**Liturgy Matters Lesson #13**

**“Respond with silence!”**

**By Bishop Chad Zielinski**

Thank you for joining me as our hearts and minds have ascended heavenward with the Risen Jesus and anxiously await the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday. May the Holy Spirit guide as we continue our lessons on “What Happens at Mass.”

Silence is our first response to the word we have just heard in the First Reading. The silence of the assembly at this point is the same about which we read in the heavenly liturgy described in the book of Revelation: "When the Lamb broke open the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about thirty minutes,” (*Rev. 8:1*). Of course, we do not remain silent for thirty minutes, but it is prudent to allow several moments of silence to reflect on the First Reading.

In response to this silence, we use the words of the psalms. We do so because this was Israel’s hymnbook and so was the prayer book of Jesus himself in his earthly life. The psalms were produced and then prayed throughout all the various epochs and phases of Israel's existence. They express joy and wonder, gratitude and repentance, pleas for help, mercy and protection. The words written in the psalms were fulfilled by Jesus as he prayed them during the course of his life. Verse by verse, psalm by psalm, they were a mystery, hidden but now revealed in him.

Because there is a change in direction between the reading and the psalm; that is, God speaking to us in the Word and then us speaking to God in the responsorial psalm, we see also a different person signing the psalm. (The cantor) As the assembly repeats the same words of the cantor, they also share with Christ the prayer sung to the Father. This “joining” with Christ in the psalm, praying to the Father, we once again see the richness of the liturgy as a communal and integral part of our unity with Christ as our response to the Father. This is as St. Paul once exclaimed, “Whatever promises God has made have been fulfilled in him; therefore it is through him that we address our Amen to God when we worship together,” (*Corinthians 2:20*). When Jesus rises again, his way of praying rises with him and becomes in the liturgy his praying in us.

Thank you for joining me as we draw deeper into the Word of God proclaimed at Mass. May the Easter greeting of the Risen Christ fill you with a renewed peace and continue to strengthen us as we grow closer to Him through our understanding and participation in the Holy Mass.

I look forward to sharing Lesson #14 with you next week. Let us keep one another in prayer. May God bless you and your families.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Chad Zielinski