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#StrongerThanDeath | Six ways to foster silence this Lent

We are on the threshold of the second Sunday of Great Lent dedicated to Saint Gregory Palamas also known as the theologian of the uncreated divine energies.

Since the work of the Holy Archbishop of Thessalonica refers to contemplation, quietude, spiritual peace, we thought to list six ways to foster silence and implicitly calmness, as part of our #StrongerThanDeath Lent campaign.

Report permanently to Jesus Christ
Saint Ignatius Theophorus explains that ‘he who truly has the word of Jesus can hear even His silence, that he may be perfect, in order to do through those uttered and to know through those silenced.’

Our Saviour Jesus Christ, the eternal example of us all, went into the wilderness to show us a path of asceticism and silence, but this did not involve a separation from others.

In addition, the Holy Scripture notes that ‘Jesus remained silent’ (Matthew 26:63) and that ‘Jesus remained silent and gave no answer’ (Mark 14:61) when He was judged before the Sanhedrin, being fully aware of the circumstances and that no one would have listened if He spoke.

Don’t speak if it is not useful
According to Saint Silouan of Mount Athos, ‘many words cannot avoid sin’.

Therefore, you should always check if what you want to communicate is true, useful or necessary, so that your neighbour may have any profit.

It is very important for us people to know when, what, why, and how much to speak, as well as when to remain silent or to withdraw.

Saint Nikolai Velimirovich offers a very insightful piece of advice: ‘Don’t’ haste to speak about three things: about God, until you strengthen your faith in Him; about the sin of others, until you know your own; and about tomorrow, until the sun comes up.’

Say a short prayer
To attain to silence, one of the most efficient methods is to say frequently short prayers.

To avoid forgetting about God, efforts need to be sustained for a frequent prayer, even if it lasts only a few minutes.

This practice reminds us of the purpose of our life on earth and sets us in connection with God our Creator.

Set certain ‘quiet moments’ in your daily schedule
We have to realize that we need moments of hesychasm and silence, that is why we can set certain ‘quiet moments’ in our daily schedule.

It is not healthy nor profitable to be permanently exposed to artificial noise.

Therefore, we should think well when we leave our TV or radio turned on for hours.

Resolve to visit a church for daily prayers
In order not to skip or be distracted from our prayer, we can resolve to visit a church daily to offer our prayers.

The church offers the calmness we need to attain to silence through prayer.

Silence is a form of asceticism such as fasting and self-control, but silence is nothing in itself. Silence becomes a virtue only when it is cultivated in connection with other virtues.

Place spiritual books at hand
By placing spiritual books at hand in our homes, we offer ourselves the opportunity to give up talking about useless things, by reading something profitable for our soul.

For example, reading spiritual books can be delayed for an indefinite time if we are not able to see them at hand in the kitchen, bedroom, living room etc.

This exercise may offer great results, especially because we can value some of the time spent at home in order to draw closer to God.

As for silence, we conclude by citing Saint Barsanophius of Optina: ‘Peace is born from silence, and prayer from peace.’

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