

THE HIDDEN POWER OF SILENCE IN THE MASS - Fr Boniface Hicks

The Church's liturgy in the Roman Rite uses intentional periods of physical silence to capture and foster various movements of personal silence.

These are intended to provide a "cutting" in the interior stream of experience so as to foster a movement in the heart of the believer in relationship to the Word.

The better we understand the rationale behind these ritual gestures of liturgical silence, the better we will be able to correspond with them and so be transformed by the Word in our liturgical worship.

Prior to Mass and in the Introductory Rites, the participant is encouraged to foster an ascetical silence to prepare space for encountering the Word .

Then, in a mystical silence, the participant encounters the voice of God in the Liturgy of the Word. This invites a response of self-offering in a sacrificial silence .

Following the self-offering, the Word becomes incarnate in the participant and really present on the altar and is adored and received in contemplative silence .

Finally, the participant remains in a timeless or eternal silence to savor the divine presence.