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Silence Before the Mystery

by Rolando Moreno

As we enter the heart of the summer and hopefully a slower pace of life, especially regarding ministry, it is important for us who serve in the Church to cultivate time for silence and prayer. Silence is an integral part of Christian life and spiritual renewal. In our busy lives however, how often do we have silence or make intentional time for it? As one busy with family life and ministry, I often find myself longing for just a few moments of silence. The need for silence can be met in short intervals, in just a little time of quiet and prayer throughout the day. *Interior silence* is that stillness referred to in Sacred Scripture, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Similarly in Psalm 37:7 we hear these words, “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him”. The silence we seek is the stillness before the Lord, the awareness and recognition of his presence in our lives always, including the mundane moments of our day. Stillness does not necessarily mean inaction. We can have a stillness (interior silence, peace) amid a busy life. It is the fruit of prayer.

The model of silence for us all is St. Joseph. As you know, we have no actual words from him in the Gospels. What can his silence teach us? St. Joseph’s silence exemplifies reverence and humility. He understands the presence of those he is in: Jesus and Mary. He teaches us to contemplate the Mystery of the Incarnation (Jesus) and the Immaculate Conception (Mary). His silence in scripture is not the absence of words but the silence before the Mystery. Being in the presence of God quiets the soul, which predisposes our hearts to grace. St. Joseph also lived action and thus teaches us *active contemplation*, the model for a busy family life and a life of work.

I pray that it in this latter part of summer, you may all be able to find some time for silence, prayer, and contemplation so that your souls will be nourished for continued service in the vineyard. “*For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him*” (Psalm 62:5). In this year dedicated to St. Joseph, let us go to him as a model of silence, active contemplation, stillness, and prayer. *Ite Ad Joseph!*

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What's Coming Up

August 1: Annual Family BBQ at Our Lady Of Peace Retreat center is from 11am to 3pm , find more about it [here](#)

August 18: As we continue our series in honor of St. Joseph, Sr. Veronica Schuler, our beloved Chancellor, will delight us on [Facebook Live](#) at 7pm. Stay tuned to our archdiocese website for more details.



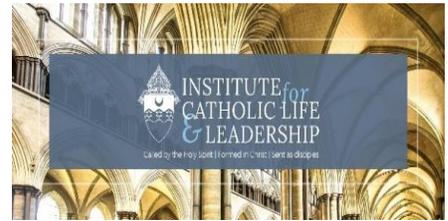
August 28: Orientation/Registration Deadline for Foundational Certificate Program. See below for links/info.

The Continuing Educational Aim Of The Archdiocese:

Each month, if you have followed this newsletter, we have tried to put together a workshop or two, or an article or two, in both languages, with which to support the community. From Priests to DRE's to the volunteer catechist, every effort made has been to inform everyone during this pandemic of the resources that are available to them. In the next few months, you are going to be hearing a lot from these two educational platforms as the Archdiocese tries to effect a basic standard of excellent catechesis. It is the desire of the Archbishop to make sure every person who is speaking for the church and its beliefs, does so in an informed way. To that end, both of these platforms will be offered to all in our archdiocese, regardless of that person's ability to afford them. The Franciscan Catechetical Institute has made an agreement with Archbishop Sample that their content will now be made available to the whole of the Archdiocese for free. Now, you can learn about your Catholic Faith and how to teach it regardless of need, either in person or online. Read more below.

IN PERSON: The Institute for Catholic Life and Leadership

We are happy to announce that the Institute will offer a new cohort of students for our Foundational Certificate in Theology and Pastoral Ministry!! The new cohort will take place at St. Joseph parish in Salem! Registration is now open! If you are interested in learning your faith more in-depth or have catechists who would like formation, please refer them to the Institute. To register and more information about scholarships, go to our [website](#)



ONLINE: Catechetical Institute

If you have always wanted to have a more complete understanding of your faith, now is the time!! The archdiocese is embarking on a new partnership with the Catechetical Institute of Franciscan University which will make workshops free to all who want to learn and earn a certificate. Available in English and Spanish, and with multiple tracts of study that are particular to your role in your parish. This month our highlighted workshop [Pedagogy of Revelation and the Response of Faith](#). Taught by Petroc Willey, who authored [The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis](#), this workshop delves in the sacred pattern of God's methodology — how He reaches out to us, and how He calls us and enables us to *freely* respond. Also available is a short webinar, [How to Grow Your Spiritual Life](#), focusing on interior peace and joy in the middle of a busy world and a hostile culture.



Articles on The Importance of Silence

As much as we sometimes seem to crave silence, for the children in our classes and in our families, silence can be daunting, if we see it as surrendering our spirit to a terrible nothingness. So, if the need for silence could be fostered from within the individual person from a young age, then it would be seen as less of a spiritual practice but rather as a creative process of inner growth. This free article from Catechetical Review, [Children's Catechesis: Cultivating an Ecosystem of Silence](#), is a great way to encourage your families to see silence in an alternative way. Another free article, which is available in Spanish, [Catequesis para Niños: La formación de una cultura de oración en el hogar](#), explores how to develop a culture of prayer in children.



