

Tu Es Sacerdos



FR DENIS FOLEY

was a down to earth
person
able to meet people
at their level,
a real paragon.

Chris Nickle

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Fr. Denis Foley – loyal to the core!

Sr. M. Elizabeth Foley

(Schoenstatt Sister of Mary and a younger sibling of Fr. Denis)

Fr. Denis was a loyal son and brother in his own family, a loyal priest of the Sydney Archdiocese and a loyal son of Fr. Kentenich, Schoenstatt's father and founder. Being the eldest of six siblings and having left home for the seminary at only 16 years of age, when the youngest sibling was not even born, Denis took his place as the eldest in the family very seriously. After his ordination at the age of 23, he loyally came home every Monday night after his "day-off" spent bushwalking or later canoeing. This provided a centre or meeting point for the whole family – it was important for all of us to be home on Monday nights if we could be there, because Denis would be home. Being considerably older than the younger siblings, he was in a sense a second father to us. He certainly played an important part in my vocation – I don't know how many prayers and sacrifices he made but one evening when I asked him why he travelled half an hour every week to pray in

the Schoenstatt Shrine when he lived beside a Church, his answer was – after some insistence from me: “I believe it is a place of grace”. This simple sentence led to my own prayerful reflection and definitely influenced my vocation as a Schoenstatt Sister of Mary. He loyally supported me through the many years we could share in working together for Schoenstatt’s mission in Australia. I can only give thanks for the love and loyalty of my priest brother. Denis was simply there for his family and was loved and treasured by all of us.

Denis was also always conscious of his vocation to the diocesan priesthood and served loyally wherever he was sent. He would attend all diocesan priests’ meetings and retreats, even while it was the Schoenstatt spirituality which supported his spiritual life. The Covenant of Love was a source of strength for him and, in loyalty to Schoenstatt’s mission, he introduced Schoenstatt to parishioners wherever he was assigned.

When he joined the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests, this only made him

more aware of his calling to loyally serve the Archdiocese. However, it also gave him a “new task” to which he gave himself wholeheartedly. Through his selfless service to the Schoenstatt Movement, primarily in the Sydney area, he became a loyal son of Schoenstatt’s founder. He was always available for the men and the boys, for training days, group meetings and camps. Together with other Schoenstatt priests, he offered Holy Mass in the Shrine on Covenant days for many years; he chaired the Schoenstatt Diocesan Council and the Central Inspirational Team until his health did not allow this anymore; he was a spiritual director and confessor for several Schoenstatt members and tried his best to interest others in the richness of Schoenstatt. To some who knew him well, he was often referred to as Australia’s Joseph Engling. It was a real joy for me to be able to accompany him and Australian pilgrims to Rome and Schoenstatt in the Holy Year 2000. Denis was a very down to earth dinkum Aussie, with a unique sense of humour which brought lots of joy. He could fit in so well with whoever he was with and

offered a natural – supernatural atmosphere during the pilgrimage.

Denis did his best to enthuse members of Schoenstatt for the Schoenstatt International Centre in Rome, a project entrusted to the Secular Institute of Diocesan Priests. He felt co-responsible for this project and did everything he could to support it, leaving a large portion of his estate to this project. His dearest wish was that others would follow him and become members of the Secular Institute of Diocesan Priests. When that dream comes true, those people will have an example in Fr. Denis of what it means to be a loyal Schoenstatter. I miss him very much as do all my siblings and the Schoenstatt Family in Australia.

Denis and Liz (1985)



Father Denis Foley – much loved priest

Both in life and in death we are the Lord's. (Rom 14:7)

Rose Williams

Mary Immaculate Parish, Bossley Park, NSW Australia

The death of Father Denis brought profound sadness to the parishioners of Mary Immaculate, Bossley Park. We are a parish in mourning for a priest, a compassionate pastor-counsellor who won our hearts.

I and my family experienced his warmth and kindness personally. A family friend who officiated at the wedding of our youngest son. His presence at every family milestone are treasured memories.

Fr Denis loved to tell stories and his dry humour was sometimes misunderstood as brusqueness. Nevertheless, he was loved for his transparency his humanity and his spirituality.

His Requiem Mass held in Mary Immaculate Church was highly attended by clergy, religious, local government officials and laity. His service in the community was highly acknowledged and surely will

be forever missed. His passing is a timely reminder that young as well as old of the inescapability of death.

Thank you for all the kindness and friendship you have always shown to our family. Fr Denis, our own “Holy Foley”. you taught us well. The Williams family prayers and love will be always with you. We also ask, “pray for us”.

**Fr Denis Foley was a very special person to me.
As time goes by, I realise all the more just how special.**

Anna Power

I met Fr Denis at a time in my life where I was so broken, confused searching.

I had no idea how much he would influence me, my life and the world around me.

He was what I would call a rough diamond, a bit rough around the edges, but the centre a pure treasure. The more I got to know him the more I saw someone I wanted to be more like, someone so amazing, so genuine and real. There was a simplicity about him a depth of faith that I had never seen before but was drawn to.

He taught me many things, not in the way others did by talking at me, but by telling me what I needed to do or how I needed to do it.

He accepted me and loved me right where I was. The patience he showed me was beyond words. He was able to teach me things by ever so patiently leading

me to my own answers, pointing me into the right direction to search. He challenged me, he taught me to see my own heart. I had listened in the church and found myself wanting so much to be holy but saw myself so far from that.

Fr Denis taught me to be truly holy you need first to be fully human! Oh, what joy and freedom I found in that. Suddenly holiness was attainable in whichever state of life – religious life, married life, single life. Fr Denis showed me being true to who God created me to be was my path. He was not one to hold onto things – I loved that about him. He loved and appreciated people and things, but he was not attached to them. The Blessed Trinity and our Mother Thrice Admirable were his centre, his heart. He saw God's hand in everything. He taught me this spiritual attachment.

I would often go with him to the Schoenstatt shrine, and we would pray or just sit in silence. The sense of peace and belonging I would feel was amazing. I learnt there are times when no words are needed.

He gave me many things, but his greatest gift was himself. His love of Schoenstatt, his patient acceptance of me, his humour, his realness.

Fr Denis once thanked me for the privilege of being part of my journey, I cried. He had helped me in so many ways, more than anyone in the world and he thanked me. His humility was beautiful and powerful.

When I visited him in hospital, the last thing he said to me was, "OK now go and take God's love". That's who Fr Denis was in the world to me, God's love.

Fr Denis and I signed off all correspondence with "United in the Shrine"

Sue Low

Fr Denis had a philosophy that the parish is made up of many people and each of us have something to contribute, no matter how small we think it is.

On one occasion when we were singing at Mass, there was no reader and when I made a move to the lectern to read, Fr Denis waved me away and said that I was already part of a ministry and that he wanted someone else from the congregation who wasn't involved in a ministry to read.

When he interviewed us prior to our son being accepted to Holy Family primary school, he wanted to know how we could contribute to the parish life. Thereafter, I noticed that he also made it a point of getting acquainted with the parishioners.

He was of the belief that everyone in the parish should be involved in parish life and actively encouraged that. With hindsight that was the way to bring people together and build cohesion.

Father Denis – thanks be to God

Libby Yip

I'm so grateful to Father Denis for introducing me to the Schoenstatt Spirituality in 1987.

He had been a mentor in the deepening of my faith to become a better Christian and help those nearest and dearest as well as those whom I met on their journey heavenwards.

I always remember his words of encouragement to take a small step at a time to tackle whenever there's an obstacle on the way

I've developed a closeness with Our Mother Thrice Admirable who has helped me continually make important decisions with my family through the years.

Thank you, Fr Denis.

Emma Gioiello

Father Foley was a man of the people, that is how we will always remember him. The first time I met him I was instantly struck by his Spirituality, and his love of Mary.

These two qualities helped me on my journey of faith whenever I had problems and felt that God had abandoned me. Father Foley would not let me fall in despair. He was such a strong force in providing for his parishioners spiritual needs.

Father Foley would never ask you to do something without him being right there next to you helping.

My fondest memories are seeing him with his straw hat out in the garden doing whatever needed to be done.

I would like to say Thank you Fr Foley, for instilling in your parishioners a sense of community, as well as a sense of belonging, each time we came to Mass.

Thanks for simply being a friend.

