

## In Our Prayer

Both in our personal prayer and in our family prayer, we can benefit from some of these moments of silence:

*Listening to God's word.* We can read or listen to a brief passage from the word of God, or take a line from the psalms. After reading it or hearing it, we may reflect on it in silence. What is God saying to me? to our family? Is there something in my life that is not pleasing to God? Am I holding back? Am I a faithful follower of Jesus?

*Seeing God in nature.* We look about at the marvellous and beautiful world that God has made for us: mountains, sunlight, oceans, lakes, fields, trees, flowers, animals, clouds, stars. Nature reflects the power, love, and beauty of our God. The world is made through and for Christ, who is the king of all creation.

*Seeing God in others.* Jesus has told us that he is present with us when we love him and keep his commandments. He is also with those who suffer. When we help someone in pain or in need, we are showing our love for our God. When we encourage children with our love and example, we are helping them to become more like Jesus.

*Seeing God in events.* God is always with us. Nothing can happen to us that is not part of God's plan to save us. Whatever occurs, be it sad or joyful, is known by God our loving Father. Do we try to see God's hand in all that is happening in the world and in our life?

**In our prayer,** we need to be attentive to God's action, to see it with eyes of faith. We thank God for the good gifts showered on us, and ask for strength to carry our cross with Jesus. We ask for the courage and light of the Spirit to guide our steps each day.

## In Our Life

**Begin now:** Each day, take a few moments to be silent:

Reflect on God's goodness to you, your family, and your community.

Respond by thanking God in your prayer and in your life.

Pray for others who never pause to think about God or listen to the Spirit.

Be silent, be open, and let God speak in your time of prayer.

*Father, teach us to be silent:  
to listen to your Spirit,  
to hear your voice and heed it,  
to have time to reflect.*

*Father,  
we ask this grace  
through Christ our Lord. Amen!*

*"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."  
(cf. 1 Sam 3.10)*

Silence Liturgical Leaflet edited by the National Liturgy Office and published by Publications Service, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2500 Don Reid Drive, Ottawa, ON. K1H 2J2 Canada. Copyright © Concacan Inc., 1983, 2002, 2006. All rights reserved. This text may be reproduced for personal or parish use. For commercial licence, please contact the publisher.

# SILENCE

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Time to reflect and listen

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## Silence

**Noise:** In our modern life, noise is all around us: radio, TV, various forms of computer media, portable music pods, and so on. Too much noise is a form of pollution that can damage our hearing in some cases; worse still, constant noise can keep us too busy and superficial, gradually distracting us, ruining our taste for better things, keeping us from serious thinking, and making our prayer life more difficult.

*Do I use noise as a crutch, as a way of avoiding thinking, praying, or listening to someone in need? Do I use noise to escape from reality?*

**Getting away from noise:** We have to work to provide ourselves with some moments of silence in our lives. Plan at least ten minutes alone each day, with no radio or TV, in quiet. If outdoors, look at the clouds or plants; inside, watch a plant grow, or just close your eyes.

**Time to listen:** Learn to use these moments of silence to listen:

*Listen to God.* Take a line from the psalms or an event from the gospels. What is God saying to you? Is there something in your life that needs changing? Ask your heavenly Father for help.

*Listen to yourself.* What is important in your life? What are you living for? Are you doing everything for the glory of God?

*Listen to others.* Are you hearing the people around you? Are you listening to their needs?

**Benefits:** We need some moments of silence in our life each day, so that we can hear what is truly important and keep a balance in our living, which is increasingly active. Silent moments give us needed time to breathe.

## At Mass

Silence is important and necessary in every good celebration of the liturgy.

**Before we begin,** it is always helpful to pause for a moment of quiet reflection and prayer. We are here because God our Father has called us together as beloved children. We are here to praise God and pray for the world.

**Penitential rite:** At the beginning of Mass, the priest invites us to remember that we are weak and in need of God's saving strength. In silence, each of us may ask the Lord Jesus for forgiveness. We need his help to be more faithful in following him each day.

**"Let us pray"** – As the priest begins the opening prayer, he invites us all to join in a time of silent prayer. As individuals, we ask God for our personal needs and pray for all the people on earth. As members of this praying community, we listen as the priest offers the prayer in our name. Then he concludes by offering it to the Father, through Jesus our Lord, in the Holy Spirit. We approve of the prayer by our *Amen!* – yes, we agree!

**Readings:** During the readings, we listen with faith as the readers proclaim them with conviction. After each reading, a significant moment of silence should be observed. We need time to pause and absorb some of the echoes of God's word, to let it penetrate into our hearts and lives, to let the Spirit speak to each one of us. Calm reflection on what we have heard, and prayer for ourselves, for others, and for the Church are beneficial for all.

*Responsorial psalm:* The psalm is a reflection on the first reading. We sing the psalm refrain and reflect on the words of the psalm sung by the cantor.

## In Liturgy

**Homily:** The homily is to be a prayerful reflection on God's word for this community of God's people. Faith is deepened by a moment of silence after the preaching.

**Communion:** During communion time, there is a balance between community song and silence. In the communion procession, we sing together (usually through a simple refrain) as we come to eat the bread of life and drink the cup of salvation. Some moments of silence follow for individual reflection and prayer. Then the community may join in singing a psalm or song of praise.

**After the celebration:** During the rest of the day and the week, we are invited to reflect on the readings and on the meaning of what we do when we celebrate Mass together. Some people look over the readings and the responsorial psalm during the week and let the Lord speak to them anew.

**We need to remember** the meaning of silent moments in the liturgy: they are not "wasted" minutes or mere "pauses" in the action, but important times for personal prayer within the community's worship.

*Problems.* Sometimes the priest does not leave time for people to pray: they can ask him to give them adequate time for these moments of silence. Sometimes musicians want to fill these times with music: they need to be reminded that silent moments are times for all to pray.

When liturgy is celebrated without adequate times of silence and reflection, it becomes much less effective and can seem hurried. Good liturgy needs a number of silent moments for the benefit of all.