tendency to avoid it. As long as some team

Teams that fear conflict ...

- Have boring meetings
- Create environments where back-channel politics and personal attacks thrive
- Ignore controversial topics that are critical to team success
- Fail to tap into all the opinions and perspectives of team members
- Waste time and energy with posturing and interpersonal risk management

Teams that engage in conflict ...

- Have lively, interesting meetings
- Extract and exploit the ideas of all team members
- Solve real problems quickly
- Minimize politics
- Put critical topics on the table for discussion

members believe that conflict is unnecessary, there is little chance that it will occur. But beyond mere recognition, there are a few simple methods for making conflict more common and productive.

Mining Members of teams that tend to avoid conflict must occasionally assume the role of a "miner of conflict"—someone who extracts buried disagreements within the team and sheds the light of day on them. They must have the courage and confidence to call out sensitive issues and force team members to work through them. This requires a degree of objectivity during meetings and a commitment to staying with the conflict until it is

resolved. Some teams may want to assign a member of the team to take on this responsibility during a given meeting or discussion.

Real-Time Permission In the process of mining for conflict, team members need to coach one another not to retreat from healthy debate. One simple but effective way to do this is to recognize when the people engaged in conflict are becoming uncomfortable with the level of discord, and then interrupt to remind them that what they are doing is necessary. As simple and paternal as this may sound, it is a remarkably effective tool for draining tension from a productive but difficult interchange, giving the participants the confidence to continue. And once the discussion or meeting has ended, it is helpful to remind participants that the conflict they just engaged in is good for the team and not something to avoid in the future.

Other Tools As mentioned earlier in this section, there are a variety of personality style and behavioral preference tools that allow team members to better understand one another. Because most of these include descriptions of how different types deal with conflict, they can be useful for helping people anticipate their approach or resistance to it. Another tool that specifically relates to conflict is the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, commonly referred to as the TKI. It allows team members to understand natural inclinations around conflict so they can make more strategic choices about which approaches are most appropriate in different situations.

The Role of the Leader

One of the most difficult challenges that a leader faces in promoting healthy conflict is the desire to protect members from harm. This leads to premature interruption of disagreements, and prevents team members from developing coping skills for dealing with conflict themselves. This is not unlike parents who overprotect their children from quarrels or altercations with siblings. In many cases, it serves only to strain the relationships by depriving the participants of an opportunity to develop conflict management skills. It also leaves them hungry for resolution that never occurs.

Therefore, it is key that leaders demonstrate restraint when their people engage in conflict, and allow resolution to occur naturally, as messy as it can sometimes be. This can be a challenge because many leaders feel that they are somehow failing in their jobs by losing control of their teams during conflict.

Finally, as trite as it may sound, a leader's ability to personally model appropriate conflict behavior is essential. By avoiding conflict when it is necessary and productive—something many executives do—a team leader will encourage this dysfunction to thrive.

Connection to Dysfunction 3

How does all of this relate to the next dysfunction, the lack of commitment? By engaging in productive conflict and tapping into team members' perspectives and opinions, a team can confidently commit and buy in to a decision knowing that they have benefited from everyone's ideas.

8.4 Dysfunction 3: Lack Of Commitment

In the context of a team, commitment is a function of two things: clarity and buy-in. Great teams make clear and timely decisions and move forward with complete buy-in from every member of the team, even those who voted against the decision. They leave meetings confident that no one on the team is quietly harboring doubts about whether to support the actions agreed on.

The two greatest causes of the lack of commitment are the desire for consensus and the need for certainty:

- **Consensus.** Great teams understand the danger of seeking consensus, and find ways to achieve buy-in even when complete agreement is impossible. They understand that reasonable human beings do not need to get their way in order to support a decision, but only need to know that their opinions have been heard and considered. Great teams ensure that everyone's ideas are genuinely considered, which then creates a willingness to rally around whatever decision is ultimately made by the group. And when that is not possible due to an impasse, the leader of the team is allowed to make the call.
- **Certainty.** Great teams also pride themselves on being able to unite behind decisions and commit to clear courses of action even when there is little assurance about whether the decision is correct. That's because they understand the old military axiom that a decision is better than no decision. They also realize that it is better to make a decision boldly and be wrong—and then change direction with equal boldness—than it is to waffle.