Juan and Sonia Zavolokin

Pilgrim Mother Apostolate

It is an honour being able to write a testimony about our beloved and remembered Father Denis Foley

His humbleness and simplicity in providing words of encouragement and wisdom were always appreciated.

We got to know him further on a pilgrimage to the Original Schoenstatt and then the blessed Belmonte Shrine in Rome.

Fr. Denis demonstrated so much happiness. He said Mass for our group every day, with a rosary in the afternoon and a recap of our day each evening.

We recall that he would say; "We need to go out to the people, to go on a pilgrimage with the people and not wait for the people to come to us".

He gave spiritual guidance for all who worked with the Pilgrim Mother.

All of his discussions would end with him reminding us of the presence of Jesus and our Mother Mary and demonstrating love.

Fr. Denis was always one of us.

In Covenant, Cesar and Teresita Corpus

We have known Fr Denis for a period of 20 years from 2002 to 2018. He was assistant Parish Priest at Mary Immaculate Church, Bossley Park. We started to know Fr Denis when my husband was diagnosed with a Renal Carcinoma.

We approached Fr Denis for blessing and prayer in 2002. Our first encounter with Fr Denis was when he introduced to us the Pilgrim Mother for the sick. During that difficult time Fr Denis became our spiritual supporter and comforter.

He invited my husband to visit the Shrine at Mulgoa and be introduced to the Blessed Mother Thrice Admirable. Fr Denis invited my husband many times to attend a retreat for the Schoenstatt Men's League, then slowly he had an idea of Schoenstatt spirituality.

Fr Denis became our mentor and spiritual adviser in our faith journey. He was always there for us giving inspiration, strength and courage in our everyday life.

Fr Denis guided our formation in preparing us for our Schoenstatt Covenant of Love. We have learned about the Demands and Promises.

He is a person easy to approach and we have ever known him as a courageous, firm and priestly personality

He encouraged us to be active members of the Schoenstatt family. We started as Pilgrim Mother coordinators and my husband became an active member of the Men's Group. I am also an active member and coordinator of a Mother's Group. He instigated the enthronement of our Home Shrine and also, he gave us one of his own symbols to place on our altar. His loving memories will always be remembered and treasured in the heart of our family.

When Fr Denis was sick, we were always there for him with prayers, love and support. Whenever he went to hospital we frequently visited and gave him Communion. My son also had a good relationship with Fr Denis. Sometimes he went kayaking with him and he always sought advice from him if he had a

problem. During his Fiftieth Anniversary of Priesthood my son gave him a special gift, a designed photo called *Tu Es Sacerdos*. (see front cover)

When Fr Denis passed away on October 6, 2018 unfortunately, we were away on holiday. We felt very sad because we were not there at his funeral.

Fr Denis you are always remembered, and your great contribution to Mary Immaculate Parish and the Schoenstatt family will never be forgotten. You are a loving son of God,

**Marie Coughlan, Parish Secretary
for the last 5½ years of Fr Denis' time in Menai**

It is a truly fond memory when we remember the day in November 1986 when we met and welcomed a Schoenstatt Diocesan Priest by the name of Rev Denis Foley who agreed to the task to establish the new parish of Menai in southern Sydney.

Here was a faith filled man full of vision and strength of spirit with willing hands ready to face whatever was ahead of him. Rev Denis used the principals and ideals of the Schoenstatt Movement to develop a culture in the parish that was family based in its core values. Many of the early parishioners were encouraged by Rev Denis to join the Passionist Family Groups that were established during the early years. This movement promoted a true sense of belonging and lifelong friendships amongst a solid core group of parishioners to this day.

Rev Denis Foley taught us to truly value our faith and always give thanks and remain grateful for all the blessings we have received in our lives.

Father Denis
Missed by many

Cora Aranda

It is indeed a great joy and a privilege to write a tribute to a very loving, caring, honest and very dedicated Priest in the person of Father Denis Foley, who was full of energy, very much athletic and I know that he is surely missed by those who knew him well and those who were loved by him.

My name, as Father Denis called me is 'Cora" and I am very much involved in the RCIA Team, choir, lector and bringing Holy Communion to the residents of the nursing home of Bossley Park.

I know every year Fr Denis Foley travelled to Rome, and there was a time that I asked him a favour, if he could buy a "Rosary" made in Italy. I wondered if he would actually remember my request, until he came back from Rome and surprisingly bought not just for me, but for the RCIA Team and lovingly, with a smile on his face distributed with pride telling us that it was indeed blessed by His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

It had the sculpted image of His Holiness on one side and the Mother of Perpetual Help with the baby Jesus on the other.

He didn't say a word but, action speaks louder, and it meant the world to me upon receiving the "Holy Rosary". It is always with me wherever I go here in Australia and abroad like the Holy Land, Turkey, Malta, Greece and Eastern and Western Europe. Pilgrimage to the USA and the Philippines.

The "Holy Rosary" he gave me has miraculously healed me and others in the community to which I belong, the Parish of Mary Immaculate, Bossley Park. It has extended someone's life, healed them in body, mind and spirit by God's grace, mercy and compassion.

Fr Denis Foley was the first priest from my parish to which I belong to give me "Extreme Unction" in May 2005 whilst I was in Fairfield Hospital after having a stroke, which actually paralysed my left side. Without hesitation I received my "Viaticum" food for the journey.

He would often visit me at the Hospital and even when I was transferred to the rehabilitation hospital at Braeside. I am forever grateful as he didn't give up praying for me and giving me support and comfort that I needed during this trying time in my life. I was just 50 years old and by God's grace, mercy and compassion that never ends I am here giving my witness to God Almighty, Creator, who has given me a chance to live to tell the story of His abounding love. And may the good Lord forgive me my sins. Amen.

Fr Denis, please continue to pray for us who are still here on earth to our loving God, to His Son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who died for us, by the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mother, by the power of the Holy Spirit, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Thank you, Lord for giving us a good and dedicated priest who leads us to Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Father Denis

Relaxed friendly natural

Kerry Fordham

My first memory of Fr Denis was of a man in shorts, sandals and a huge straw hat working with all the dads laying the path that still exists from Anzac Road right up to the school. My daughter was one of the inaugural students of both Holy Family primary school and Aquinas College. So much of the laying of paths, turf, gardens in our new parish was very much a volunteer basis and Fr Denis was always right there with all the dads. The mums would supply morning tea/lunch for them. Such a united, joyful time and is where many friendships were formed.

**Fr Denis Foley will always be remembered for being
a *devoted priest, trusted mentor and, to me, a loyal
friend.***

Rita Cordina

Liturgy and Music Coordinator, Parishioner, Bossley
Park

From our first encounter at Mary Immaculate Bossley Park, I knew that Father Denis would make a deep impression on me and my life. Affectionately called Father D, he had a confident, straightforward manner that was somewhat intimidating. However, the more we worked together, the more I would get to know all the beautiful qualities of Father D. He was gentle, compassionate and had a genuine love for the people he served.

In his time at our parish, Father D immersed himself into every aspect of parish life. He had an ability to connect with parishioners young and old and took a deep interest in their lives. Father D believed in the power of connecting people, always reminding me that “Grace builds on nature”. He focussed on hospitality and took the opportunity to educate and guide during community building events.

Father D's strong relationships with young people was undeniable. His ability to communicate, guide and mentor the youth was inspiring to witness. This was particularly evident through his involvement with sacramental preparation and Antioch. My own children, now adults, still talk about how much Father D influenced their lives. They trusted him and valued his advice and guidance.

The Schoenstatt movement was a large part of Father D's life. His involvement was interwoven into every aspect of his life, particularly his ministry as a priest. He had a great devotion to Mary, Mother Thrice Admirable, and he shared this love with all he met.

Father D was an educated man with a very cryptic, quirky sense of humour (that not many understood). He loved nature and would often spend his time off in the great outdoors. Father D's fitness and stamina would often outweigh those who were brave enough to venture with him.

Personally, Father D became a very significant person in my life and work. I miss his sound advice and often pray for his guidance from above. In my homelife, Father D showed great respect and love towards my family. He would often come over for dinner or invite my husband and boys to go kayaking with him. Father D became part of our extended family. We shared many good times together and his absence has left a hole in our hearts. We can only pray that he is continually watching over us from his heavenly home. He is truly missed.



