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ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Metropolitan Theodosius, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Ollie Pendylshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mary Pekich, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Sandy Gamble, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 6-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 2-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jimmy Fennel [7th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Mike Pelchar [Liz's brother], Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, George & Mika Rocknage, Elizabeth Mitchell, Robert McKivitz, Cliff Dow, Marjorie Pershing, Robert Paouncic, Tim Monta, Amy Kemerer, Tom Marriott, Joe Farkas, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Adam, Helen Pytlak, Timothy Sams, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], and Daria Masur. **ARNOLD:** Stefania Lucci, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Please remember especially in your prayers: Walter Burlack & Liz Obradovich.

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 27 JULY 2008

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**FATHERS OF THE SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS, APOSTLE
AQUILA OF THE 70, MARTYR JUSTUS OF ROME, VENERABLE
ELLIUS OF EGYPT, VENERABLE ONESIMUS –MONK OF
MAGNEIA & WONDERWORKER, VENERABLE STEPHEN-ABBOT
OF MAKRISHCHE, SAINT NIKODEMUS OF MOUNT ATHOS**

TROPARION—TONE 5

Let the faithful praise and worship the Word,
Coeternal with the Father and the Spirit;
Born for our salvation from the Virgin;
For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
To endure death,
And to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 5

Thou didst descend into Hell, O my Savior,
Shattering its gates as almighty;
Resurrecting the dead as Creator,
And destroying the sting of death.
Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse,
O Lover of Man,
And we all cry to Thee: O Lord, save us!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 5

READER: Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this
generation forever.

PEOPLE: **Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this
generation forever.**

READER: **Save** me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly.

PEOPLE: **Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this
generation forever.**

READER: Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us...

PEOPLE: **From this generation forever.**

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 5

I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation.

Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever, and my truth will be prepared in the heavens.

THE LIVING BIBLE

This is such a great example of The Living Bible.

His name is Bill. He has wild hair, wears a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans, and old sandals this was literally his wardrobe for his entire four years of college.

He is brilliant. Kind of profound and very, very bright. He became a Christian while attending college.

Across the street from the campus is a well-dressed, very conservative church. They want to develop a ministry to the students but are! not sure how to go about it.

One day Bill decides to go there. He walks in with old sandals, jeans, his T-shirt, and wild hair. The service has already started and so Bill starts down the aisle looking for a seat.

The church is completely packed and he can't find a seat. By now, people are really looking a bit uncomfortable, but no one says anything.

Bill gets closer and closer and closer to the pulpit, and when he realizes there are no seats, he just squats down right on the carpet.

By now the people are really uptight, and the tension in the ! air is thick.

About this time, the minister realizes th! at from way at the back of the church, a deacon is slowly making his way toward Bill.

Now the deacon is in his eighties, has silver-gray hair, and a three-piece suit. A godly man, very elegant, very dignified, very courtly. He walks with a cane and, as he starts walking toward this boy, everyone is saying to themselves that you can't blame him for what he's going to do.

How can you expect a man of his age and of his background to understand

some college kid on the floor?

It takes a long time for the man to reach the boy.

The church is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him. You can't even hear anyone breathing. The minister can't even preach the sermon until the deacon does what he has to do.

And now they see this elderly man drop his cane on the floor. With great difficulty, he lowers himself and sits down next to Bill and worships with him so he won't be alone.

Everyone chokes up with emotion.

When the minister gains control, he says, "What I'm about to preach, you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget."

"Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read".

HOMILY

About the remembrance of the imminent separation of the body

"Yes, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle (body) to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ had showed me" (2 Peter 1: 13-14).

Here is a good reminder to lovers of the body who, because of the body, forgot their souls. The body must be put off. No matter how costly we hold it to be, no matter how much worth we attach to it, no matter how much we caress and pamper it, we must put it off one day. O how powerful and truthful are these words "to put it off!" When the soul is separated from the body, the soul puts off the body as no longer necessary. Those who suffer shipwreck reach the shore on a plank. They come to the shore and discard the plank. When spring blossoms, the serpent sheds its skin and puts it off. When a butterfly wings its way out of the cocoon, the cocoon is put off. In the same manner the body is put off when the soul departs from it. No longer of use and without benefit, even harmful to other men, it is put off from the house, put off from the city, put off from the sun and is buried deep into the ground. Think about this, you who live in luxury and are adorned, you who are haughty and gluttonous!

As long as the soul is in the body, it should utilize the body for its salvation submitting to the law of God and performing the works of God. Do you see how the apostolic soul

is a lover of labor! "As long as I am in this tabernacle (body) to stir you up." That task was given to him by God. He wants to conscientiously complete it to the end because he must put off his body. Brethren, let us labor first to embrace the apostolic warning and secondly, to remind others, all others, for whom we wish good. In haste we are approaching the shore of the other old world, as the hour hastily approaches when we must put off the bodies and, with a naked soul, appear before the judgment of God. What will we say at the Dread Judgment Seat of God? To what goals have we, in this earthly life, used the device from the earth, which is called the body?