Contrast this with the behavior of dysfunctional teams that try to hedge their bets and delay important decisions until they have enough data to feel certain that they are making the right decision. As prudent as this might seem, it is dangerous because of the paralysis and lack of confidence it breeds within a team.

It is important to remember that conflict underlies the willingness to commit without perfect information. In many cases, teams have all the information they need, but it resides within the hearts and minds of the team itself and must be extracted through unfiltered debate. Only when everyone has put their opinions and perspectives on the table can the team confidently commit to a decision knowing that it has tapped into the collective wisdom of the entire group.

Regardless of whether it is caused by the need for consensus or certainty, it is important to understand that one of the greatest consequences for an executive team that does not commit to clear decisions is unresolvable discord deeper in the organization. More than any of the dysfunctions, this one creates dangerous ripple effects for subordinates. When an executive team fails to achieve buy-in from all team members, even if the disparities that exist seem relatively small, employees who report to those executives will inevitably clash when they try to interpret marching orders that are not clearly aligned with those of colleagues in other departments. Like a vortex, small gaps between executives high up in an organization become major discrepancies by the time they reach employees below.

A team that fails to commit ...

- Creates ambiguity among the team about direction and priorities
- Watches windows of opportunity close due to excessive analysis and unnecessary delay
- Breeds lack of confidence and fear of failure
- Revisits discussions and decisions again and again
- Encourages second-guessing among team members

A team that commits ...

- Creates clarity around direction and priorities
- Aligns the entire team around common objectives
- Develops an ability to learn from mistakes
- Takes advantage of opportunities before competitors do
- Moves forward without hesitation
- Changes direction without hesitation or guilt

8.4.1 Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunction 3

How does a team go about ensuring commitment? By taking specific steps to maximize clarity and achieve buy-in, and resisting the lure of consensus or certainty. Here are a few simple but effective tools and principles.

Cascading Messaging One of the most valuable disciplines that any team can adopt takes just a few minutes and is absolutely free. At the end of a staff meeting or off-site, a team should explicitly review the key decisions made during the meeting, and agree on what needs to be communicated to employees or other constituencies about those decisions. What often happens during this exercise is that members of the team learn that they are not all on the same page about what has been agreed upon and that they need to clarify specific outcomes before putting them into action. Moreover, they become clear on which of the decisions should remain confidential, and which must be communicated quickly and comprehensively. Finally, by leaving meetings clearly aligned with one another, leaders send a powerful and welcomed message to employees who have grown accustomed to receiving inconsistent and even contradictory statements from managers who attended the same meeting. (Minimum time required: 10 minutes.)

Deadlines As simple as it seems, one of the best tools for ensuring commitment is the use of clear deadlines for when decisions will be made, and honoring those dates with discipline and rigidity. The worst enemy of a team that is susceptible to this dysfunction is ambiguity, and timing is one of the most critical factors that must be made clear. What is more, committing to deadlines for intermediate decisions and milestones is just as important as

final deadlines, because it ensures that misalignment among team members is identified and addressed before the costs are too great.

Contingency and Worst-Case Scenario Analysis A team that struggles with commitment can begin overcoming this tendency by briefly discussing contingency plans up front or, better yet, clarifying the worst-case scenario for a decision they are struggling to make. This usually allows them to reduce their fears by helping them realize that the costs of an incorrect decision are survivable, and far less damaging than they had imagined.

Low-Risk Exposure Therapy Another relevant exercise for a commitment-phobic team is the demonstration of decisiveness in relatively low-risk situations. When teams force themselves to make decisions after substantial discussion but little analysis or research, they usually come to realize that the quality of the decision they made was better than they had expected. What is more, they learn that the decision would not have been much different had the team engaged in lengthy, time-consuming study. This is not to say that research and analysis are not necessary or important, but rather that teams with this dysfunction tend to overvalue them.

8.4.2 The Role of the Leader

More than any other member of the team, the leader must be comfortable with the prospect of making a decision that ultimately turns out to be wrong. And the leader must be constantly

pushing the group for closure around issues, as well as adherence to schedules that the team has set. What the leader cannot do is place too high a premium on certainty or consensus.

