

**REDISCOVERING THE
CALL TO SILENCE**

"The word, in fact, can only be spoken and heard in silence, outward and inward."

"Ours is not an age which fosters recollection. At times one has the impression that people are afraid of detaching themselves, even for a moment, from the mass media."

"Only in silence can the word of God find a home in us, as it did in Mary, woman of the word and, inseparably, woman of silence."

*-Pope Benedict XVI
Verbum Domini,
September 2010*

*Still as dew falls on the meadow,
Softly as the seed in sod,
Silent as a passing shadow,
Comes the mystery of God.*

DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP

"The voice of one crying out in the desert..."

"He must increase and I must decrease." Saint Augustine does not hesitate to declare: "All voices must decrease in the measure that one advances in the knowledge of Christ. The more wisdom reveals itself to us, the less we need the voice: the voice in the depths, the voice in the psalms, the voice in the Gospel. Let him come, the Word who was at the beginning! This Word who was God! Thus let the voice gradually cease to perform its function, as the soul progresses toward Christ. For God has a secret language, in many people he addresses the heart, and it is

a mighty murmur in the great silence of the heart when he says: I am your salvation."

The more man advances in the mystery of God, the more he loses speech. Man is enveloped in a power of love, and he becomes mute from astonishment and wonder. Before God, we disappear



snapped up by the greatest silence.

The wisdom of God has generated in every person a great love that nourishes the little silence of the human heart. Astonishment at the divine silence closes our mouth, like a celebrant who, performing his priestly duties before God, burns incense and adores in silence. Nothing in the world is more important than the silence of God. No human noises, even the sweet sound of the Gospel, can express the magnificent silence of God.

- Robert Cardinal Sarah, *The Power of Silence*, #86-88.

Wait ... and let the silence speak a new year of grace

Our years are typically full of busyness, the schedule only amps up as the holidays approach. For me, this year has been no exception — between work and family and other activities — it's been a year where "peace" and "silence" have not been common companions. These advent times of silence allow me to begin to settle my heart. I enter with anticipation into the silence. My

prayer is that we might all have some quiet to reflect upon the true purpose of the Advent Season. I am reminded of what it must have been like for the ancient followers of God, awaiting the coming of the Messiah.

We, too, must wait. We wait upon the Lord to hear the cries of our hearts . . . We wait upon the Lord to see justice for the oppressed . . . We wait upon the

Lord to feel hope in the midst of our despair and challenging times . . . We wait, in a season structured to remind us of silence and darkness, to see light and hear shouts of hope . . . We wait . . . We wait also for Him to return again . . . that in His coming, the world might again be made right.

- Mae Elise Cannon

**DAILY READINGS
FOR ADVENT**

*"There was a tiny
whispering sound.
When he heard this,
Elijah hid his face."
- 1 Kings 19:12-13*

FIRST WEEK

Sunday Mk 13:33-37
Monday Is 2:1-5
Tuesday Ps 72
Wednesday Is 25:6-10
Thursday Matt 7:21-27
Friday Ps 98
Saturday Is 30:19-21

SECOND WEEK

Sunday Mk 1:1-8
Monday Ps 85
Tuesday Zech 2:14-17
Wednesday Ps 103
Thursday Lk 1:26-38
Friday Matt 11:16-19
Saturday Sir 48:1-11

THIRD WEEK

Sunday Jn 1:6-8, 19-28
Monday Jer 23:5-8
Tuesday Jgs 13:2-7
Wednesday Is 7:10-14
Thursday Sgs 2:8-14
Friday Lk 1:57-66
Saturday Lk 1:67-79

FOURTH WEEK

Sunday Ps 89

"Watchfulness" as Preached by Blessed John Henry Newman

"True Christians, whoever they are, watch, and inconsistent Christians do not. Now what is watching?... Do you know the feeling in matters of this life, of expecting a friend, expecting him to come, and he delays? Do you know what it is to be in unpleasant company, and to wish for the time to pass away, and the hour strike when you may be at liberty? Do you know what it is to be in anxiety lest something should happen which may happen or may not, or to be in suspense about some important event, which makes your heart beat when you are reminded of it, and of which you think the first thing in the morning? Do you know what it is to have a friend in a distant country, to expect news of him, and to wonder from day

to day what he is now doing, and whether he is well? Do you know what it is so to live upon a person who is present with you, that your eyes follow his, that you read his soul, that you see all its changes in his countenance, that you anticipate his wishes, that you smile in his smile, and are sad in his sadness, and are downcast when he is vexed, and rejoice in his successes?

To watch for Christ is a feeling such as all these; as far as feelings of this world are fit to shadow out those of another.

He watches for Christ who has a sensitive, eager, apprehensive mind; who is awake, alive, quick-sighted, zealous in seeking and honoring Him; who looks out for Him in all

that happens, and who would not be surprised, who would not be over-agitated or overwhelmed, if he found that He was coming at once.

And he watches *with* Christ, who, while he looks on to the future, looks back on the past, and does not so contemplate what his Savior has purchased for him, as to forget what He has suffered for him.

This then is to watch; to be detached from what is present, and to live in what is unseen; to live in the thought of Christ as He came once, and as He will come again; to desire His second coming, from our affectionate and grateful remembrance of His first."

(Parochial & Plain Sermons, Volume 4, #22)

Daily Lighting of the Advent Wreath

*As we make the Sign of the Cross,
the leader says:*

Our help is in the name of the Lord.
R/. Who made heaven and earth.

A song may be sung as the candle is lighted

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Opening Prayer

Open our minds and our hearts, O Lord,
to hear your word of promise!
Send us the Holy Spirit
to guide us through these holy days.
Quiet our worries and anxieties
and help us to wait in joyful hope
for the coming of our Savior,
Jesus Christ who is Lord for ever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Scripture Reading (see Daily Readings)

A reflection may be shared about the Reading

Concluding Prayer

Lord our God,
we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:
He is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,
He is the Wisdom that teaches and guides us,
He is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we light the candles of this wreath.

May the wreath and its light
be a sign of Christ's promise
to bring us salvation.
May He come quickly and not delay.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R/. Amen.

As we make the Sign of the Cross, we say:

May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil,
and bring us everlasting life.
R/. Amen.