Wayne McMillan

I knew Fr Denis Foley briefly but found him to be a man of great integrity, character and fortitude. I bushwalked with him on a number of occasions in the late 1970's and early 1980's. He was a very strong bushwalker who loved the outdoors, a physical challenge and an adventure. Denis was a great role model for young men, especially troubled youth. He had a wicked sense of humor, where he loved to play little pranks on anyone who thought they were superior, full of themselves or above the rest of us. He didn't take himself too seriously and was very down to earth. In my humble opinion, he dealt with his personal burdens, responsibilities and duties with manly courage and wise commonsense. He was a delight to be with on bushwalks and a great conversationalist.

Fr Denis Foley, a man a priest of many parts:
*Colleague, companion, loyal friend and at times
bloody stubborn.*

Fr Robert Fuller

I first meet Denis when I was a young parishioner and member of the Schoenstatt Boy's group.

Then as a seminarian when he turned up with the bushwalking priests, considered strange by some. The bushwalkers preferred the term "unique and individual".

Then as a fellow priest working within the Schoenstatt spirituality which meant being fellow pilgrims.

He strove to be himself and encouraged others to be themselves. This was the best way to be a member of any group.

On one pilgrimage instead of travelling on to Germany he made the sacrifice to stay with me in Rome despite my encouragement not to do so. But his

sense of loyalty and his stubbornness meant both of us needed extra patience.

But in the end his way, his sense of loyalty and stubbornness meant that when I needed him most, he was there and this time his support was more than welcomed and appreciated. His final act was keeping me to be his priest executor. An honour I will always cherish,

Thanks
mate
continue to
pray for us
in heaven
as you
prayed for
us in the
Shrine.



Fr John Evans (Schoenstatt Father), Fr Greg Saw (Diocesan Priest – Myanmar) with Fr Denis.

The Cloney Family

I am pleased to hear that Fr Denis is to be acknowledged for the work he has done in his time as a Priest and I am happy to share my family's experience in the Menai parish of Holy Family.

My wife Lorraine, myself Brian and our 2 sons, Stuart and Glen, moved from Perth to Menai in 1987 after a previous 8 months stint in 1984. Our neighbours the Reneker family were quite excited to tell us a church was to be built in Menai and a presbytery would be built first. This would be followed by a primary school then secondary school which would allow a local community to grow.

When 5 years later our daughter Elise was born, she went all the way through both the primary school then Aquinas College, whereas our boys had to commute to St Pat's at Sutherland to complete their schooling. So over 38 years we saw our new community grow and the area has become a strong supportive community.

I first encountered Fr Denis at a working bee to clear land for the Presbytery with other parishioners. Straight away I saw a hands-on Pastor who joined in the hard work rather than standing back and directing the project.

Our sons and their friends went with Fr Denis to youth camps at Mulgoa on multiple occasions and always loved the experience.

Fr Denis was there for us as a family through hard times and good times as we lived and watched our community dream become a reality. My wife Lorraine and I became active as volunteers in many capacities as our Parish grew under Fr Denis's leadership.

A no nonsense Priest he was high on standards and expected his flock to aspire to the same standard. The hard work was all worthwhile as we have had a great life in our Catholic Community.

God Bless Fr Denis's work and achievements for us all. We are glad we found our Menai home at Holy Family Parish.

Angela and Rick Benson

Rick and I came to know Fr Denis, Parish Priest of Holy Family in 1986 when we moved to Menai from Punchbowl. We thought he was a 'diamond in the rough'. He wore sandals like Jesus, so down to earth and fiercely family minded. He charged us to canvas the Catholics in the street, make them feel welcome suggesting a Pilgrim Mother Shrine would help. He recommended a Schoenstatt Mothers' Group to me. He was a train driver getting what he described as 'slow to get on the train Australians' on to the Schoenstatt Marian Way Train.

I don't know when exactly I came to see him as the epitome of Father Kentenich. He like Father Kentenich was a true leader – he stood out in a crowd. He and his sister - Sr Elizabeth took several of us from our parish, on retreat to Rome and Schoenstatt. He was so proud to take us to the site and wayside shrine for the Belmonte Shrine.

Our boys enjoyed daredevil trips on the Mondays of school holidays liloing down waterways, kayaking or bushwalking and they followed Fr. Denis with

delight. Yes, he was their priest, all of them altar boys but he was truly their 'mate'. He was an image of Father Kentenich for anyone who got to know him well. Finally, he was what we all need to be a true image of Mary, even though we all remain at some level 'a diamond in the rough'!



Building site at Menai parish

A great Priest, a great man ... a great friend!

Gary Reneker

I met Fr Denis on Sunday 7th November 1986, when he arrived for his first Mass, which was being held in the school hall, at Bangor Public School. My first recollection of him was being a big tall man, with big shoulders, big glasses and a big smile.

Fr Foley showed himself to be very much one of the people, with his very direct, down to earth conversation and amiable personality, that showed that he was very much the same person, whether he was on the Sanctuary, or clearing a blocked drain ...

He asked me to be part of the first interim Finance Committee soon after his arrival, which proved to have daunting connotations as the Committee undertook the establishment of a Planned Giving Program for the Parish. It was successfully implemented though and remains a necessary part of Parish life.

Fr Foley's contribution to the Parish as the foundation PP through Pastoral care, was immense.

His gift though of the devotion to Our Blessed Lady through Schoenstatt and the Pilgrim Mother, leaves a wonderful legacy. The First Rosary Circle was commissioned in July 1987 and there are many more circles that continue to this day.

Bernard Toutounji

I am very pleased to have known him and be involved with him throughout his time at Menai. I was pleased too, to have been with him, taking photos and helping him on his last day in the Parish in January 1999, and going with him to his new Parish of St Joseph's Belmore.

I was also pleased to have been involved in organising a souvenir brick from the Church for him, and replacing it with an appropriate plaque, as well as the placement of his photo at Mt Schoenstatt Mulgoa, and a further photo tribute of him, in the foyer of Holy Family Church, at Menai.

I spent some years in the seminary in the early 2000s and Fr Denis worked with myself and two other seminarians to get us to our Covenant of Love. It was evident that he was genuinely interested in us, and in us benefitting from being a part of the movement. One could truly see that he loved the Blessed Mother, the Shrine and Schoenstatt. He was always willing to work with us to the level we asked him to,

he wanted our freedom but he would support us one hundred percent. Fr Denis was a true brother to us.

A great man, friend and spiritual advisor.

Keith Corbett

A lapsed Anglican I accompanied my wife Mary, a very devout catholic, to mass every week for 25yrs. Moving to Menai in 1991 where Fr. Denis was P.P. at Holy Family. First contact with Fr Denis was a home visit with communion when Mary was bedridden for the final 6 months of her 45yrs. before succumbing to cancer. One afternoon Fr. Denis arrived with Holy Communion for Mary only to find 5 Religious Sisters & 6 fellow school teachers present plus a nice lady with a "Home Shine"; enter Angela Benson into my life. Fr Denis later wrote a very much appreciated lovely supporting/advising letter to our 13yr daughter Philippa. One year later after Mary's passing, I still attended mass sitting down the back when Fr Denis' homily was on. "Not by your words but by your deeds" at this point The Holy Spirit led me to the RCIA process.

The parish RCIA team consisted of Fr Denis, 2 Schoenstatt ladies (Angela & Joan Hardy) and a Schoenstatt man, Jim Jankiewicz who was introduced

as my sponsor. Fr Denis & Joan both now "Gone to GOD" I count Angela & Jim as very close friends.

Becoming catholic at Easter 1995 I then attended weekly Schoenstatt men's meetings lead by Fr. Denis.

In the year 2000 I went on a pilgrimage with Fr Denis & Sr. Elizabeth which included retracing Fr. Kentenich's return from Dachau.

Arriving at Rome airport we were informed our accommodation had been changed and alas not a guide in sight until sometime much later in the crowd we saw a tall gentleman wearing an "aussie" hat. Saved by Fr. Denis.

Tony Melville

Likely my earliest memory of Father Denis was in late 1963 (from memory) as an altar boy at St Bernadette Catholic Church at Bexley North, when he came cycling over the railway bridge from Kingsgrove to do 7.30am Mass. It was about 7.45 or so and the small crowd was gathered waiting for him to open the Church doors. As it turned out it was the morning when we found out that Fr Brian McGinley had died in a car accident. St Bernadette's was a small church affiliated with Our Lady of Fatima Kingsgrove, where the priests lived adjoining the church and school.

