

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – SEPTEMBER 16, 2018

Dear Parents and Parishioners,

Our world has become more and more noisy and more and more nose-y. Instant communication and instant unsorted news come to us like a monsoon. We are seldom alone without the beep and burps of a cell phone, a TV flashing, radio talk blabbing, and the background of cacophonous music. Is there a moment of silence? Is there a time when we can “ascend the mountain” to talk with God one on one and alone?

Pope Francis had just completed his visit to Ireland and even on the plane the loquacious press was at his heels. “What do you think about Archbishop Vigano’s allegations?” pressed the reporters. His reply: “I will not say a single word about this. I believe the statement speaks for itself and you have the journalistic capacity to draw your own conclusions. It’s an act of faith. When some time passes and you have drawn your conclusions, I may speak.”

Pope Francis knows full well that the media wants immediate answers, controversy, and sensationalism in order to sell itself. Speaking on September the 3rd in a homily, Pope Francis said, “With people who don’t have good will, who seek only scandal, who want only division, who seek only destruction - - including within the family: (I propose) **silence, prayer**. The truth is humble, the truth is silent.”

Later he spoke in prayer, “May the Lord give us the grace to discern when we should speak and when we should stay silent.” Silence and quietude are not the way of our world. The world loves noise and scandal. The media has newsprint beyond measure, opinions galore with few insights. Money is the driving force.

Pope Francis has spoken often about the chatter and clatter of the world in which we live. While God could use a bullhorn to overcome this when talking with us, God generally uses quietude and solitude especially in the night to send his Spirit upon us. God does not use the night because it is dark, but rather because it is quiet.

The Holy Spirit of God comes to us more often when we have “climbed the mountain” and come to quiet time and space. The New York Times noted that “Pope Francis embraces silence in response to allegations.” (September 4, 2018) Might we all learn a lesson to hold our tongue, ponder a bit, and ask God to speak to us when we are quiet.

Jesus, the Teacher

The most frequently used title for Jesus was teacher. It had different forms such as Rabbi, Master, or Teacher. Teacher also applied to parents as teachers of their children, and to teachers in our school. Follow in the footsteps of Jesus and as far as possible resemble him as a good teacher.

In the gospel for the day, Jesus asked his disciples, “How are people identifying me?” He was not asking his disciples this question to receive praise but rather to lead them into the knowledge of his Father’s plan.

Peter recognized Jesus by the action of the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Anointed One. But then Peter erred and thought this meant Jesus would be an earthly king and lead the people back to Davidic times. Jesus warned him that God’s way was through suffering and even death, and the Kingdom of Heaven was our eventual resting place. This statement was a scandal to Peter because it totally disrupted his view of the Messiah and where the teacher was leading. Are we also confused by the scandal of the cross?

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