

Announcements for Sacred Silence

Week 1 (Priest): The Importance of Sacred and Reverent Silence

St John of the Cross taught that “The Father spoke one Word, which was His Son, and this Word He always speaks in eternal silence, and in silence it must be heard by the soul.” (*Counsels of Light and Love, XI Prayer*)

Silence is the sacred place where we hear the Word of God. We long to hear his Word, to be to be filled with the life and strength he wants to share with us. Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find times of silence. So often we are surrounded by different forms of noise: news programs, phones, movies, tv, podcasts, social media, music, YouTube... It seems like sacred silence is being stolen from us. And without silence, our souls remain empty of God’s Word.

This year, as our Church endeavors in a National Eucharistic Revival, I invite you to renew an atmosphere of sacred and reverent silence before Mass. When you walk into the Church, I want to invite you to prepare yourself to meet God in Mass through sacred silence. Put away distractions such as checking your phone one last time. Try your best to avoid conversations in the pews. Quiet your hearts and your minds. Give your souls an opportunity to hear the voice of God in the silence.

Week 2 (Deacon): How to enter Sacred Silence with Lectio Divina

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council remind us that “In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them...” (*Dei Verbum 21*)

We are blessed to have a loving Father who speaks to each of his children! His word gives life to our souls, heals our wounds, strengthens our weakness, and inspires greatness within us. As we prepare to hear God speak to us through the Sacred Readings at Mass, we can already begin to meet him in the few short moments of reverent silence we have before Mass begins. So many of us have access to the daily Readings through the Missalettes in our pews, publications like *Magnificat* or *Word Among Us*, and even our phones.

Perhaps each of us can take a few moments to choose one of those Daily Readings and slowly read over it. Listen for the word or phrase that draws your mind or heart. Wonder about what God may be speaking to you through that verse. Say a prayer to God in response. Then rest in his peace for the final few moments before Mass begins.

Week 3 (Lector): How to enter Sacred Silence with PACT

Through Sacred and Reverent Silence, we meet God who speaks to us. The quiet moments before Mass are an opportunity to quiet our hearts before we begin to dialogue with our loving God. Here in these moments before Mass, we can already begin to love him. As we prepare to receive him in the Holy Eucharist, we offer *petitions*, prayers asking for his help on behalf of those we love and for our own needs. We *adore* him in the tabernacle who has waited eagerly for our visit. We express our sorrow and *contrition* for the times when we turned our backs on him and others in sin. And we *thank* God for the joys and blessings he has given us this week. These four ways of prayer: Petition, Adoration, Contrition, and Thanksgiving form a P.A.C.T with God that helps our relationship with him to grow.

Week 4 (Lector): How to listen to Jesus

There is a wonderful story about the 19th century French saint, Peter Julian Eymard: when he was 5 years old, his parents couldn't find him and asked his older sister, Marianne to look for him. When Marianne checked inside the Church, she saw him on a stepladder with his ear pressed against the tabernacle door. Astonished, she asked him what he was doing, at which point he responded that he was listening to Jesus!

As Christians, whenever we walk into a church and see that familiar red candle by the tabernacle, we know Jesus is there. He waits for us, wanting to speak a message of life and love to us. But are we eager to listen?

In this year of our Eucharistic Revival, we are providing a guide that individuals and family can use to help listen and talk with Jesus in the time of sacred silence before Mass. We hope this guide can be an aid to hearing Jesus' voice as you prepare for the Holy Mass. I invite each person and family to try one of the forms of prayer and then to be ready, because God may speak to you!