



SAINT JOHN HENRY NEWMAN PARISH

Heart Speaks to Heart

Briggsville | Buffalo | Montello | Pardeeville | Portage | Westfield

Isaiah 7:10-14

Psalms 24

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-24

“Heart Speaks to Heart”

-Joseph, Silence, and the Obedience of Faith

Saint John Henry Newman’s motto was *Cor ad cor loquitur*—“heart speaks to heart.” At the core of all Newman’s sermons, teachings, and preaching was this truth: God speaks to each person at the level of the heart.

Consider the analogy of a radio frequency and the necessity of fine-tuning to receive the signal clearly. My heart is tuned differently than yours. What fine-tunes my heart to the heart of God may be different from what fine-tunes yours. But the signal is the same.

Your mere presence here at Mass this morning is already a response. It indicates that, in some way, you have heard God’s voice. For Newman, God always makes the first move—and we respond. Faith is our response to the gift.

Newman teaches that faith is the root. We want our roots to grow deep and strong. From that root comes obedience as the fruit, and the fragrance is freedom. We desire to live freely in the Lord—free from guilt, regret, and a sense of mere obligation.

Joseph: Silence That Hears

The most significant person in the Gospels who never speaks a single word is Joseph. And yet, his heart is so finely tuned to the heart of God that, in silence, Joseph fulfills God’s plan.

Joseph hears—and he obeys—before he understands.
Faith obeys before understanding.

How Do We Fine-Tune Our Hearts?

We fine-tune our hearts by staying close to the Mass and by allowing silence to do its work.

1. Ninety percent of life is showing up.

Simply showing up matters. Fine-tuning the heart has nothing to do with whether we feel like coming to Mass.

2. Mother Church desires to form and inform her children through the Mass.

Like any good mother who says, “How many times do I have to tell you...,” the Church patiently forms us—week after week—in learning how to listen to God’s heart.

Before Mass Begins

We arrive a few minutes early and enter into the silence. We begin to fine-tune our hearts as we anticipate the Mass. We grow aware of our need for God’s mercy and come with sincere gratitude for the gift of life itself. We become less concerned with who else is here—or not here—and more attentive to the presence of God.

The Penitential Rite

Here we fine-tune our hearts by growing precise in self-examination:

- a thought that was unkind
- a word that wounded
- an action that betrayed Christ
- a failure to act that blocked love

We grow in our awareness of our need for a Savior. As the Gospel reminds us:

“You are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Before the Gospel Acclamation

Another moment of fine-tuning occurs just before the Gospel is proclaimed. In those brief 10–15 seconds of silence, we ask: Where has God already been speaking to my heart?

Perhaps it was:

- the arrogance and fear of King Ahaz, awakening our own hesitation to trust God
- the promise of *Emmanuel—God is with us*
- the psalm’s cry: *“Let the Lord enter; He is the King of glory”*
- or St. Paul’s words: *“Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus...”*

Are we slaves of Christ Jesus?

Or have we subtly turned Jesus into a servant of our own desires?

We place whatever God has stirred in our hearts—along with our sins—on the altar as our ‘thank offering’ to the Lord.

Communion Procession

The Mass is a wedding banquet—‘Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb’ (Rev. 19:7-9)). Think of a wedding: the bride approaches with anticipation and joy; the groom waits, fully given.

Jesus is the Bridegroom. He has laid down His life for His Bride and gives Himself completely to you. When you approach for Communion and say “Amen,” you are responding: ‘I give myself completely to You. Live Your life in me, with me, and through me.’

Returning to your pew, your heart continues to listen. Your prayer may be simple:

- Jesus, I trust in You.
- Speak, Lord; Your servant is listening.
- I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done according to Your word.
- Lead me where You need me.

Conclusion

Heart speaks to heart.

Joseph shows us that silence is not empty—it is obedient. He acted before he understood, and God entrusted him with Mary and Jesus.

At every Mass we are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb. Christ gives Himself fully to us, and He waits for our response.

This Advent, the invitation is simple but demanding:

Make room.

Make room for silence.

Make room for trust.

Make room to trade your plans for His glory.

Never confuse the silence of God with the absence of God.

When you hear His silence and feel His absence, trust His presence.

Stay close to the Mass.

Let faith grow deep roots, obedience bear fruit, and freedom become the fragrance of a life lived in the Lord.