Connection to Dysfunction 4

How does all of this relate to the next dysfunction, the avoidance of accountability? In order for teammates to call each other on their behaviors and actions, they must have a clear sense of what is expected. Even the most ardent believers in accountability usually balk at having to hold someone accountable for something that was never bought in to or made clear in the first place.

8.5 Dysfunction 4: Avoidance Of Accountability

Accountability is a buzzword that has lost much of its meaning as it has become as overused as terms like empowerment and quality. In the context of teamwork, however, it refers specifically to the willingness of team members to call their peers on performance or behaviors that might hurt the team.

The essence of this dysfunction is the unwillingness of team members to tolerate the interpersonal discomfort that accompanies calling a peer on his or her behavior and the more general tendency to avoid difficult conversations. Members of great teams overcome these natural inclinations, opting instead to “enter the danger” with one another.

Of course, this is easier said than done, even among cohesive teams with strong personal relationships. In fact, team members who are particularly close to one another sometimes hesitate to hold one another accountable precisely because they fear jeopardizing a valuable personal relationship. Ironically, this only causes the relationship to deteriorate as team members begin to resent one another for not living up to expectations and for allowing the standards of the group to erode. Members of great teams improve their relationships by holding one another accountable, thus demonstrating that they respect each other and have high expectations for one another's performance.

As politically incorrect as it sounds, the most effective and efficient means of maintaining high standards of performance on a team is peer pressure. One of the benefits is the reduction of the need for excessive bureaucracy around performance management and corrective action. More than any policy or system, there is nothing like the fear of letting down respected teammates that motivates people to improve their performance.

8.5.1 Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunction 4

How does a team go about ensuring accountability? The key to overcoming this dysfunction is adhering to a few classic management tools that are as effective as they are simple.

A team that avoids accountability ...

- Creates resentment among team members who have different standards of performance
- Encourages mediocrity
- Misses deadlines and key deliverables
- Places an undue burden on the team leader as the sole source of discipline

A team that holds one another accountable ...

- Ensures that poor performers feel pressure to improve
- Identifies potential problems quickly by questioning one another's approaches without hesitation
- Establishes respect among team members who are held to the same high standards
- Avoids excessive bureaucracy around performance management and corrective action

Publication of Goals and Standards A good way to make it easier for team members to hold one another accountable is to clarify publicly exactly what the team needs to achieve, who needs to deliver what, and how everyone must behave in order to succeed. The enemy of accountability is ambiguity, and even when a team has initially committed to a plan or a set of behavioral standards, it is important to keep those agreements in the open so that no one can easily ignore them.

Simple and Regular Progress Reviews A little structure goes a long way toward helping people take action that they might not otherwise be inclined to do. This is especially true

when it comes to giving people feedback on their behavior or performance. Team members should regularly communicate with one another, either verbally or in written form, about how they feel their teammates are doing against stated objectives and standards. Relying on them to do so on their own, with no clear expectations or structure, is inviting the potential for the avoidance of accountability.

Team Rewards By shifting rewards away from individual performance to team achievement, the team can create a culture of accountability. This occurs because a team is unlikely to stand by quietly and fail because a peer is not pulling his or her weight.

8.5.2 The Role of the Leader

One of the most difficult challenges for a leader who wants to instill accountability on a team is to encourage and allow the team to serve as the first and primary accountability mechanism. Sometimes strong leaders naturally create an accountability vacuum within the team, leaving themselves as the only source of discipline. This creates an environment where team members assume that the leader is holding others accountable, and so they hold back even when they see something that isn't right.

Once a leader has created a culture of accountability on a team, however, he or she must be willing to serve as the ultimate arbiter of discipline when the team itself fails. This should be a rare occurrence. Nevertheless, it must be clear to all team members that accountability has not been relegated to a consensus approach, but merely to a shared team responsibility, and that the leader of the team will not hesitate to step in when it is necessary.

Connection to Dysfunction 5

How does all of this relate to the next dysfunction, the inattention to results? If teammates are not being held accountable for their contributions, they will be more likely to turn their attention to their own needs, and to the advancement of themselves or their departments. An absence of accountability is an invitation to team members to shift their attention to areas other than collective results.

