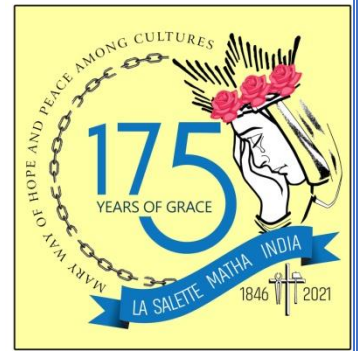


**Jubilee year of the Apparition  
Monthly Recollection for Seminarians of  
La Salette Matha Province  
December-2020**



**Prepared by Fr. Biju Chempottickal M.S**

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**1. Opening Song: Holy Spirit Song**

**2. Opening Prayer: PRAYER FOR THE MARIAN YEAR**

See the Prayer Card

**3. Scripture Passage**

Psalms 37: 1-11

**4. Theme of Meditation:**

**“Our Lady teaches us the worth of Silence”**

**5. Reflection**

*(This reflection could be either read out or explained as talk without losing the important thoughts of the reflection)*

Our Lady chose a secluded silent place for her merciful apparition. It is definitely a message for us like the other powerful symbols of La Salette. In this month of December let us reflect about the importance of silence in our life. Most of the pilgrims, tired from the long journey, approach the Shrine of La Salette and finally behold it nestled in the hollow of the mountain; they immediately perceive and realize that they have reached the mountain of contemplation. They have climbed laboriously—as if through the trials of the Purgative Way—penetrating into an atmosphere of purer air and ever-more imposing silence.

**We live in a very noisy world.** Most people are incapable of being in silence for just one minute. It seems that there is a generalized panic about silence. Almost everyone you see walking down the street is listening to music. Young people in particular seem to need to have loud music playing in their ears, all the time. In our seminaries we have time of silence because noise **is very much a trap of the devil. God speaks in silence.** Therefore, the more deafening the noise that surrounds us, the more difficult it is to hear the voice of the Lord, who desires to speak to us in the depths of our hearts. At La Salette our first La Salette Missionaries have valued silence very much and led a semi-contemplative life.

Mother Mary in the Bible is a woman of silence. Mary's led a humble and hidden life. Scripture tells us that Mary treasured all her beautiful experience with Jesus deeply

and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19). In his book entitled **The Power of Silence**, Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect for the Congregation of Divine Worship affirms **that silence is an essential condition for prayer, and prayer is indispensable for Christian life.**

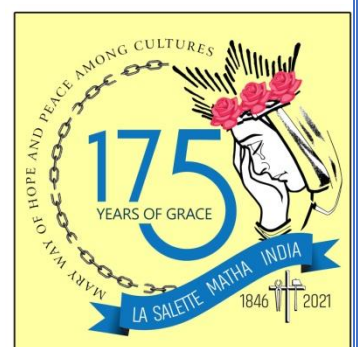
**Jesus prayed in silence.** He would often retire to pray, especially at night, in places that were solitary and private like Gethsemane (Lk 6:12; 22:40). St. Basil, for example, considered silence to be not only an ascetic necessity for monastic life, but also **an essential condition for an encounter with God.** Cardinal Sarah affirms that **silence precedes, prepares, and accompanies prayer**, a privileged moment when we have access to God, when He speaks with us face to face as with a friend. St. John of the Cross states: *“The Father spoke one Word, which was His Son, and this Word He always speaks in eternal silence, and in silence must it be heard by the soul.”* Thus we see that **maintaining silence is not a question of idleness but of activity.** If our interior “cell phone” is always communicating, since we are constantly speaking with creatures, how then can our Creator ever reach us? How can He call upon us?