O Lord Jesus, Righteous Judge, direct our mind to think of death and judgment. To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

The blessed Melania told me this: When I first came from Rome to Alexandria and heard about (Abba Pambo's) virtue from the blessed Isidore, who showed me the way to him in the desert, I took him a silver coffer containing three hundred pounds of silver and invited him to share in my wealth. He was sitting weaving palm leaves, and he merely blessed me and said, "May God reward you!"

And he told his steward Origen, "Take this and dispense it to all the brethren down in Libya and on the islands, for those monasteries are in greater need." He gave him orders not to dispense any of it in Egypt because that country was better off."

She continued: I was standing by and expecting to be honored and praised by him for my donation, but I heard nothing from him, and so I spoke up to him, "So you may know, my lord, how much it is, there are three hundred pounds."

He did not so much as raise his head, but said, "My child, He who measures the mountains knows better the amount of the silver. If you were giving it to me, you spoke well, but if you are giving it to God, who did not overlook the two obols, then be quiet."

Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 10.2-4

Fight always with your thoughts and call them back when they wander away. God does not demand of those under obedience that their thoughts be totally undistracted when they pray. And do not lose heart when your thoughts are stolen away. Just remain calm, and constantly call your mind back.

St. John Climacus--The Ladder of Divine Ascent, 4

February 2005, Article # 1

The Gift of Silence

Written by the Very Rev. John Breck

The second-century Latin theologian Tertullian declared that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. This remains true to our day, as witnessed most poignantly by the martyrdom of bishops, priests and lay people during the Communist era, in Russia, Romania and elsewhere, and in the ongoing persecution of Christians at the hands of Muslim extremists in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Toward the end of the third century, however, with increasing tolerance shown to Christians and their faith, literal martyrdom began to wane. The witness it represented (martyr means "witness") increasingly took the form of ascetic struggle – spiritual combat against the demons and our most destructive passions – that would constitute the impetus behind the growth of monasticism. Gradually, the monk, the monochos or "unified one," became the true "martyr," the true witness to the "unseen warfare," which is indispensable for pursuing the "narrow way" that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Authentic monasticism thus became the new "seed of the Church." Over the centuries it has served as the foundation of Orthodox spiritual and liturgical life, and has thereby proven itself to be an essential element in Christian existence and for the overall witness of the Church in and to the world.

The growing numbers of monastic communities in the United States and Canada have the potential to continue the centuries-old witness to the need within Christian life to acquire certain virtues commonly associated with the hesychast tradition of prayer: "prayer of the heart," grounded in silence and inner stillness, which can, by a gift of pure grace, lead one – monk or lay person – into a deep and abiding communion with the God of love.

If there is one element of traditional monastic experience that is more difficult than any other to acquire in our culture, it is surely the element of silence. Silence lies at the heart of ascetic, and particularly hesychast, tradition and experience. Yet it is all too often misunderstood and neglected, not only by our busy lay people, but even by monastics, those who have dedicated themselves to a life of witness and prayer.

In the next few "Life in Christ" columns, therefore, I would like to speak, in very modest and inadequate ways, about the virtue – the divine gift – of silence. This, unfortunately, is no "personal testimony." I make no claim at all to understand the mystery of silence, much less to practice it. The following few sets of reflections are drawn, rather, from the Church's scriptural and ascetic tradition, and from the witness

of spiritual elders whose lives have been shaped and blessed by genuine silence. Since silence is so important in the whole of Christian existence, I offer these thoughts in the hope that they might be of some use to "Life in Christ" readers. We begin with the experience of silence as it was known in ancient Israel.

There is an obvious and deep irony in any attempt to talk about silence. It's like trying to describe the ineffable or depict the invisible. The task itself is inherently impossible. Silence can only speak for itself: not through words, but through experience. The best way to begin, therefore, is not by any definition or analysis, but by a story.

There is a familiar little account in the alphabetical collection of traditions that have come down to us from the desert fathers of the early Christian centuries. It is said that one day Abba Theophilus, who was an archbishop, came to Scetis, a desert wasteland and spiritual paradise, where great numbers of monks carried on their unseen spiritual warfare.

Archbishop Theophilus made his way to the cell of Abba Pambo, a man recognized and acclaimed for his humility and wisdom. The brethren who accompanied Theophilus said to Abba Pambo, "Say something to the archbishop, so that he may be edified." Abba Pambo replied: "If he is not edified by my silence, he will not be edified by my speech." 1

There is really little more that can or should be said. If people are not edified by our silence, then they will not be edified by our words.