Fr. Denis was his usual whirlwind self and just got on with it in his laconic voice. Along with a couple of other priests he was a local man and different from the older style Irish priests that were more 'God fearing' in their sermons. You could count on Fr. Denis to give a short succinct homily. This was just before the changes from Vatican 2 when Latin Mass was still the regular style. Fr. Denis was almost certainly, by his own acknowledgement, not a great

speaker of Latin and we altar boys got used to his pronunciation in an Aussie twang.

When I moved to Bangor in 1990, I found that Fr Denis was the local priest at Holy Family as it was being built. He easily identified me when we met again as one of the many Melvilles from Kingsgrove parish. My parents Mary and Brian were strong stalwarts of the developing Kingsgrove parish from the early 1950s with mum still involved in the parish.

As in previous times you would find Fr Denis just as easily with his sleeves rolled up in the building works or the new garden area. I think it was likely a surprise to some visitors to find this Aussie speaking guy was the priest. He had no airs or graces and was as easy to chat with no matter your age, role or background. The Menai Catholic School was also developing at this time with Sister leading and establishing the foundations for what continues to be an excellent local school.

Raf Saad

When I think of Father Foley the first thought that comes in my mind is "The man who actually saved my life"_Had I not encountered Father Foley at this critical time of my earthly journey I would have ended up in the doldrums or worse. I would certainly not be here today to write the words that he deserves whole heartily. It happened in 1997. I had been a highly paid corporate executive riddled with ambition and devoid of any scruples. God in his mercy allowed 4 things to happen in my life within the space of a few months. The loss of my job/my divorce/the death of my beloved mother/and finally the death of my beloved Brutus. I felt desperate, lonely, scared and at a total loss as what to do next. Someone I knew at Menai advised me to contact the Parish Priest who could probably help alleviate my pain a little. He actually did much more than that, Father Foley brought me back to the Faith, became a wonderful spiritual director to me, a friend, a father and a most trusted confidant. He pointed out to me the new direction I should follow in life. I could see

him any time I wanted [particularly for Confession] I felt his departure as the loss of the man I trusted the most in my life.

On behalf of The Pilgrim Mother Apostolate in Australia for Father Denis Foley; the man, the Priest the Saint of the Modern-Day Australia

Fred Turner

He was a person who lived by a Practical belief in Divine Providence.

Through his detailed study of the life of Father Kentenich and the living of the covenant in everyday life he became a disciple of Father Kentenich.

One of Father Denis' favourite questions when we were faced with a problem was "What would Father Kentenich have done?"

Father Denis' appreciation of Divine Providence came through very clearly with the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate always alert to the opportunities of promoting family prayer.

On the 24th of August 1985 a group of pilgrims from Australia left for Schoenstatt to celebrate the 100th birthday of Father Kentenich.

Before Father Denis left Australia to join the other pilgrims, he sent me an article about Joao Pozzobon and his work with the Pilgrim Mother Shrine promoting The Rosary and family prayer. Father Denis knew of my own interest in promoting the Rosary in our Diocese.

We weren't to know Divine Providence was already working for us to have the opportunity to follow in Pozzobon's footsteps bringing our Pilgrim Mother Mary home to many in Australia.

After visiting Schoenstatt, the whole contingent went to Rome, where they met a couple from Argentina who brought with them 25 Pilgrim Mother Shrines from Brazil. They gave one to my wife Visnja, my son Rick and Father Denis to bring back to Australia.



On the 21st of On the September 1985 in the House Chapel of Domus Mariae in Rome they accepted the mission for Australia, Father Denis said to me later this was Divine Providence again!

The apostolate was launched on 23rd February 1986 from our Schoenstatt Shrine here in Mulgoa by Father Denis, speaking on the Rosary and adoration.

The Pilgrim Mother Apostolate in Australia owes Father Denis a huge debt of gratitude; we could not have grown without his gentle guidance and example of divine providence in action – he was always encouraging and never critical.

Over the years the apostolate grew very quickly. Regular planning meetings were necessary, and Father Denis was always positive, patient and encouraging of every small effort.

After a few years we started our yearly Rosary Procession with a few hundred people the first year, this quickly grew to thousands of people.

Father Denis' Spiritual and practical advice kept us on track through difficult times.

Father Denis was also a Parish Priest and had many other duties in Schoenstatt Australia. Despite all of this he always made time to give all of us his undivided attention.

I had been a friend of Father Denis for over 50 years, and never had harsh words or feelings between us. He had a saying which speaks of divine providence whenever I was getting worked up “Stone the Flaming Crows, she’ll be right mate”

Jim Jankiewicz

I first met Fr Denis when he became Parish Priest at Holy Family Parish Menai. Circa 1986. There was a lot of work to be done to build a Church and Primary School. His practical approach was very instrumental in getting together “Working Bees” to help establish the Parish.

My involvement in many of the projects allowed me to get to know him more personally than otherwise possible in an established Parish.

I was struggling with my Faith life and he was instrumental in getting me back on track in his very unique way.

He introduced me to Schoenstatt and with that to our beloved MTA. His guidance and patience were instrumental in me learning more about Schoenstatt. I was fortunate in being lent many German books from him that really helped me to fast track my journey back to the Faith.

After I made my consecration to our Blessed Mother, my Faith journey took on another dimension, ever so

gently guided by Fr Denis. He certainly was a very tough taskmaster and a very persistent Spiritual Director not settling for the mediocre.

He became the Moderator of our Schoenstatt Men's Group and guided us on our many Reflection Days and Retreats. His knowledge and passion for Schoenstatt came through very strongly, especially his love for Our Mother. May he rest in Eternal Peace.



Monica & Ralph Perez

Our dearest memory of Father Foley – in 2002 we attended the October Conference. At Saturday morning Holy Mass Ralph and I were invited to take up the gifts in Offertory procession. When the time came, we stood ready, Sister M Elizabeth Foley softly called out to us to wait as the collection was still taking place. Father Foley from the front beckoned us to walk towards him, Sister M Elizabeth called out to wait, Father once again beckoned us.

‘What do we do?’ I whispered, “At Mass Father’s in charge”, Ralph replied “we walk”, and that was what we did.

On reaching Father Foley we handed over the bread and wine, he bent down, whispered “don’t take too much notice of my sister, she’s a bossy-boots!” And with a huge smile he blessed us.

Of these 3 things we were certain:

1. Father Foley dearly loved his sister.

2. Father loved Our Blessed Mother, he loved the Shrine, was a true son of our Father & Founder Father Kentenich.

3. Father Foley believed in his very soul that Schoenstatt is a place of Grace.

Ralph & I attended Father Foley's funeral, we wanted to thank him for his loyalty, steadfastness in working in the spirit of Schoenstatt as Diocesan Priest, and his wonderful Aussie humour.

Father Kentenich said (from "His Mission, Our Mission", pg66 ") – 'Eternity will one day show who served the Movement most ...The most necessary, the most important people are those who constantly care most for the capital of grace, who unite their hearts and bloodstream with the heart and bloodstream of the capital of grace.'

Rest in Peace Father Foley, eternity will show!

In Our Covenant, Perth, Western Australia.

Father Denis Foley, Spiritual Adviser and Priest

Zenny Custodio.

In a few words Father Denis Foley can be described as kind, simple, humble, understanding and a thoughtful Priest. He was approachable and understood that everyone is different. However, you have to know him to understand him because when you ask him a question, he answers you with another question, that is, to make you think, to soul search. Being a typical down-to-earth Aussie priest, he uses a lot of colloquial terminology and phrases, and sometimes a joke.

He was my very patient and punctual Spiritual Adviser. He always arrived for an appointment before me. Two of the many things that he taught me that I continue to live are:

- Accept your sufferings or you cannot be a disciple of Jesus
- Discern what God is trying to tell you and not ask Him “Why”

As our Pilgrim Mother Apostolate's Adviser, he was always there for us and supportive of us. The road is not always straight due to differing opinions, but we always managed to come to an amicable solution.

