



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

FR. Tom Krosnicki, SVD

Cloister Culture and Silence

Have you noticed some items from the baggage of our cultural past that are difficult to find these days? How many households have land line phones? What about coal shoots? Or milk boxes? Very few, if any, I am sure. Today's youth would not even know of what I speak!

There is one other item from the culture of the past which is often hard to find today in the midst of our frenetic lives and chaotic world. I refer, of course, to **silence**. A good dose of silence would certainly benefit our culture and society today; it might even help to cure some of its bothersome ills.

Silence in our lives is not a gift in or for itself. Teachers and parents know this. Spiritual directors know this. One who cultivates space for silence knows this. Silence is the quiet space one defines within and around oneself in order to hear and receive. Receive and hear what? The word of another, the Word of the Lord.

An element central to the cloister culture, as I have come to know it here at Mount Grace, is of course silence. If some degree of **silence** in everyone's life is beneficial (even psychologically necessary), it is crucial to the way of life of a contemplative community such as our Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters. Blessed Paul VI had it right: "The search for closeness with God involves the truly vital need of a silence embracing the whole being." Inner and outer silence, therefore, is what is cultivated and what one can expect to find in the true cloister culture. Just as the cloister walls define the boundaries of space that circumscribe the habitat of wholesome silence, so each Sister strives to welcome and nurture her inner silence to make room to hear and respond to God. Such is the silence of one's very being.

There is, of course, a healthy rhythm of sound and **silence** in true cloister culture. Time is given for the Sisters to converse; silence has not rendered them mute. As the Sisters' Constitutions clearly direct: "During working time we observe silence. Nevertheless, it is permitted to say or discuss what is necessary and to speak a friendly word required by charity and courtesy." Furthermore, community norms specify when there will be conversation during meals and when the Sisters are encouraged to share together in common recreation.

Cloister silence offers a hearty challenge. We need times of silence in our lives. If you don't have such, it is time to create them to let God speak his Word to the silence of your heart. Stop and listen to the

"sounds of silence."

Eucharist Prayer

"The Holy Eucharist contains the whole spiritual treasure of the Church, that is, Christ himself.... He who is the living bread, whose flesh, vivified by the Holy Spirit and vivifying, gives life to men."
Vatican II



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Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters
(Pink Sisters)



"One of the most important tasks of a Christian is prayer to the Infinite GOD. Prayer is a spiritual sacrifice offered to God."
St. Arnold Janssen

"Whoever Eats My Flesh And Drinks My Blood Has Eternal Life And I Will Raise Him On The Last Day."
Jn. 6: 54

Mount Grace Happenings



Bishop Rice's Visit

Our good friend, the **Most Reverend Edward Rice, Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau**, made his annual visit celebrating his 31st Anniversary of Priestly Ordination, January 3. He offered the optional Mass in Honor of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, which St. John Paul II restored into the Church's liturgy during Christmastide. This year his breakfast with us brought him a delightful surprise, since our eldest, Sister Mary Bertha is from his Diocese of Springfield, having been born and raised in that city. He knows the neighborhood where her father had his restaurant, in fact the Bishop told us that he lives on that same street, St. Louis Street, but Harry's Pancake House is no longer there! This yearly visit is always an anticipated joy for us in the Christmas season and it is amazing that he has been able to keep the custom for the past thirty-one years!



The Much-Needed Repainting

In honor of our Ninety Years since the foundation of Mount Grace Chapel and Convent of Perpetual Adoration, we are having our chapel completely repainted and re-finished this summer. If you are able to contribute to this project, for our Eucharistic Lord's house, we would sincerely appreciate it and we know the Lord himself will reward you. Thank you and God bless you!

Sister Mary Catherine and all the Sisters



John Cho, Martin Herrera, Hoang Tran, Christian Castro, with our Chaplain, Fr. Tom Krosnicki, SVD (at the back)

The SVD Novices

The four Novices of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) from Techny, USA visited our convent on their way to their 30-day retreat. They are a group of enthusiastic young men, three of them aspiring to be Priests after Christ's own heart and one to be an SVD Brother. To achieve their dreams, let us accompany them and those in formation with our spiritual support. May the prayer of Fr. Tom Krosnicki, SVD for the four novices be ours too: "May their following of Christ be firm and lasting."

The Power of Prayer

The incessant hum of traffic on the Interstate Highway 70 within walking distance of our cloister and the airplanes flying low overhead on their landing pattern into Lambert Airport keep us connected to sounds outside. Sounds of doorbells and phones ringing inside join us to those who wish to request prayer. Our life, as our chaplain noted in his article, is one of silence, but the needs of those outside of the cloister arrive through buzzes or ringing and other noise like fire engines and police car sirens. Our Constitutions remind us that "Every distress and hardship in the world should find a vigorous response in our prayer." So we keep attuned to these interruptions of the cloister silence. Just as bells that call us to the various hours of prayer within the cloister, these other sounds from outside also call us to pray.

Pope Francis exhorts us and all contemplatives: We pray and intercede for our many brothers and sisters who are prisoners, migrants, refugees and victims of persecution. Our prayer embraces all families who are experiencing difficulties, the unemployed, the poor, the sick and all the urgent situations causing suffering in our world.

Our Holy Father goes on to explain that it is silence that enables us to welcome all the urgent intentions of our brothers and sisters in the world along with all the events of today's world and bring them in faith to the Lord in fervent prayer.

Our personal and liturgical prayer is nurtured in silence. The rosary is a powerful prayer of intercession.



Reading, study and reflection on Sacred Scripture and daily spiritual reading, done in silence, nourishes our prayer life.

"The Word of God is the first source of all spirituality." St. John Paul II, Pope

"The rosary, which all are encouraged to pray daily, and the Way of the Cross are recommended as proved forms of meditative prayer." Our Directory 414.1

St. Arnold gave us the Quarter Hour Prayer to be a means of walking in the presence of God all day. The convent chimes ring out every fifteen minutes to remind us to "glance at God" as St. Arnold said.