In the beginning there was absolute silence. Through His Word, God spoke into this silence, to create the heavens and the earth. Then, on the cosmic Sabbath known as "the seventh day," God rested. His Word, however, has continued its creative activity throughout human history. As God declares through the prophet Isaiah, "My Word that goes forth from my mouth will not return to me empty; it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa 55:11). To affirm that God creates *ex nihilo* is to say that He speaks out of silence, to bring all things into existence by the power of His creative Word. Word and silence, then, complement each other. Silence, in the most positive sense, is the environment and atmosphere, the sacred space, into which God speaks His Word, both to create the world and to save it from death and corruption.

Further on in Old Testament tradition, silence becomes the medium for divine revelation. In a terrifying epiphany recounted in the first Book of Kings, God appeared on a mountain to the prophet Elijah. As the Lord passed by, there came a mighty wind, so strong it split the mountain and shattered the rocks in pieces. But, the narrative tells us, "the Lord was not in the wind." After the wind there came an

earthquake, then a fire; but the Lord was in neither. Then, the passage concludes, "after the fire a still, small voice" (1 Ki 19:12). The New Revised Standard Version renders this more forcefully: "after the fire the sound of sheer silence." Through this paradoxical image – "the sound of sheer silence" – God reveals both His presence and His purpose.

From the time of Elijah through the period of classical prophecy, God continued to reveal Himself through His Word of blessing and judgment. At the same time, silence was increasingly perceived as something negative: the absence of God's voice and thus of His presence. "The land of silence" became synonymous with Sheol, the place of the dead where, by definition, the life-giving God is not to be found (Ps 88:11-13; 93:17, LXX). God's judgment pronounced against the nations includes the withering command: "Sit in silence, and go into darkness, daughter Chaldea!" (Isa 47:5). Silence is darkness, and that darkness is death.

Finally, Israel itself experiences such a judgment, when the tongues of prophets fall silent as God withdraws His prophetic Word from the people's midst. (The post-Exilic Psalm 73:9 laments, "We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet..."; cf. 1 Macc 14:41, 2 Baruch 85:3, for whom "the prophets are sleeping.")

Yet even in the Old Testament silence is recognized to have a profoundly spiritual value. "Be angry but do not sin," the psalmist admonishes, "commune with your own hearts on your bed, and be silent" (Ps 4:4). The Septuagint (LXX) or Greek version of the Hebrew Bible expresses the deeper meaning of this verse by slightly modifying the translation: "Be angry, and do not sin; for what you say in your hearts feel compunction on your beds" (4:5). Genuine compunction arises out of the silence and solitude of one's own bed, where, as St. Augustine declares, the heart opens to the outpouring of divine love through the Holy Spirit.

The final word on silence, as it was experienced in ancient Israel, is that of the prophet Zephaniah: "Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is at hand" (Zeph 1:7). Silence possesses an eschatological quality insofar as it prepares both heart and mind to receive God in His final coming. The day of the Lord is a day of judgment, symbolized by thunder and fury. But it is also a day of vindication, blessing and the bestowal of everlasting peace. These are qualities both given and received in silence.

Israel perceived the silence of the prophets to be a sign of God's judgment upon the people's rebellion and faithlessness. For early Christians, on the other hand, the falling silent of Israel's prophets presaged a new creation and a new revelation. As St. Ignatius of Antioch expressed it some eighty years after our Lord's death and resurrection, "There is one God who manifested Himself through Jesus Christ His Son, who is His Word, proceeding from silence..." (Mag 8:2).

God speaks out of silence at the original creation; He does the same with the new creation in Jesus Christ. The Word of God, whose creative power brought all things from non-existence into being, brings about the new creation of the Church, the universal Body of Christ. From this point on, the Church will be the primary locus of God's creative activity and self-revelation. It is there that the heart can acquire the gift of silence. And it is there that silence resolves into the inner stillness that allows us truly to hear – and thus to obey – the voice of God.

1 Benedicta Ward, *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (alphabetical collection), (London: Mowbray, 1975), p. 69).

Abba Ammoun of Rhaithou asked Abba Sisoës, "When I read the Scriptures, my mind is wholly concentrated on the words so that I may make elaborate comments and so to prepare myself to answer questions on it." The old man said to him, "That is not necessary; it is better to enrich yourself through purity of spirit and to be without anxiety and then to speak simply."

Abba Sisoës said, "Let yourself be despised, cast your own will behind your back, and you will be free from care and at peace."

St. Sisoës the Theban, commemorated 6/19 July

Three elders went to visit Abba Stephen the priest and, while they remained there talking about what is beneficial to the soul, he remained silent. The elders said to him, "You are not answering us, father. It was for the benefit of your counsel that we came to you." Then he said to them, "Forgive me, but I did not know what you were talking about until just now.

But I can tell you what is the matter with me; I can see nothing else, either by night or by day, but our Lord Jesus Christ hanging on the Cross."

They went their way greatly edified.

John Moschos, *Leimonarion* (The Spiritual Meadow) 64