

Inner city priest

by [Margaret C. Szumowski](#) in the [May 4, 2004](#) issue

It might as well be the inner sea,
all these people floating by in surges,
welcome calm after the last parishioner
slips away at low tide,
after the third mass, after he's greeted
each one personally, remembering
chief worries, daughter
in trouble, husband wronged,
teenage boy not certain
if he's in or out of religion, black-hatted
old woman who swam in during mass,
fluffy white-suited—some misguided
angel. The day is old. He walks back
alone to the huge rectory built for twelve,
now inhabited by one priest and the tidal wave of his God.