



Quieting the mind, being with God

There is something about sound
that speaks most clearly in silence.

It comes alive when the constant noise of the world falls away and the quiet notes of the day — no longer drowned out by busyness — begin to play their hymn.

These are the sounds that speak loudest in the early morning hours, long before the sun has risen and the work of the day has begun — the radiator springing to life, a dog shifting quietly in search of a place to rest just a bit longer, the gentle creak of a building waking up, the hushed preparation for a new day.

Each Wednesday morning, before much of the world is awake, I walk from the rectory across an empty parking lot to the church. I go to open the doors and begin the first hour of Eucharistic Adoration for the day. At that hour, sound seems to touch the heart differently. In autumn, there is the rustle of leaves and the distant calls of geese heading out early. In winter, the crunch of snow beneath my feet and the stillness of cold air. And in spring, the arrival of birdsong — an Easter chorus announcing that the sun is soon to rise.

Inside the church, everything slows. The lights come on one area at a time. Candles are lit. Incense is prepared. Doors are opened. All of it is done in silence.

I have come to love this part most of all — a time of simple work done quietly, before words are spoken and prayer

formally begins. I think of it as my little monastery, a pocket of stillness tucked into the middle of an ordinary week.

By the time the opening hour of Adoration begins, a few others have arrived — usually five or so. We do not speak much. We exchange quiet smiles, take our places and begin. It feels less like a gathering and more like a procession, like people slipping into something ancient and steady before the day claims them.

When the opening hymn ends, I sit.

The first moments of prayer are always a kind of clearing. My mind arrives crowded — with lists, unfinished tasks, worries about the day ahead and the pressure of everything that needs to be done. It resists unplugging.

Thoughts come and go, some more stubborn than others, until gradually the noise thins and the stillness returns. The church seems to breathe, and I find myself breathing with it, in a place that has quietly become home.

When that happens, I pray the Divine Office, the prayer of the Church, and then I simply remain. What follows is not formal or scripted. It is conversational, honest, unguarded — the kind of prayer that happens when no one else is listening.

I begin by praying for those who have asked for prayers, and for those who are sick or struggling. One by one, I place them before the Lord, offering not only their names but also the feelings I carry with them. I did not plan that. I rarely do. I have learned not to argue when God sets the agenda.

Eventually, the words run out, and I stop talking.

Nothing dramatic happens. There are no revelations or resolutions. I simply rest. Sometimes prayer brings clarity. Sometimes it brings challenge. Sometimes it brings consolation. And sometimes — like this morning — it brings quiet companionship.

Sitting there, I know the day will come for me soon enough. Emails, meetings, responsibilities, expectations — all of it waiting beyond the doors. But for that one hour, there is nothing to accomplish and nowhere else to be.

I am not a role or a title.

Not someone needed elsewhere.

Not someone behind schedule.

I am simply human.

And I am with God.

That hour changes me, slowly and steadily. Not every Wednesday morning feels the same. Some days my mind wanders. Some mornings I fight sleep. Sometimes I complain that it is too early or inconvenient. But I show up. And when I do — when I step out of the noise — something shifts, beginning with me.

When the hour ends, I rise quietly from my place. I leave the church as I entered it, having sat in the presence of Jesus, saying little, listening much. The door opens and catches the morning, and with it the first voices of the day — the birds greeting the light, the soft sounds of a world waking up.

The sun has risen now, and I step outside no longer in darkness. My footsteps echo once more on the tile floor, then fade as I step outside. The silence is no longer empty. It is full. And when the noise returns later that day, I am ready — for first, I will have listened. ■



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