When we were preparing to crown the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate picture which had been installed at St Therese Church 20 years ago, Fr. Denis voluntarily helped us put together the petitions from the Pilgrim Mother Coordinator's in the area into a Novena Prayer. On the Crowning Day, for health reason, he wasn't able to attend. However, he sent a message and greeting to all, and thanked the then Parish Priest for his support of Schoenstatt in the Parish Community

Father Denis was beautiful inside and out.

Nancy Maddalena

Father Denis was an inspiration to those who built Holy Family parish, his spiritual direction made the parish what it became. He made the parishioners think about what was needed and how to achieve these things by their own efforts and not to rely on others to do it for them. I am sure the original parishioners all became better people and better Christians under his guidance.

When we moved to Illawong in 1985 there was nothing on the school site but bushland. No Church to attend Mass, no school for our children and no Catholic community to share our Faith journey with.

The closest church was St. Pat's Sutherland but Father Cruickshank would say Mass in Bangor Public School hall for us, so we asked Bishop David Cremin to give us our own Priest and Parish. The Bishop said we only had 200 people who came to Mass and that was not enough to warrant a new Parish, we replied that only 200 could fit in the school hall and that there were many more people attending other places. He asked us to do a survey and prove there

were more Catholics in the area so we walked from door to door all over Bangor, Menai, Illawong, Barden Ridge and Lucas Heights and asked everyone if they were Catholic and would like a school and church. We gathered a list of 2000 names and presented it to the Bishop. Alfords Point did not open for housing until after our survey was completed.

The Cardinal appointed Father Denis Foley to establish the new Parish and Father enlisted the help of the original 200 to assist him. We formed small groups to discuss what was needed to make a good parish and how to go about getting it to work. Our first objective was to have a place of our own for Mass and the Sacraments and a meeting place to grow the parish family. A multi-purpose building was erected on the vacant land and the parish was run from there. This eventually became the school library. The name Holy Family was chosen as we were a community of many families and could find no better model than the Holy Family to follow. The Parish motto "Living and sharing the Christian faith

as a new Parish family” was formed by the preteen group who also had their say in the formation of the Parish.

Sister Judith was appointed first Principal and the first classes were held at St. Pats whilst we continued to build. A house was purchased for Sister Judith and staff and we built the Presbytery for Father Denis, then the Church, the original Rainbow window was a reminder of our covenant with God. Demountable classrooms were placed along the fence on Menai Road and on Sundays before and after Mass classes were held for parents and children preparing for the sacraments. A great rapport was established, and many people returned to their practice of faith encouraged by the welcome they received in these classes. Groups of ten families were formed to support one another in all areas of life, a group outing each month and a weekend away each year forged bonds of friendship that last to the present day.

By the time those first Kindergarten children were ready for High school Aquinas College was

commenced and they were able to complete their schooling in one place. They were a very caring group having been encouraged by Father Denis and the teaching staff to help and care for others and that the prayers of children were especially favoured by God. There was a young baby with Cerebral Palsy in those early days and Father Denis gathered the other children around her and they laid their hands on her asked God's favour to rest on her and against all odds she survived into her late teens. Never forget the power of prayer.

Unfortunately, Father Denis's health began to deteriorate, and he moved to Bossley Park. My sister, Joan, and I moved to Mudgee where a new episode of our lives began, and we lost touch with Holy Family parish. Our time at Holy Family was very special and increased our faith and love of God. I wish you all the best Holy Family has to offer and ask you to remember that you are the parish and your voice is important to continue to grow the love and caring that we began so many years ago.

May you rest in God's abiding love.

Karen and Mark Meacham and family

The day God guided Father Denis Foley to Menai in 1986 was indeed a true blessing for our Parish's faith journey. We were a new parish. We had no place of our own to meet or worship. We needed to establish a name and identity within our own parish community.

When Fr. Foley arrived, Sunday mass was conducted in the local Bangor Public School Hall. Previously mass had been held in the small Bangor Public Library overseen by a visiting priest from St Patricks Church Sutherland.

And so, it began. Fr. Foley believed in parish consultation, together we chose the name HOLY FAMILY PARISH.

Our mission: *'Living and sharing the Christian life as a growing parish family'.*

Fr. Foley oversaw the building Holy Family Primary School, Holy Family Church and Aquinas College. With both schools built our children were able to complete their schooling within their parish.

Fr. Foley introduced family based sacramental programs for First Holy Communion and Confirmation which helped develop lifelong friendships within the Parish with faith at their centre.

Fr. Foley always listened and encouraged parishioners to take part in parish life through the introduction of small Lenten Groups, Passionist Family groups, Schoenstatt Mother's group and of course working bees.

Fr. Foley loved the outdoors and shared his love of hiking and rafting with parishioners on days out.

He guided us in our faith journey and spoke often of the importance of 'Faith, Family and Friendship'.

We thank God for the life of Fr. Denis Foley.

Father Denis Foley
a True Australian and Loyal Schoenstatt Priest

Shirley Hall

Member of Schoenstatt Single Women's Branch

I knew Father Denis for over 50 years, mainly through our mutual involvement in Schoenstatt, but initially through our connection in my local parish where he was an Assistant Priest.

Over the years I came to know Father Denis better, especially as we were often on various Schoenstatt committees or projects together. Fr. Denis was always a uniquely Aussie (Australian) person who was secure in his own person. His colloquialisms and way of saying things were sometimes hard for people to understand, but once you got to know him better you realised what a genuine person he was.

He had a deep devotion to Our Lady and to Schoenstatt and to his priestly apostolate especially through the Schoenstatt Institute of Diocesan Priests to which he belonged. He was also deeply devoted to Father Kentenich and this came through in the

way he approached many things. Fr. Denis was a man of prayer and you would find him in the shrine whenever he could get there and he would always encourage others to visit the shrine whenever they could and bring others with them.

I remember the first time I went to reconciliation to Fr. Denis. I came in prepared to tell him all my faults and failings, but instead he asked me to tell him one or two things that had happened recently that were blessings from God. He told me that we should first of all be reminded of all the great gifts God gives us. This leads us then to appreciate how good God is to us, no matter how many times we fail. This was a very different approach to Reconciliation than I had experienced with other priests before and afterwards. I got the impression that this was something he had learnt through Father Kentenich.

Fr. Denis and I worked on a number of Schoenstatt projects together. I found that he was happy to let me work in my own way, but he was always there to give support and help if needed. But he never imposed this. I found that he would leave you to try

and work it out for yourself and then to let him know if help was needed, in any form. He wasn't worried if someone made a mistake for, he said, that was how they learnt.

He was always striving to spread the Schoenstatt spirituality here in Australia. He was a great witness for Schoenstatt, for Our Blessed Mother and for our father and founder, Fr. Kentenich.

One of his great wishes was that there would be another Schoenstatt Institute Diocesan Priest here in Australia. I pray that this wish of his will one day be fulfilled.

May Fr. Denis be richly rewarded for all his work for Schoenstatt's mission in Australia.



Golden Jubilee Mass with Frs. Terry and Prabhu – 2012

Reflection at Memorial Mass at Mount Schoenstatt, Mulgoa – 16th October, 2018

Sr. M. Elizabeth Foley

Jesus prays in the Gospel, “Father I want those you have given me to be with me where I am”. I believe that the Heavenly Father has answered this prayer and that our brother Denis is now seeing the glory that the Father has given to Jesus.

In the Reading from Isaiah we hear that “on this mountain the Lord of hosts will prepare a banquet of rich food.”

We are gathered here today on this mountain, a holy mountain for Denis- our Mount Schoenstatt. He was also at home on another mountain in Germany - Mount Moriah – the mountain and home of the Diocesan Priests. Abraham features very much in the life and striving of the Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests and the leader of his course wrote: Denis, the Abraham of Australia. Abraham received the great promise and at first saw nothing of this promise. “He

believed in the LORD and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

It seems that mountains were part of Denis’ life. He spent most Mondays trekking through them.

For more than 40 years my brother Denis and I have shared our love for Schoenstatt. To his prayer and sacrifice I believe I owe my vocation. He was the one who introduced me to Schoenstatt and I have been grateful for this all my adult life. He was my “second father” as he was also to my siblings, but probably in a different way. Through this reflection I hope you will understand why this memorial Mass here today at Mount Schoenstatt would be important for him as well as for our Schoenstatt Family.

His Course leader wrote that “family” was always important for him.