Bilingual Resources

We are always on the hunt for resources that a whole staff can utilize regardless of their preferred language. [The Fulfillment of All Desire](#) by Ralph Martin provides encouragement and direction for the pilgrim who desires to know, love, and serve our Lord. Available in [Spanish](#) as well.



Speaker Spotlight Deacon James Thurman

Deacon Thurman was received into the diaconate two years ago and is the youngest in the Archdiocese. He currently serves in Silverton at St. Paul's Catholic Church as director of faith formation and is the founder and organizer of the Men's Holy League Conference. We recently sat together to discuss St. Joseph and the importance of silence. [Deacon James](#) is available for speaking events on a variety of topics.

Question > In listening to [your recent talk](#) for the Archdiocese on St. Joseph, I had several questions that I wanted to follow up with. You mentioned that most Catholics who have a devotion to Mary consider her a spiritual mother, their mama, so to speak, however, they have a harder time seeing St. Joseph as their spiritual father. Why do you think that is?

Fatherhood tends to get lost in the Godhead. If you reflect on Jesus's life, you will notice he was influenced by two Fathers. Learning how to be a man and how to carry himself, learning St. Joseph's charism within his vocation as the head of the family were formative in Jesus' youth. His humanity was formed by St. Joseph. The understanding of the influence of St. Joseph is relatively recent, even though many of the saints had a great devotion to him. And that it wasn't rare, the best example would have been Theresa of Avila. It's fitting and providential that we have become aware of his influence in a time when we have a crisis in what it means to be a father. The roles of men as leaders in the greater society and the family have been attacked in the recent cultural revolution and we need St. Joseph's model to get through this.

We all know the statistics of how the internet effect's how we teach and how we live. The noise of this modern world interrupts how the students and families are hearing us - or rather - not hearing us.

Knowing this, as we turn to St. Joseph, we realize that through all of the Gospels, this father is silent. Can you speak to the importance of silence in this modern technological world and how St. Joseph's behavior can play a role.

Silence is how we hear God. And that is the most important thing we can do in this life. It is not just devotionals or the prayers we all know - it is in the silence that we are able to wind down and eliminate the noise. There is a temptation to keep busy with prayers and the next new devotion or novena. Those are gateways, developing a prayer life is step one, but the next step, if we look at the lives of the saints, is contemplation. The only way to do that is to develop an ability to become internally silent. And that takes practice.

Everyday our Catholic world seems to be more polarized regarding our beliefs and ideas. There are members of the Church who feel silenced and "canceled" from both within and outside of the Church. So, in light of what you just said, is it contemplation that we should strive for? How can this lesson of silence speak to us when we are feeling silenced by others?

Contemplation implies that we are thinking about something, what I am talking about is active listening. Remembering that God is always in control and is always speaking to us. The peace He will give us is in His presence should be paramount. He is always speaking to us, but we have to be able to hear. The trust that we develop in prayer will allow us to rely on His intervention when it happens. Trust is in the Presence and in the silence. We all participate in God's divine plan. In this plan, is a mission for all of us. In St. Joseph's plan, his mission was that he was asked to be a model of virtue.

Men's ministries are always at the forefront of what you are responding to, can you talk a little about what you are working on right now.

Well, I just got back from CMLA, the [Catholic Men's Leadership Alliance](#), where about 50 national leaders meet and discuss the direction of men's conferences and discover more Catholic resources for men. Establishing Holy Leagues in parishes is one of my primary focuses. The Holy League is a men's ministry that is founded on four pillars: Adoration, Confession, Men's reflection and prayer, and fraternity. There's a few chapters around Oregon and its a great blessing. The Holy League will be having a [major conference](#) called "LEPANTO: A Call to Put on the Armor of God in our Post-Christian Culture." On November 6th 2021. We will be having many speakers including Archbishop Sample, Gabriel Castillo, and Dr. Dan Schneider. A few other speakers are also planned.



A Short Visit to the Blessed Sacrament Before Meditation

I place myself in the presence of Him,
In whose Incarnate Presence I am before.
I place myself there, I adore Thee.
Oh, my Savior, present here as God and Man,
in soul and body, in true flesh and blood.
I acknowledge and confess that I kneel before the Sacred Humanity.
Conceived in Mary's womb and lay in her arms
Who grew up to a man's estate and
by the sea of Galilee called the 12.
Wrought miracles and spoke words of wisdom and peace
Which, in due season, hung upon the cross
lay in the tomb, rose from the dead
and now reigns in Heaven.
I bless thee, I praise thee
I give myself wholly to Him
who is the True Bread of my soul,
and my everlasting joy.

Blessed John Henry Newman