

# 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.