- He found this in our family where he was the cause and centre of Monday night family time – he came faithfully home each Monday after his bushwalking relaxation.
- He found it in the Schoenstatt Family here in Australia – where he is endeared in the hearts

of so many including members in the various States where Schoenstatt is active. Even members of our Schoenstatt Family have flown from Perth to be here today.

- He found this in the family of his priests' community – his priest brothers in the Institute but also his brother priests here in Sydney who were part of his Schoenstatt priests' group.

He had a deep love for Our Lady. He told me that he first consecrated himself to Our Lady when he was in the seminary on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1958. Then Our Lady lead him to Schoenstatt in 1966 when as a young priest he was in St. Mary's parish. Many of you will know Fr. Boes who invited him to join a priests' group. Fr. Terry was also part of this group. Fr. Denis spent 4 years in Mount Druitt at a time when Schoenstatt was developing there and his love for Schoenstatt grew. After making his covenant of love in 1975 with Fr. Terry, he made a decision to commit himself more deeply to Schoenstatt and was accepted into the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests.

He took long service leave to do his novitiate training and learn the German language.

Denis was a man of few words and often had difficulty expressing exactly what he meant. I think we have all experienced struggling to follow his cryptic sayings and the links in his homilies. Even his course brothers have shared with me that they, too, had difficulties in understanding what he wanted to say and also his unique sense of humour. It would have been a cause of suffering for him but he did not give up. He lived with his limitations and strove, took advice which could be of help to him, (eg. it is better if you write your homilies than speaking freely), and faithfully continued to “live on the mountain the Lord of hosts” where our Mother and Queen offers all who come here a spiritual home, transformation and mission zeal. And not only did he “live on the mountain” but he did all he could to bring others to this mountain. When I asked him as a young person, why he travelled a half an hour from Mt. Druitt to Mulgoa to pray at the shrine when he had a church next door to him, his answer was very simple and

caused me to reflect deeply. Perhaps it can do the same for you. His answer was, “I believe it’s a place of grace.” For most of us here we have experienced this place of grace.

In this connection Denis’ love for freedom also played a role. Many could not understand or became frustrated when, trying to follow our founder’s approach, he would leave freedom to those asking his advice, whether spiritual or practical. People can become impatient and want answers but, as one of the Men’s Branch shared at our Schoenstatt National Gathering over the last weekend, Denis’ usual answer was: “What is God trying to say to you?” He encouraged people to reflect and pray; to listen to God speaking in their hearts. They should freely choose what they believed was God’s will for them.

In the Schoenstatt Institutes those who do their training together form a course group. The ideal of Denis’ course had to do with adoration. One of his course brothers shared with me that in 1980, his parish priest commented to Denis that he should belong to the pilgrims’ course. But he gave as an

answer, “yes I am often on the way, but I am more often spending time in adoration.” This course brother continued: “Adoration has become dear to his heart. A replica of the “little Monstrance”, which is also on Moriah, has since built a bridge from him to us. It was not just about Eucharistic adoration, it was about the "adoration of the Father's will" which he has sought in the everyday...”. He looked for God in every aspect of his life, asking, as our founder taught us: “What are you saying to me, or asking of me through this event or happening”. Faith in Divine Providence and his search for God’s will marked his life. He was able to do this in the strength of his Covenant of Love with our MTA. The following prayer which I found in his Home Shrine gives evidence of this life in his soul:

Dear Heavenly Father, I offer this prayer to you through the intercession of our M.T.A., Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt and our Father and Founder.

I kneel before you and our Eucharistic Lord in the Shrine.... United in faith with our founder, Father Kentenich, the founding generation of Schoenstatt,

our Priest's community and the whole Schoenstatt Family.

Help me with my weaknesses to fulfil the mission you have given me through our M.T.A. for the Bishops and priests in Australia. Strengthen me to grow deeper in the covenant as an instrument of our Mother for the Schoenstatt Family in Australia.

Help me to see the providential hand of God in all things. Bind me and those with whom I have contact closer to the shrine that we can generously give ourselves through Mary to be the heart of the Church in Australia so that through our sacrifice we can adore you eternally. Amen.

Denis has been sick for a long time but the last months since January have been a real way of the cross for him. He did not complain nor wish for things. He accepted God's will and used the suffering for the Capital of Grace of the Shrine and for his great longing for a diocesan priest to follow him in the Schoenstatt Priests' Institute.

I once expressed to him that I was sad that he had to suffer so much. And again I got a very short, simple answer, but also a profound one. For the Schoenstatters who are here, you will understand. He responded, “We have made the inscriptio, haven’t we?” For those who do not belong to Schoenstatt, the following words from the morning prayer which Fr. Kentenich wrote in Dachau express what Denis meant and what he lived by:

“You may use us for your work and send us crosses, suffering and hardship;

whether we meet with failure or success we want to proclaim your love.

“May what you have foreseen for us be realised in every moment of our lives.

We have but a single longing: lead us according to your wise plans.”

I am sure that Denis was offering his suffering as a petition for a priestly vocation for the Schoenstatt Priest’s Institute and I trust that our MTA will accept

the offering of his life for this intention when it pleases God.

Denis was an extremely loyal person and this has been expressed by his Superior General who has written a few words for the funeral tomorrow. I will just quote one sentence from what he wrote: “We have always admired his great loyalty and connection to our Schoenstatt Priest’s Institute Family although he was the only Australian very far away from us.”

He died two days after the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Joseph Engling’s death in Cambrai in 1918 towards the end of World War I. Joseph Engling was one of the founding generation of Schoenstatt and a loyal son of our founder. Very early in Denis’ life in Schoenstatt, it was obvious that he was reaching out for the high ideals given in the Schoenstatt way of life and I heard many refer to him as the Joseph Engling for Australia. His fellow priests in Germany have remarked about this providential timing of his death.

His loyalty was also appreciated here in Australia. He spent much of his spare time – except when he was out in the bush or in a canoe – sharing with and working for our Schoenstatt family. He worked with boys, men and built up family groups in the parishes where he was. He accompanied three of the four pilgrimages we have had from Australia to Schoenstatt and during the first one in 1985, together with Visnja Turner, accepted responsibility for the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate here in Australia. So for more than 30 years he was part of this apostolate wherever he was. He also served on the inspirational team of the Movement. Using the gifts that God had given him in his very unique way I think most of us here present today have memories of this priest of God who loved Our Lady, Schoenstatt, the shrine and our father and would do anything for the growth of this Movement in Australia. When he retired his dream was to be able to serve Schoenstatt even more. However, God had other plans. His ill health did not allow his longings to find reality.

God granted me the great gift of being present with him when God called him home. We shared our love for Schoenstatt and we could share this moment as well. A moment marked by prayer - my sister and I were praying the Rosary, he was conscious and constantly had his eyes fixed on our MTA. That Fr. Terry and Fr. Martin were able to come and pray in the last few moments before he went home was another great gift and I am sure a gift for Denis as well.

The last verse of the reading from Isaiah exclaimed: "We exult and we rejoice that he has saved us." Let us rejoice and give thanks for the love and sacrifice of our brother and friend and that God has allowed Fr. Denis to touch our lives in so many ways.

Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord.

Homily at his funeral by Fr Terence Bell

FR DENIS PATRICK FOLEY

Born 18.07.1939 Ordained 21.07.1962

Died 06.10.2018 Funeral 17.10.2018

Yesterday, it was necessary and fitting that the Vigil Mass for Fr Denis was celebrated at the site of the Shrine of Our Lady Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt at Mulgoa, for Denis was a consecrated member of the Secular Institute of Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests. And now it is fitting that we are gathered for his Funeral Mass in the Parish chosen by him as the place for his ministry as a Priest on Lesser Duties. It was chosen because it is the Sydney Parish closest to Mulgoa cared for by Diocesan Clergy. It also enjoyed having as its Patron Mary Immaculate.

In the Prayer of the Office for the Bishop and Martyr St Denis, celebrated just three days after Fr Denis' death, we asked that we might be able, like St Denis, to "meet with like indifference the triumphs and afflictions this world has to offer". Fr Denis did that faithfully and fully all the days of his life.