Silence, says Cardinal Sarah, is one of the principal means that allows us to enter into a spirit of prayer and disposes us to establish a vital, continuous relationship with God. It is hard to find a pious person who is always talking; on the contrary, he **who possesses a spirit of prayer is a lover of silence.** Since the earliest times, silence has been considered the shield of innocence, the buckler against temptations, and the fruitful fount of recollection. Silence facilitates prayer, as St. Bernard tells us, and **allows the soul to think of God and the realities of Heaven.** For this simple reason **all the saints have ardently loved silence.** Silence is God’s first language. St. Teresa of Calcutta says: *“We need to find God, and He cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. (...) The more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life. We need silence to be able to touch souls. The essential thing is not what we say, but what God says to us and through us.”*

Whoever keeps silence for love of God will surrender himself to meditation, spiritual reading, and prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said **that whoever does not love silence is incapable of appreciating the things of God, and he will not be long in throwing himself into the great furnace of worldly pleasures.**

**Practicing the virtue of silence, however, does not consist in refusing to speak a word.** *“There is a time to be silent, and a time to speak”* (Eccl 3:7). Referring to these words, St. Gregory of Nyssa affirmed that whoever desires to be a saint must learn how to keep silence when it is not necessary to speak, and to only speak when charity so requires. St. John Chrysostom formulated the following rule: *“Speak only when it is more useful to speak than to keep silence.”*

St. Ephraim recommended: **“Speak often with God and little with men,”** while St. Arsenius recognized that he often repented of speaking but never of keeping silence. St. Francis de Sales uses a striking image: “In order to avoid faults in speech, we should have



our lips buttoned, so that while unbuttoning them we may think of what we are going to say.” In order to learn how to keep silence and nourish God’s presence, we should **practice lectio divina** : a time for reading Sacred Scripture, meditating and listening in silence, contemplating with profound recollection in the light of the Spirit. On Christmas night when we sing “Silent night” let us remember that great mysteries of God are revealed in silence. Silence is essential in our vocation journey.

Our lady at La Salette teaches us the importance of silence in our life. Indeed, prayer to Our Lady of La Salette brings 12 virtues: silence itself, listening, humility, joy, paying attention to others, patience, balance, docility, stability, purity, trust, and mercy. Let us Consecrate Ourselves to Our Lady of La Salette.

Our lady of La Salette, Mother of Silence, I consecrate all of my life to you. Deign to impress upon my heart the Heart of your Son Jesus, who died and rose again for me. In reply to the angel’s joyful annunciation, you said, “Fiat”; at the wedding at Cana, you taught me to do everything the Lord tells me to do; under the cross, you gave me an example of unity with Jesus who was obedient to the Father. Our Lady of Silence, channel of grace, give me each day the grace of sincere conversion and of stability in my vocation. Amen

(The Sessions breaks for half an hour. After the break the group gathers again in a prayerful atmosphere either in the Chapel or a hall. The Blessed Sacrament exposed, or a room is prepared for group sharing)

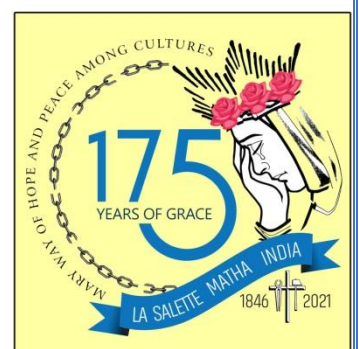
## 6. Meditative Music

## 7. Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion:

- What does the Silence at La Salette says to me?
- As La Salette Seminarian how do I approach Silence?
- Do I experience God talking to me when I am silent?

## 8. Group Sharing Based on the Questions Above

## 9. Spontaneous Prayers



## 10. Concluding Prayer

O Lord, I offer you this moment of silence.

This moment is for You.  
I consent to Your action  
In my mind and in my heart  
In my will and in my soul.  
I welcome Your action!

And to prepare myself, to  
make room for You,  
I will sit here, quietly, with  
my eyes closed,  
In an attitude of peaceful rest  
and loving devotion,  
My intent is to welcome You.  
I will slow down my thoughts  
and my imagination,  
I will calm down my fears  
and my emotions,  
I will try to exercise patience  
and humility  
And I offer you these feeble  
efforts...

I lift up my soul to You,  
Whispering in my heart and  
in my mind,  
"Here I am! Quiet but  
attentive to You"

## 11. Concluding Song: La Salette Song