8.6 Dysfunction 5: Inattention To Results

The ultimate dysfunction of a team is the tendency of members to care about something other than the collective goals of the group. An unrelenting focus on specific objectives and clearly defined outcomes is a requirement for any team that judges itself on performance.

It should be noted here that results are not limited to financial measures like profit, revenue, or shareholder returns. Though it is true that many organizations in a capitalist economic environment ultimately measure their success in these terms, this dysfunction refers to a far broader definition of results, one that is related to outcome-based performance.

Every good organization specifies what it plans to achieve in a given period, and these goals, more than the financial metrics that they drive, make up the majority of near-term, controllable results. So, while profit may be the ultimate measure of results for a corporation, the goals and objectives that executives set for themselves along the way constitute a more

representative example of the results it strives for as a team. Ultimately, these goals drive profit.

But what would a team be focused on other than results ? Team status and individual status are the prime candidates :

- Team status. For members of some teams, merely being part of the group is enough to keep them satisfied. For them, the achievement of specific results might be desirable, but not necessarily worthy of great sacrifice or inconvenience. As ridiculous and dangerous as this might seem, plenty of teams fall prey to the lure of status. These often include altruistic nonprofit organizations that come to believe that the nobility of their mission is enough to justify their satisfaction. Political groups, academic departments, and prestigious companies are also susceptible to this dysfunction, as they often see success in merely being associated with their special organizations.
- Individual status. This refers to the familiar tendency of people to focus on enhancing their own positions or career prospects at the expense of their team. Though all human beings have an innate tendency toward self-preservation, a functional team must make the collective results of the group more important to each individual than individual members' goals.

As obvious as this dysfunction might seem at first glance, and as clear as it is that it must be avoided, it is important to note that many teams are simply not results focused. They do not live and breathe in order to achieve meaningful objectives, but rather merely to exist or survive. Unfortunately for these groups, no amount of trust, conflict, commitment, or accountability can compensate for a lack of desire to win.

8.6.1 Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunction 5

How does a team go about ensuring that its attention is focused on results? By making results clear, and rewarding only those behaviors and actions that contribute to those results.

A team that is not focused on results ...

- Stagnates/fails to grow
- Rarely defeats competitors
- Loses achievement-oriented employees
- Encourages team members to focus on their own careers and individual goals
- Is easily distracted

A team that focuses on collective results ...

- Retains achievement-oriented employees
- Minimizes individualistic behavior

- Enjoys success and suffers failure acutely
- Benefits from individuals who subjugate their own goals/interests for the good of the team
- Avoids distractions

Public Declaration of Results In the mind of a football or basketball coach, one of the worst things a team member can do is publicly guarantee that his or her team will win an upcoming game. In the case of an athletic team, this is a problem because it can unnecessarily provoke an opponent. For most teams, however, it can be helpful to make public proclamations about intended success.

Teams that are willing to commit publicly to specific results are more likely to work with a passionate, even desperate desire to achieve those results. Teams that say, “We’ll do our best,” are subtly, if not purposefully, preparing themselves for failure.

Results-Based Rewards An effective way to ensure that team members focus their attention on results is to tie their rewards, especially compensation, to the achievement of specific outcomes. Relying on this alone can be problematic because it assumes that financial motivation is the sole driver of behavior. Still, letting someone take home a bonus merely for “trying hard,” even in the absence of results, sends a message that achieving the outcome may not be terribly important after all.

8.6.2 The Role of the Leader

Perhaps more than with any of the other dysfunctions, the leader must set the tone for a focus on results. If team members sense that the leader values anything other than results, they will take that as permission to do the same for themselves. Team leaders must be selfless and objective, and reserve rewards and recognition for those who make real contributions to the achievement of group goals.

8.7 Summary

As much information as is contained here, the reality remains that teamwork ultimately comes down to practicing a small set of principles over a long period of time. Success is not a matter of mastering subtle, sophisticated theory, but rather of embracing common sense with uncommon levels of discipline and persistence.

Ironically, teams succeed because they are exceedingly human. By acknowledging the imperfections of their humanity, members of functional teams overcome the natural tendencies that make trust, conflict, commitment, accountability, and a focus on results so elusive.