

Extracted from St John Vianney September 25, 2011 Bulletin

Silence by Carl Beyer and Friends

Camping is great, but going to Mass while camping is interesting, also! My wife, Gloria, and I attended Mass last Saturday evening at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Jemez Springs, and the aged priest there made some interesting points. The first point was that the words "silent" and "listen" contain the same letters in different orders. To *listen*, he said, you need to be *silent*. Seems simple, but when was the last time you sat in complete silence? Maybe Fr. Mansfield has some new insight into this after his week in silent retreat. It is hard to be silent and listen in the city, but easier to accomplish up in the Jemez Mountains as I write this. Did I say lately that I LOVE camping!!

Last night I sat alone in silence in the woods and listened. I heard the coyotes' cries growing louder and louder as my concern for my dogs' safety grew. I heard what I believed to be an elk bellowing, but it may have been beef on the hoof. I heard the flapping of crows' wings overhead, of which I never remember being aware of in the past. I heard the gentle rattling of the aspen leaves in the wind.

Have you ever had a conversation with someone who would not let you get a word in edgewise? One in which the other person walks away thinking it was a dialogue, but YOU only spoke a few words? A conversation means two or more people communicating, exchanging words and ideas. This requires one to be silent while another speaks. Have you heard the saying, "A wise man keeps his mouth shut?" It is because the *wise man is listening*. In listening we gain wisdom. Granted, we need to speak to ask questions and clarify, but we also need to listen in silence.

Those who recite their daily prayers are to be commended, but they also must be certain that these "conversations with God" are not one-sided. If they are, then how is Our Lord to communicate with us? How would you feel if the person speaking to you spoke so quickly you could barely discern his words? On your mark, get set, GO - say the Our Father! I can say it in about ten seconds flat! I bet this does not impress Our Lord, especially when after those ten seconds I am onto other activities without having reflected on the words of the prayer.

SLOW DOWN. Have a *conversation* with Our Lord. Stop, after saying the "Our Father," and *listen*, even more so when you are not just reciting the prayer but asking for His help. "Our Lord, HOW do I solve my problem?" Stop; be silent, listen for God's guidance. His answer most likely will not be a booming voice from the sky giving you explicit directions, but more likely a gentle guidance in your thoughts. By the way, if any of you ARE receiving booming instructions from Our Father, I would like to hear from you!

This may be part of the root of our lack of understanding of what it is to pray - we may be expecting it to be in the *human* form of conversation. We must remember, we are speaking with Our Lord, Creator of All That Is.

Our silence might not grant us immediate guidance directly from Our Lord! As I sat in silence, listening to the priest's words, I was very likely receiving second-hand information. Our Lord

guides our priests, and then our priests guide us. Be silent during Mass. This involves clearing the conversations in our OWN heads. Leave your earthly hustle and bustle at the church door and be prepared to *listen*. Be *silent*. I know this is much easier said than done, but, practice, practice, practice! Practice silence, and when you speak, you, yourself might have some wise words to share. Our Lord is waiting to hear from you, but also to speak to and guide you.

Be sure and visit St. John Vianney on Wednesday and Thursday between 9am and 12pm for the silent Adoration of Our Lord.

May the dear Lord grant us the ability to be silent and to listen to and hear his guidance. May the dear Lord grant us the quiet ability to experience and absorb the beauty of His Creation. May the Dear Lord grant us Silent Peace to grow in the wisdom of His Love.

Go forth and be silent. Go forth; say your prayers, and then, in silence, wait for God's reply. God Bless You All.