

Formation for Silence

The following is offered as a process when considering the introduction of (more) silence into the liturgy, especially the celebration of Mass. So that all can fruitfully participate in the silence it needs some careful planning rather than the independent action of an individual minister.

Choose a moment in the liturgy

- *The Place of Silence* identifies occasions for silence throughout the celebration of Mass. Where there is the desire to increase the time for silence it is best to do so by identifying particular points in the liturgy rather than focus on all of them.
- Select one moment, or a number of moments which have commonality (e.g. following the readings).
- For a parish liturgy group it may be helpful to monitor where silence currently takes place in the celebration.

Identify the type of silence

- There are different types of silence in the celebration of Mass. These are given on page 2-3 of the document.
- Identifying the type of silence can help understand its relative depth in the context of the whole celebration.
- This can also help establish whether this is a time when it would be desirable to slowly expand the time over a number of weeks or months.

Who are key people?

- Different times of silence will involve a variety of key people, liturgical ministers and others.
- For example, silence following the readings may involve the priest, readers, musicians, servers etc.

Who needs formation?

- The introduction of silence benefits from a consistency of approach.
- Liturgical ministers may need formation not only in the practical aspects but also in the liturgical understanding of silence and how they might participate in it.
- Some silence may need the explicit formation of the liturgical assembly; other times the model of good practice may be enough (or at least an assuredness that nothing has gone wrong or been forgotten).

What direction might be given?

- Particularly for the longer periods of silence people may need an invitation about how they might use the silence.

How long a period of formation will be needed?

- An aspect of the liturgical formation is the development of the habits of silence and so consideration should be given to how long explicit formation might be.

How will you evaluate?

- In some ways the immediate effects should be obvious — more silence. Consideration should be given to other parts of the Mass which may also be developed and how to foster a School of Silence (cf. page 7–8)