

Stillness in the Sea of Life *(continued)*

The flock is weary, most carry heavy burdens, and all are on the same “sea of life, surging with the storm of temptations.” Most can’t hear themselves think.

As priests we find ourselves in the same boat. Serving often requires us to be longsuffering, to endure false accusations, to be misunderstood, pulled in every direction imaginable, and even isolated. Until that moment, when mystically at the altar, “the Holy Spirit makes up that which is lacking,” takes our hands, our prayers, our struggle and grants us stillness. The sea of life subsides. We are united as one in the Body of Christ, and all of those struggles are put in perspective.

Well, at least until coffee hour....

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*If you wish to contribute a reflection
to the next Priest to Priest,
please email rloumiotis@iocc.org*



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PRIEST *to* PRIEST

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Stillness in the Sea of Life *A Pilgrimage in Perspective*

Fr. Innocent Dresdow

“I could hear myself think,” she said as she approached the boat in Monks Lagoon. On assignment as a TV producer without any religious background, this woman had come to scout a filming location and was confronted with a forest sanctified through the prayers and life of St. Herman of Alaska. She traveled the seas, walked the trail, and experienced stillness.

The Psalmist’s contemplation “Be still and know that I am God” was invoked through the actions of St. Innocent of Alaska just a few years after St. Herman’s repose. The merchant ship he was aboard was foundering off Spruce Island. Over 80 passengers were stowed under the deck in a windowless hull.

The seas were horrific, and the storm prevailed upon them relentlessly. In the chaos, St. Innocent stood on the deck of the ship, exposed to the bitter elements, and asked for the intercessions of the newly reposed A’pa Herman.* The seas calmed, the winds turned favorable, and not one soul was lost.

I’m blessed to navigate these same seas. To be honest, I’m usually distracted with worldly cares. Having made the journey hundreds of times over the years, muscle memory and situational awareness are seared into my instincts. I expect the unexpected whether it be sea conditions, weather, mechanical or human error. Those things don’t trouble me. What troubles me is when I go ashore and can’t hear myself think. While retaining situational awareness in this holy place, I’ve lost spiritual awareness in the frequency of my experience.

Being present while others experience this sanctified place, I find that God reveals Himself anew in my priestly struggle. Sometimes it’s their anxiousness at sea, or their worry of being lost in the woods, or their absolute wonder at having arrived safely, of drinking from St. Herman’s spring, kneeling at his grave and listening to the quiet.

In our parishes, this very experience is happening at every liturgy.

*A’pa is the Alutiiq/Aleut Native term for an endearing father or grandfather figure, one who is deeply respected and loved.



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