

SILENCE

A Withdrawal into the Desert for 40 Days



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Do Trappist Monks take a vow of silence? Actually, no. However, Trappists and other contemplative religious orders maintain a spirit of silence in their monastic enclosures by avoiding unnecessary talk, and foregoing television, mobile phones and other distractions, thereby freeing themselves to focus completely on God. In this Sunday's Gospel, Our Lord, after his Baptism, withdrew into the desert for 40 days, where he was tempted by Satan. Before critical moments in his ministry, Our Lord often retreated to deserted places to pray alone in silence. For example, he went to the desert mountains before choosing the twelve apostles (Luke 6: 12-16), and into the Garden of Gethsemane at the beginning of His Passion. This movement into the desert, mountain and garden are transitions into silence. During this Lenten season, we are reminded to move into the silence to find God. Cardinal Robert Sarah in his excellent book, *The Power Of Silence: Against The Dictatorship Of Noise* reflected that: "Christ lived for thirty years in silence. Then, during his public life, he withdrew to the desert to listen to and speak with his Father. The world vitally needs those who go off into the desert. Because God speaks in silence."

The constant "noise" of the world moves forward at a distracting speed and volume which drowns out our connection with God. So, during these forty days of Lent let us enter into silence. We can do this during Eucharistic adoration; moments before, during and after Holy Mass, as well as any time during the day or night. The setting aside of a time for silence to reflect upon the love of God will lead us to a deeper relationship with our Savior. St. Maximilian Kolbe reflecting on receiving the Holy Eucharist and post communion silent contemplation said: "Your Blood now runs in mine, Your Soul, Incarnate God, compenetrates mine, giving courage and support." During this time of Almsgiving, Fasting, and Prayer let us go to the desert and "fast" from our cell phone, television, unnecessary speech, social media, news, and the business of rushing here and there being engulfed by the distractions of the world. Just for a moment, in silence, immerse ourselves into the deep ocean of the love of God. Through these silent moments and meditation, we will learn to "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). May Our Blessed Mother keep you under her mantle during this Lenten Season of hope.