Fr Denis was a physically strong man. Many can testify that when he set the pace, either bushwalking or kayaking, it was nigh impossible to keep up with him. So, it was hard to see him laid low with physical afflictions that were numerous, frequent, and spread over many years. Each time he suffered another setback people would say “Not another illness – what next?” But when he left Holy Family Parish Menai of which he was the first Parish Priest, and moved into lesser duties, it was not to lick his wounds and put up his feet but to throw himself fully into the life of the parish here in Bossley Park and especially into the ministry to the sick in Fairfield Hospital. The nursing staff was very conscious of his constant presence among the sick and were distressed when he would fall ill but also privileged to look after him. In his sufferings, whether from accidents or illnesses, he got to know many staffs in many hospitals.

But it is because of his triumphs that he will be best remembered. Like Fr Joseph Kentenich, the founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, he loved God, Mary, and the Church. He was a disciplined thinker and

loved challenging people to think, especially when he would ask: “What is God saying to you, saying to us?” Denis and I came into contact with the Schoenstatt Movement with his appointment to St Mary’s Parish in western Sydney and my appointment next door in Penrith. Together we made our consecration in the Covenant of Love with Mary on 17th July 1975. We had been gathered together as young priests in the western part of the Archdiocese by Fr Carl Boes. We met weekly in Carl’s A Frame House in Mt Druitt and took part in Monthly Reflection Days at the Shrine in Mulgoa. Bishop Eddy Kelly would often join us so that we could concelebrate Mass since, initially, one could only concelebrate if a Bishop was present. He wanted to encourage us to meet and pray together and so facilitated that gathering together and celebration.

Long before “Ministry to Priests” was promoted, Denis met with me and many other priests each month, supporting us, challenging us, sharing with us the trials and triumphs of priestly ministry and our striving to grow in holiness. Eventually we chose the prayer of Oscar Romero as our motto for our group,

our striving, and our approach to ministry. It now rests on the coffin.

Denis was always loyal to the Covenant, to his Bishop and brother priests, and to the Schoenstatt Groups – Priests, Sisters, Families, Men, Mothers, Youth, Girls, Boys. He was first and foremost always a Diocesan Priest.

Our First Reading today is chosen because Fr Denis moved on from being a Schoenstatt Diocesan Priest in the League to undertaking preparation for and eventual consecration in the Secular Institute of Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests. On your Mass booklet is the Motto of Denis and his brother Priests in the same course: “One in Adoration through Moriah for the Father”. House Moriah in Mount Schoenstatt in Germany is the International Centre for Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests. On Moriah, Abraham put his faith and trust in God. Israelites, Christians, and Moslems all celebrate Abraham as our Father in Faith. Fr Denis’ dream and conviction was that he would not be just the first and only Schoenstatt Diocesan Priest in Australia but that there would be many others, numerous as the stars seen by Abraham, who would

make the Covenant of Love, either as League or Institute Members. For this he was prepared to offer his life and his sufferings.

The Second Reading invites us to “live through love in his presence” knowing that we dwell always and are surrounded constantly by the providence of God. Like St Mary MacKillop, Denis had a strong faith in the providence of God. All things, all events, all gifts, all experiences have meaning and purpose. Denis asked of himself and of others – what is God saying to me? The 18th of each month, the day for renewal in the Covenant of Love, was always special following on from the founding day of the Schoenstatt Movement on 18th October 1914. So, it was especially significant and providential when he awoke, on the 18th of the month, after having been in an unexplained coma for three days at least in Liverpool Hospital.

Our Gospel is often the one of choice for funerals. It continues our trust in Divine Providence. On Saturday evening, 6th October, in Mary Potter Nursing Home, Ryde, as I was proclaiming this passage of John’s Gospel, Denis peacefully passed

from this life into eternal life. He had completed his journey home to the Father. The one whom he had loved and served faithfully as Christian, Priest, and Schoenstatter called him from the joys and sufferings of this life into the glory prepared for him so that he may rest with Fr Kentenich in the peace and love of his Blessed Mother's arms in the presence of the eternal Father.



The seminarian Denis Foley at Springwood – 1956

EULOGY FOR DENIS

By his Brother - Peter

Denis Patrick Foley – Priest, son, brother, uncle, great-uncle and friend.

We wish to share with you a little of our brother Denis' life. Denis was born just before WWII, the eldest son of our parents, Enid and Noel. Denis was the eldest of six, three boys and three girls, a good catholic family.



1962 – Ordination

All of us went to primary school at St Martha's Strathfield, the boys went on to St Patrick's College,

Strathfield. “Let your light shine” is the motto of the school and that is what he did.

Denis went to the seminary at Springwood straight from school. Greg, our youngest brother, had not been born. Denis finished his studies at Manly and was ordained at St Mary’s Cathedral on 21st July 1962 at the enthusiastic age of 23. His first car in his first parish, Kingsgrove, was a second-hand pushbike. Denis’ most notable achievement as a priest apart from all the individuals that his life has touched was probably building the parish of Menai from scratch. We are very proud of our brother, Denis, for being such a good influence on so many people in so many parishes over some 55 years.

Mondays were happy times for Mum and Dad, as that was the night Denis came home faithfully every week for dinner, unless he had become a little lost while bushwalking. They were always there for him on Mondays. If we wished to gather as a family that was when we did it. After Mum and Dad died the custom of Mondays continued at one or other of his sibling’s homes. Denis was very family orientated.

Denis enriched our lives by always being there. He was our “big brother” and he was like a second father to us. Denis was the “rock” in the family, the one some of us would turn to when we needed advice or clarification. He was a “rough diamond” a “no-frills Foley” with a heart of gold. Denis’s turn of phrase was often cryptic. Many of us didn’t always understand what he was trying to say, however, if we asked him to explain he would do it, revealing himself to be a willing teacher. Denis was a wise, and holy man; with a caring nature and an eye for helping others. He endeared himself to his parishioners and friends. He had a quirky sense of humour and a big laugh that helped fill any room with joy.

Bushwalking was a great love of Denis’ life. He joined the Catholic Bushwalkers Club in 1966. Several of his priest friends used to bushwalk every Monday on their day off. His enjoyment of bushwalking extended to his siblings. Denis would take them on countless bushwalking trips on his day off and in holidays. One of many stories is that he loaded three-year old Greg into a backpack and went for a

long bushwalk in the hinterland of Umina. Denis wanted to practice carrying weight in his new pack. Denis loved his canoes and all-outdoor adventures. Greg and I once helped Denis move some canoes down the Nepean River to a boys' camp with our father, Noel on board. Denis thought it would be good to get Noel out into nature. It had been quite raining a bit. The river was swollen. The rapids seemed huge. We went over weirs like they weren't there and capsized on every rapid. We almost killed poor old Noel. He only went out with us the once. We boys took our sister Colleen on a trip to Mt Wilson on a canyoning adventure; it nearly killed her too and she didn't venture out with Denis again either. Those of us who did go on to share many adventures admired his bushcraft and company.

We were privileged to have our very own family priest. He was always there for us when we needed him for celebrations of Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals and Anointings of the Sick. We always looked forward to his Homilies.

Denis loved the children and he was always hungry for news about them. He gave of himself and spent time with all seven nieces and nephews at family gatherings and on outdoor adventures. Before John, Gwenanne's husband died, Denis promised to be a "grandfather figure" to his great nieces and nephews and he did a wonderful job.

Denis had a special affiliation with the Schoenstatt Movement and our sister Elizabeth will speak of Denis's involvement there.

And continued by his sister - Elizabeth:

Denis first encountered Schoenstatt in 1966 as assistant priest in St. Marys Parish. Schoenstatt became his life and his mission; one could say his passion which I was lucky to share with him. Any spare time he had, he devoted to serving the Schoenstatt Movement in Australia. His love for Schoenstatt, the Mother Thrice Admirable, Fr. Kentenich and the Shrine, deepened and he answered God's call to enter the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests in 1978. His final commitment to the community was in 1986. His

course brothers testify to his loyalty to the priests' community, although separated by a great distance, and their course ideal which was one of adoration. One course brother wrote: "Adoration has become dear to his heart. A replica of the "little Monstrance", which is also on Moriah (the priests' mountain in Germany), has since built a bridge from him to us. It was not just about Eucharistic adoration; it was about the "adoration of the Father's will" which he has sought in the everyday...". Although he was the only member of his community in Australia, he offered all, as a loyal son of the founder, for Schoenstatt's mission for the Church in Australia.

