



**DIOCESE OF TYLER**  
**Sacred Liturgy – Uses and Practices - Guide**

**Reverence and Silence in the Presence of the Sacred**

1. The church building is a consecrated place to encounter the presence of our Lord and Savior who is really, truly and substantially present. In this sacred place, we as members of Christ's Body come to give God praise and offer our joys and sorrows to our Lord so that we may receive His grace and strength. Jesus Christ gives us Himself in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and is reserved in the church in the tabernacle. Because the Lord's Eucharistic Presence is most holy, we must enter this space with great reverence. Sacred silence is an expression of reverence because it allows us to listen to God's voice. "*Speak, LORD, Your servant is listening*" (1 Sam 3:10).
  
2. Number 45 of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)* instructs that even before the celebration of the Mass, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, sacristy, vesting room, choir area and adjacent areas. The Most Rev. Joseph Strickland, Bishop of Tyler, is inviting our parishes to continue to create a heightened sense of awareness of these sacred spaces. Efforts should be made at all parishes to bring about not only awareness, but the means to promote reverence and silence in the Sanctuary at all times outside of the celebration of the Mass. Every parish is unique and will require a plan to fit its needs. The Diocesan Liturgical Commission recommends each parish to consider the following:
  - To maintain a separation between the sacred space and the narthex (that is, the gathering area before entering the sacred space). Loud talking should always be avoided in the church, and parishioners should be encouraged to greet each other warmly in the narthex rather than in the sacred space.
  - To remind parishioners to always silence their phones and electronic devices when entering the church. Accidentally forgetting to silence these devices will sometimes occur, but they should be seldom.
  
3. Reverence and silence encourage a shared experience of the Divine within our parish and mission churches. The action of promoting reverence and silence in the church begins with us—our own disposition to seek the Lord in His House—but also through proper catechesis and understanding official Church documents on the sacred liturgy. Therefore, the faithful may be greeted in their parishes by a welcoming atmosphere inviting them into reverent silence in the church—the sacred place in which we come together as a community to worship Almighty God.