

Silence Is Golden: But How Golden?

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. SILENCE: A PREREQUISITE FOR PRAYER

- Silence as art (*Silence*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-15)
 - Frees us
 - Unleashes creativity
 - Experience self to be most like our Creator

- Our frenetic world (*Silence*, Chapter 2, pp. 18-29)
- The practice of silence (*Silence*, Chapter 3, pp. 30-48)
 - Sound/noise/white noise
 - Body
 - Mind
 - Soul

- A silence experience

2. PRAYER AS SACRED ENCOUNTER/DEEPENING RELATIONSHIP THROUGH SILENCE

- Some descriptions of what prayer is (*Silence*, Chapter 4, pp. 50-63)
 - “At the church meeting you must confess your sins, and not approach prayer with a bad conscience. That is the way of life.” (*Didache* 4:14)

 - “Lastly, he [Christ] is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised ‘where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them’ (Mt. 18:20).” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* no. 7)

 - “What is prayer? Prayer is the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God.” (*Baltimore Catechism* Q. 475)

 - “This mystery [of our faith], then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.” (*CCC* 2558)

- An imagery prayer experience
- Some ways of praying
 - Saying prayers
 - Centering prayer/Jesus prayer
 - *Lectio divina* (*Silence*, Chapter 5, pp. 64-70; Chapter 6, pp. 71-103)
 - Spontaneous/faith sharing
 - Contemplation

- Collects
 - Address to God + embellishment
 - Attribute of God
 - Petition(s)
 - Mediation (Through Christ our Lord . . .)

- Intercessions (Universal Prayer)
 - For the Church
 - For the world's salvation
 - For those in need
 - For our community's needs
- Prayer leads us to others (*Silence*, Chapter 7, pp. 104-112)
 - Ministry: Being / Doing
 - Full circle of silence: sent/spent

3. SILENCE DURING THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY

- SC no. 30: To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bearing. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.
- GIRM no. 45: nature of silence during liturgy depends on context: recollection, meditation, praise and prayer to God
- Required silences
 - GIRM no. 51: penitential act
 - GIRM no. 54: collect (“become aware of being in God’s presence and may call to mind their intentions”)
 - GIRM no. 78: “The Eucharistic Prayer requires that everybody listens to it with reverence and in silence.”
 - GIRM no. 271 (cf. no. 165, below): “After the purification of the chalice, the Priest should observe a brief pause for silence, and after this he says the Prayer after Communion.”
- Recommended silences
 - GIRM no. 45: before Mass in church, sacristy, vesting room, adjacent areas “so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred celebration in a devout and fitting manner.”
 - GIRM no. 56: in the Liturgy of the Word, “brief periods of silence are also appropriate, accommodated to the assembled congregation . . . [so that] the Word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the First and Second Reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the Homily.”
 - GIRM no. 66: “It is appropriate for a brief period of silence to be observed after the Homily.”
 - GIRM no. 71 (and 147): (Universal prayer): “The people, for their part, stand and give expression to their prayer either by an invocation said in common after each intention or by praying in silence.”
 - GIRM no. 164: (after Communion): “After this, the Priest may return to the chair. A sacred silence may now be observed for some time, or a Psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may be sung (cf. no. 88).
 - GIRM no. 165: “Then, standing at the chair or at the altar, and facing the people with hands joined, the Priest says, *Let us pray*; then, with hands extended, he recites the prayer after Communion. A brief period of silence may precede the prayer, unless this has already been observed immediately after Communion. At the end of the prayer the people acclaim, *Amen*.”

4. HOW GOLDEN IS SILENCE DURING LITURGY?

- Helps us make liturgy our own
- Establishes rhythm of personal/formal liturgical prayer
- Gives opportunity for mystery to impact us
- Enables impetus for living liturgy
- It is pure GOLD!