

NOTICE

ON OBSERVING SACRED SILENCE AT MASS

Dear Priests and Faithful of the Archdiocese,

Sacred silence is a part of the celebration and a point of arrival within a liturgical sequence. It is a ritual act that belongs to the whole assembly, and through it, the presence of the Holy Spirit animates the entire action of the celebration and gives shape and form to the participants.¹

His Excellency Archbishop Joseph Nguyen Nang, in his pastoral remarks during the 2022 retreat for priests, called for attention to the observance of sacred silence as guided by *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and repeated by Pope Francis in the Apostolic Letter *Desiderio Desideravi*. Our Archbishop prescribes that **“all parishes and communities keep this observance from the beginning of the coming Advent Season [2022].”**

All priests of the archdiocese, each to his parish [and religious communities], are asked to help people understand with certitude and devotedly keep the sacred silence at the following moments of the Mass:

1. In the Act of Penitence and again after the Invitation to Pray, when all recollecting themselves.²
2. After the Homily or after the Gospel proclamation so that God’s Word permeates hearts and minds.³
3. After Communion, for thanksgiving and incorporating with God in prayerful disposition.⁴

Sacred silence is truly fruitful only through conscious participation by ministers and the faithful alike. May this practice bring numerous spiritual benefits for each worshipping community and our entire archdiocese.

Archdiocesan Office,
November 25, 2022

(signed and sealed)

Rev. Peter Kieu Cong Tung
Chancellor

The original letter does not contain the four footnotes provided on this page. The footnotes and following quotations from the papal document and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) have been added to this English translation to provide helpful citations for the message given by Archbishop Joseph.

¹ Taken from *Desiderio Desideravi*, #52

² *GIRM*, 2003, #45, #51, #54

³ *GIRM*, 2003, #56, #66, #128, #130, #136

⁴ *GIRM*, 2003, #164

APOSTOLIC LETTER *DESIDERIO DESIDERAVI* OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS

52. Among the ritual acts that belong to the whole assembly, silence occupies a place of absolute importance. Many times it is expressly prescribed in the rubrics. The entire Eucharistic celebration is immersed in the silence which precedes its beginning and which marks every moment of its ritual unfolding. In fact, it is present in the penitential act, after the invitation “Let us pray,” in the Liturgy of the Word (before the readings, between the readings and after the homily), in the Eucharistic prayer, after communion.^[16] Such silence is not an inner haven in which to hide oneself in some sort of intimate isolation, as if leaving the ritual form behind as a distraction. That kind of silence would contradict the essence itself of the celebration. Liturgical silence is something much more grand: it is a symbol of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit who animates the entire action of the celebration. For this reason it constitutes a point of arrival within a liturgical sequence. Precisely because it is a symbol of the Spirit, it has the power to express the Spirit’s multifaceted action. In this way, going over again the moments I just mentioned, silence moves to sorrow for sin and the desire for conversion. It awakens a readiness to hear the Word and awakens prayer. It disposes us to adore the Body and Blood of Christ. It suggests to each one, in the intimacy of communion, what the Spirit would effect in our lives to conform us to the Bread broken. For all these reasons we are called to enact with extreme care the symbolic gesture of silence. Through it the Spirit gives us shape, gives us form.

~ Given in Rome, at Saint John Lateran, on 29 June ~
the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles, in the year 2022, the tenth of my Pontificate.

GENERAL INSTRUCTION THE ROMAN MISSAL (2003)

45. **Sacred silence** also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times.⁵⁴ 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.

Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that **silence to be observed** in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.

During the Penitential Rite and the Presidential Prayers

51. Then the priest invites those present to take part in the Act of Penitence, which, after a brief **pause for silence**, the entire community carries out through a formula of general confession.

54. Next the priest invites the people to pray. All, together with the priest, **observe a brief silence** so that they may be conscious of the fact that they are in God’s presence and may formulate their petitions mentally. Then the priest says the prayer which is customarily known as the Collect and through which the character of the celebration is expressed.

