



CHURCH OF SAINT MARY
510 N. Prospect Ave. • Alma, MI 48801
Office (989)463-5370 • Fax (989)463-1369



MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH
605 S. Franklin St. • St. Louis, MI 48880
Office (989)681-5080 • Fax (989)681-2887

Dear Parish Family,

Last week I had the opportunity to meet with our parishioners whose apostolic work is meeting the spiritual needs of the inmates at the three local prisons. In the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, we hear the righteous ask: "When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?" And the Lord responds: "Whatever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me." If you have any interest, please call Ray at 463-3912.

This seems like a good time to speak about the importance of various apostolates and groups in the parish. While the missive, "Many hands make light work," is not itself biblical, in Exodus 18, Moses' father-in-law advises him to share the work of God with the entire people of God. Some of you may remember the days of Rosary Societies, Altar Societies, and Holy Name Societies. There are many important things that need to be done ranging from intercessory prayer, to heavy lifting. I ask each one of you to daily pray the prayer of Venerable Cardinal John Henry Newman which is below.

Please continue to spread the word about the daily Mass schedule. I am also encouraging the praying of the Rosary 25 minutes before all daily and Sunday Masses. This allows for community prayer as well as time for silent prayer immediately before Mass.

I want to thank the ministers at Sunday Masses who have been so generous as to step up when the individuals who are scheduled cannot be present. I especially want to thank the altar servers who have been so very helpful to me during the Holy Mass. I encourage all of you to check-in at the sacristy even if you aren't scheduled to see if you may be needed to help out at any Mass.

For those altar servers looking for something to do Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 8:45 am, or Wednesday at 11:45 am (in Alma) or Wednesday at 8:45 am (in St. Louis); please come to daily Mass and serve!

Thank you for your continued prayers for our parishes and for each other!

Praying with the Saints

Ven. John Henry Newman

Fr. David

God created me to do him some definite service;
he has committed some work to me
which he has not committed to another.

+++

I have my mission –
I may never know it in this life,
but I shall be told it in the next...
Therefore, I will trust him...

If I am in sickness,
my sickness may serve him;
in perplexity,
my perplexity may serve him;
if I am in sorrow,
my sorrow may serve him...

+++

He does nothing in vain;
he may prolong my life,
he may shorten it,
he knows what he is about. Amen.

Venerable John Henry Newman, C.O. (21 February 1801 – 11 August 1890), was a British Roman Catholic priest, cardinal and poet. Formerly a priest in the Church of England, Newman was received into the Catholic Church in October 1845. He will be beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on September 19 of this year.



The Sounds of Silence

Q: What is the role of silence in a Mass? When should there be silence?

A: Silence has a very important role to play in the celebration as indicated by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 45.

Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times. ... Its purpose, however, depends on the time it occurs in each part of the celebration. Thus within the Act of Penitence and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; but at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts.

The specific periods of silence recommended in the GIRM encourage a general atmosphere of interior and exterior silence for all the participants at Mass.

This silence should be sought while listening to the readings, the homily, or the proclamation of the eucharistic and other priestly prayers. This helps quiet our

imagination, our worries and our toils so as to join our hearts to the prayers and be fully attentive to whatever the Holy Spirit should inspire in us. Thus silence at Mass is an active, not a passive disposition.

This form of interior silence does not impede, and indeed favors, full and active participation in those parts of the celebration where the community is united in acclamation and song, for each person is more fully aware of what he or she is doing.

Our modern world is starved of silence and Holy Mass should be a privileged moment to escape the hustle and bustle of daily life and, through worship and participation in Christ's eternal sacrifice, become capable of giving an eternal value to these same daily and transitory activities.

To help achieve this, we should foment by all available means the spirit of attentive and active silence in our liturgical celebrations and refrain from importing the world's clamor and clatter into our midst. *(Fr. Edward McNamara)*

W H A T A R E A P P R O P R I A T E T I M E S F O R S I L E N C E ?

Although scripture usually makes mention of vocal prayer and communal hymns when the people of God gather together for worship (*e.g., Eph 5:19*), there are also various allusions to silence being appropriate at certain times associated with prayer (*e.g., Ps 4:5, 1 Sam 1:13, 1 Cor 14:15*). Reference to silence during the liturgy is also explicitly mentioned in the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, in the context of communal activities to foster active participation.

Silence plays at least three different roles during the liturgy depending on when it is observed.

(1) Silence helps recollection, particularly before the act of penitence at the beginning of Mass and after the invitations ("Let us pray") to the major presidential prayers.

(2) Silence helps reflection and meditation, especially after each of the scriptural readings or after the homily.

(3) Silence helps personal prayer; before, during, and after Holy Communion.

Also note that "any sort of haste that hinders recollection must be clearly

avoided." Thus, it is particularly appropriate to include silence during the liturgy of the word, so that "by the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response may be prepared through prayer." Thus, in addition to silence after the readings, it is also appropriate to include a moment of silence before the first reading is proclaimed.

Quiet, reflective time for true reflection and prayer is not the same as the quiet necessary in a classroom to enable a teacher to speak and be heard. A period of prayer-filled silence before a reading is not merely a courtesy to the reader, deacon, or priest who will proclaim God's word, enabling that word to be heard more easily. Periods of liturgical silence are meant to be communal acts in which the assembly gathered together permits God's whisper to be heard in the midst of the multiple voices that cry to us, as individuals and as the body of Christ, to gain our attention and allegiance. Through this communal, liturgical silence, each worshipper is better able to open his or her being to God's life and love.

We live in a very "noisy" world. As a society, we have become so accustomed to (and even addicted to) the blare of radios, televisions, CDs, horns, and cell phones that it is very difficult for some people to become comfortable with silence and to focus on personal thoughts and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the only place that silence is socially acceptable is in a place of worship, when individuals come early, before a service begins, to be alone with God and to listen quietly to the whispering of the Lord as if in a gentle breeze (*cf. 1 Kgs 19:12*). Silence enables our loving God to speak to us, individually and communally, in "words" of love, words that speak to our hearts, words that invite us to draw nearer to him.

In the midst of the multiple sounds that surround us and the various voices that cry out to us, communal periods of reverential silence at various times in the liturgy are welcome additions that assists the triune God communicate His life and love to His people gathered together in prayer.

(Dennis C. Smolarski SJ)

