



There are silences that arise from exhaustion, or from fear, or from a strange inner emptiness. They are silences that hurt it seems that we have nothing to say, or that there is no one willing to listen.

Other silences, on the other hand, are like a portico that prepares fruitful, enriching dialogues, full of hope. Or as rooms of the soul that allow us to welcome and deepen the treasures that have come into our lives.

Such is the silence of the contemplative: a heart opens to God and begins to accept His Word. Such is the missionary's silence: look to heaven for a magnificent Message which he then communicates to his brethren. Such is the silence of who simply listens because he loves.

On silence speaks Benedict XVI's message for the World Day of Social Communications (JMCS) of 2012, published on 24 January of that year. In a dense and profound paragraph, it explains some dimensions of good silence: "Silence is an integral part of communication and without it there are no words with content density. In silence we listen and know ourselves better; thought is born and deepened, we understand more clearly what we mean or what we expect from the other; we choose how to express ourselves. Quietly allows himself to speak to the person in front of us, to express himself; and to us not to remain clinging only to our words or ideas, without a timely weight. This opens up a space for mutual listening and makes possible a fuller human relationship. In silence, for example, we welcome the most authentic moments of communication between those who love each other: gesture, the expression of the face, the body as signs that manifest the person. In silence they speak joy, worries, suffering, which in it find a particularly intense form of expression".

From silences the word sprouts mature, respectful, cheerful, in love. Silence also helps to weigh what we hear and what we are going to say, to promote a genuine "ecosystem" for healthy communication. This is explained by the Pope in the above-mentioned Message:

"From silence, therefore, there springs still a more demanding communication,

which evokes the sensitivity and listening capacity that often reveals the measure and nature of relationships. Where messages and information are abundant, silence becomes essential to discern what is important from what is useless and superficial".

There is, then, a close relationship between word and silence. In the last paragraph of the Message we are evoking, Benedict XVI concludes:

"Word and silence. Learning to communicate means learning to listen, to contemplate, in addition to speaking, and this is especially important for the agents of evangelization: silence and word are essential elements and members of the Church's communicative action, for a renewed proclamation of Christ in the contemporary world".

Our societies are stunned by noises, voices, invasive words. With a reflective silence, full of presences, it will be possible to promote a more welcoming environment, in which we have something important to offer and time available to listen and to love.