During the Liturgy of the Word and after the Homily

56. The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided. During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to **include brief periods of silence**, accommodated to the gathered assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. It may be appropriate to **observe such periods of silence**, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the first and second reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the homily.

66. The Homily should ordinarily be given by the priest celebrant himself... After the homily **a brief period of silence** is appropriately observed.

128. After the Collect, all sit. The priest may, very briefly, introduce the faithful to the Liturgy of the Word. Then the lector goes to the ambo and, from the Lectionary already placed there before Mass, proclaims the first reading, to which all listen. At the end, the lector says the acclamation *Verbum Domini (The word of the Lord)*, and all respond, *Deo gratias (Thanks be to God)*. Then, as appropriate, **a few moments of silence** may be observed so that all may meditate on what they have heard.

130. If there is to be a second reading before the Gospel, the lector proclaims it from the ambo. All listen and at the end respond to the acclamation, as noted above (cf. no. 128). Then, as appropriate, **a few moments of silence** may be observed.

136. The priest, standing at the chair or at the ambo itself or, when appropriate, in another suitable place, gives the homily. When the homily is completed, **a period of silence** may be observed.

After Communion

164. Afterwards [referring to the distribution of communion], the priest may return to the chair. **A sacred silence** may now be observed for some period of time, or a Psalm or another canticle of praise or a hymn may be sung.



Mr. Nguyễn Đình Diễm has provided the English translation of the Bishop's letter and it has been reviewed by the Archdiocesan office. The translation and expansion of the letter was created by OCP Vietnam as a service to the English Mass worshipping communities in the Archdiocese of Saigon. For additional liturgy and music resources, go to www.ocpvn.org/hoc-thuat/

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THÔNG BÁO

VỀ VIỆC GIỮ THINH LẶNG THÁNH TRONG THÁNH LỄ

Kính thưa quý cha
cùng toàn thể Dân Chúa Tổng giáo phận,

Thinh lặng thánh là một thành phần của việc cử hành và là cao điểm của trình tự phụng vụ. Đây là động tác dành cho toàn thể cộng đoàn, qua đó, Chúa Thánh Thần hiện diện làm sinh động toàn bộ việc cử hành và uốn nắn người tham dự.

Trong huấn từ vào dịp tĩnh tâm của linh mục đoàn Tổng giáo phận năm 2022, Đức Tổng Giuse đã lưu ý về việc giữ thinh lặng thánh như Quy chế Tổng quát Sách lễ Roma hướng dẫn và được Đức Thánh cha Phanxicô nhắc lại trong Tông thư *Desiderio Desideravi*. Đức Tổng đã ấn định: **“Các Giáo xứ và cộng đoàn thực hiện trong tất cả các thánh lễ từ đầu mùa Vọng này.”**

Xin quý cha giúp cộng đoàn của mình xác tín để cùng thực hiện thật sốt sắng việc thinh lặng vào những thời điểm sau của thánh lễ:

1. Trong nghi thức sám hối và sau lời mời cầu nguyện đầu lễ để hồi tâm;
2. Sau bài giảng hoặc bài Tin mừng để Lời Chúa thấm nhập trong tâm hồn;
3. Sau khi rước lễ để tạ ơn và kết hợp với Chúa trong tâm tình cầu nguyện.

Việc giữ thinh lặng chỉ thực sự hiệu quả khi tất cả mọi người, cả thừa tác viên lẫn cộng đoàn, cùng ý thức tham gia. Ước mong thực hành này sẽ đem lại nhiều ơn ích thiêng liêng cho các cộng đoàn và cả Tổng giáo phận chúng ta.

Văn phòng Tòa Tổng giám mục,
ngày 25 tháng 11 năm 2022

(đã ấn ký)

Phêrô Kiều Công Tùng
Chưởng ấn