We are sad to lose our brother Denis, yet we are grateful for all the memories we hold and especially grateful that, although he suffered greatly, God granted him a prayerful, peaceful death.

Denis' 79th birthday
with siblings



Visit of Course Brothers in Australia on the occasion of his
Silver Jubilee in 1987.



From left to right: Denis Foley, Bishop Kelly, Bishop of Toowoomba, Qld, Harald Schweizer, Andreas Rapp, Guido Sauer.

**Denis Foley, member of the Institute of Schoenstatt
Diocesan Priests
and confrere of our Adoration Course.**

Andreas Rapp

When I think about Denis, what made him and shaped him, I find this summed up in the words: **A priest, a man who set out again and again.**

In 1976 he was the first Australian to set out for Moriah and our course, to make his way into the Diocesan Priests' Institute. At that time, he was already an established priest, while we as theologians were still on the way. He set out with us for the Father House at Mount Moriah, which was still under construction at that time. He was the first resident in the not yet completed Father's house. (On the way there they hit a hare, which Denis - practical as he was – picked up and gutted, so that we then had roast hare).

Every Monday he set off as a bushwalker into the beautiful countryside of his homeland. He was nicknamed "no way" because he always went cross-

country and was thus always allowed to discover new things. In the last years of his life, when it was no longer possible for him to walk all day because of trouble with his knees, he set off in his kayak. It was in his blood to set out, to dare new things, to go out.

He was allowed to discover and shape new territory in his parish of Menai, of which he was the first parish priest. He had a huge area for this, where a school, church, parish hall and rectory had to be built bit by bit. When we visited him there, the church and some buildings were finished, there was no rectory yet, he had to make do with the assistant priest's flat in the neighbouring parish. We celebrated a rather simple Sunday service, but we found that more young families joined in that Mass than at our family services in Germany.

I was touched by one little thing that shows his faithfulness. In his breviary he had an insert with dates of our Priests' Family Institute, so that he could keep the attachment to us alive over long distances.

He worked with the Schoenstatt Fathers (who are no longer in Australia) and belonged to a group of League priests.

Even in his old age, when he was already in poor health and had to watch what he ate, he set out to make contact with Schoenstatt (Germany) and also with our course. Even in the year before his death he visited us. The photo below was taken in front of the Moriah Shrine during this time.



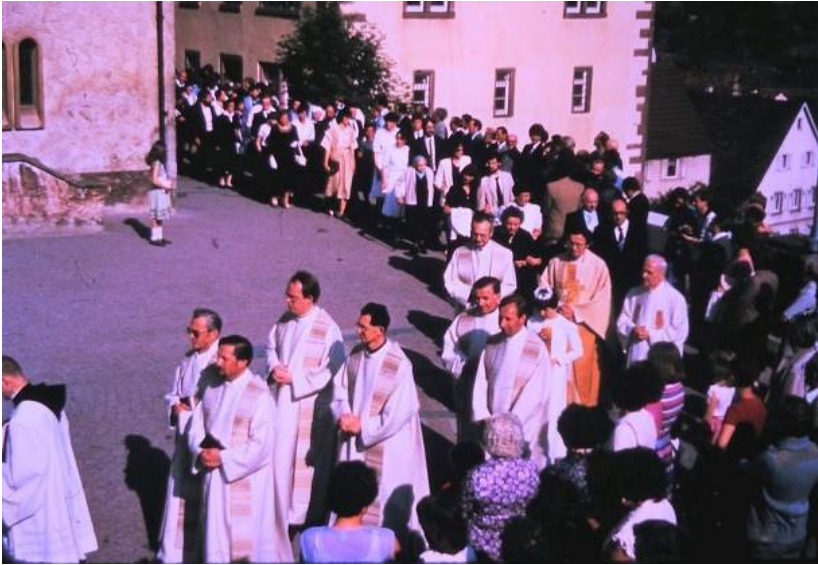
From left to right: Bernhard Winkler, Balthasar Blumers, Denis Foley, Wilhelm Mahlmeister, his course brother from Puerto Rico Santiago Rivera, who died soon after him, Oskar Bühler, Rector General Christian Löhr, Andreas Rapp, Georg Egle.



When Denis visited me in the parish in Östringen where I spent my diaconate in 1980, where Kurt Faulhaber was my boss, he told us about how he was always on his way. When Kurt then said: you should actually go to the pilgrimage

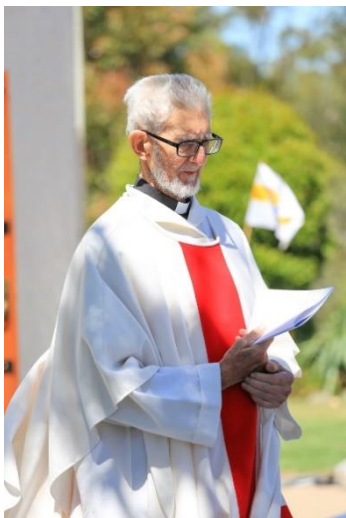
course, he replied: I am on the way a lot, but I am more often spending time in adoration. Adoration has grown close to his heart. A small replica of the "‘hand’ monstrance", which is also in the shrine on Moriah, built a bridge from him to us. However, he was not only interested in Eucharistic adoration, but also in "adoration of the Father's will". He searched in everyday life for how God guided him personally, he searched for how he guided our course, he looked for the traces of God. So, he left traces in Australia, in our course, in our family, to which he was very faithful, beyond his death.

Denis attended the First Mass of his course brother Andreas Rapp in 1981 in the south of Germany, Diocese of Freiburg



Andreas Rapp's First Mass, as attended by Fr Denis. In the photo are: Primizian Robert Zollitsch (Later Archbishop of Freiburg), Rector General Hermann Gebert, his successor Peter Wolf. And Rudolf Heller.

Fr Denis at Shrine and with Fr Kentenich's statue (notice Fr D's hat)



Fr Denis with youth and farewelling a friend – part of a priest's role



The first duty of a priest is as prophet – proclaim the Word . formally as in the Shrine and at Baptisms. Informally amongst his flock.



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This original painting by Eddie Cruze is the inspiration and adaptation for the painting by Theresa Ardler. It was Theresa who was asked by Fr Denis to paint the cross that adorns this Australian room in Belmonte. And the centre of the cross is reflected in the lower middle circle of her new painting.

This original painting is entitled

“THE INTIATION CEREMONY” – 22ND JUNE 1996.

“This painting depicts the story of an Initiation Ceremony, the story of boys becoming men. The circles on the outside represent the campsites of the

clans that belong to the same tribe. The elders have ordered their clans to send their boys to the main campsite, the inner circle, where they await their arrival.

The footprints suggest the path that they have taken. Because of the vast expanse of their tribal boundaries, sometimes it takes days for them to reach their destination. The large white dots surrounding the inner circle are the Elders who have earned the right to belong to the higher order. They are the ones responsible for educating, instructing and teaching the boys the sacred customs and rituals, secret beliefs and doctrines of their tradition. The large brown dots are Initiated Men, they are there to help, assist and encourage the newly initiated boys.

The stick figures show the jubilation and the different growth stages of the procedures of the ceremony. The yellow and white dots surrounding the figures separate them from the adults who have not yet been initiated, the other boys, and certain members of their clans.

In some tribes the initiation process can take up to three years, and it is a test of strength and character of one's ability to endure the gruelling, and sometimes torturous process. After accomplishing manhood, these men have earned the right to be honoured and respected within their clan and their tribe." Eddie Cruze

Thus, in the original painting the footprints represent the young people leaving their communities, which are painted as the outer circles, travelling to the gathering place, the centre circle. At this corroboree place there is ritual, ceremonies, dancing and sharing of stories. Hence the dancing figures showing the joy of unity.

Fr Denis led people from various parts of Australia to Belmonte. For his role in the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate see testimony by Fred Turner.

He did this as an Australian. (Represented by the wattle – the national flower and the platypus – a uniquely Australian monotreme).

Fr Denis knew the significance of the crowning of any MTA picture.

To understand the Movement one had to understand the Founder. Fr Denis was tireless in translating Fr Kentenich's words for English speakers. For this project he taught himself German.

His love of bushwalking changed to kayaking in later years. The blue around the Shrine symbolises Our Lady and of course the white her purity.

In the white around the Shrine is written Fr Kentenich's name and his Course Motto, which were the pillars on which he built his mission.

