

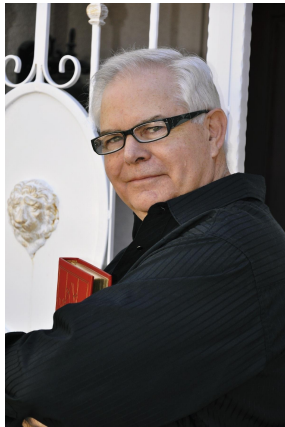


SOLLERONE

The Newsletter of Lions Gate Abbey

June 2025

The Aloha Spirit by Fr. David St. John. *(abridged from a homily delivered in 2006)*



If you have ever been to Hawai'i, and even if you have never had that pleasure, the word "Aloha" can conjure up many wonderful thoughts of sandy beaches, swaying palm trees, and tropical sunsets. And, if



you have been taught anything about the Hawai'ian language, you probably know that "Aloha" means not only "hello", but also

"goodbye". Yet, there are even deeper meanings held within this simple, beautiful word.

Aloha is more than a greeting or a farewell. Aloha means mutual regard and affection. It means extending warmth and caring - with no obligation in return. Aloha is very much like the Hebrew word, "Shalom". And, in a small way, it carries with it the idea of the Greek word "agape", as in Agape Love.

Aloha is the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person - where the welfare and well-being of everyone is far more important than the selfish satisfaction of the individual.

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In a more spiritual realm, Aloha means to hear what is NOT said, to see what CANNOT be seen, and, through faith, to know the UNKNOWABLE.

The Aloha Spirit is further defined by five core values:

- Akahi: Kindness, expressed with tenderness.
- Lōkahi: Unity, expressed with harmony.
- ‘Olu‘olu: Agreeableness, expressed with pleasantness.
- Ha‘aha‘a: Humility, expressed with modesty.
- Ahonui: Patience, expressed with perseverance.

From all of these meanings, over the centuries, the Hawai’ian people have developed what has come to be known as “The Aloha Spirit”. And now, since 1986, The Aloha Spirit is an actual law which appears in the code of the State of Hawai’i Revised Statutes, Section 5-7.5 and which acknowledges that The Aloha Spirit has long been the working spirit of native Hawai’ians and has been presented as a gift to the people of the State of Hawai’i.

All citizens and government officials are obligated by law to conduct themselves in accordance with this law while performing their duties and obligations - as well as in their day-to-day living. While in actuality being un-enforceable, The Aloha Spirit Law is intended to elevate, empower, and enoble the people of the islands. Those who support and encourage The Aloha Spirit Law say that it serves as a model law for the entire world.

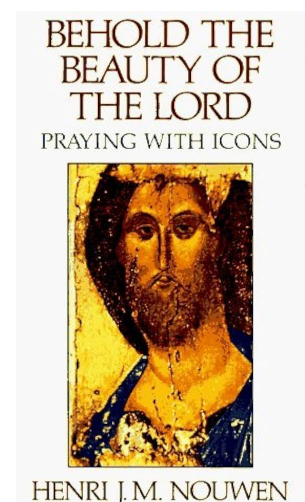
Just imagine what a truly beautiful state Hawai’i would be, or what a wonderful world this would be, if people really lived the the Aloha Spirit in their hearts! ♦

Books, Coffee & De-Lites:

“Behold the Beauty of the Lord”

reviewed by Abbess Aurore Barrett

One of my favorite books, especially when I travel, is Henri Nouwen’s “Behold the Beauty of the Lord ~ Praying with Icons”, (Copyright 1987 by Ave Maria Press). I purchased my copy in 1988 and it is now well worn, marked up, and has seen many bags and suitcases. It is a book I cherish and keep near me no matter where I might be. It invites readers to pray with four Russian icons, with their eyes open by emphasizing seeing or gazing, which are at the heart of Eastern spirituality. This book includes four color icons, “The Icon of the Holy Trinity”;



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"The Icon of the Virgin of Vladimir"; "The Icon of the Savior of Zvenigorod"; and "The Icon of the Descent of the Holy Spirit". It includes four separate meditations, one for each of the icons.

The word "icon" simply means image. A religious icon is considered to be a soul window, an entrance into the presence of the Holy. Icons serve as invitations to keep our eyes wide open while praying. It is a prayer to just look attentively at an icon and let God speak.

The profound beauty of an icon is gentle. It does not force its way. It only asks for time spent before it in stillness, gazing. Icons are a reminder of God's unconditional love.

To pray with icons, one needs to be comfortable, quiet, and to reflect on each icon as:

What do you see?
What do you hear?
What do you feel?

An icon can lead us into the inner room of prayer. In busy times it can be just a glance at the icon or a ritual where one touches the icon gently either before a challenging task or at the end of a day.

I very much recommend this book for use during quiet prayerful moments at home, and especially to take with you when you travel!

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(Some of the above information was taken from [catholicidentity.bne.catholic.edu.au](http://catholicidentity.bne.catholic.edu.au)) ♦

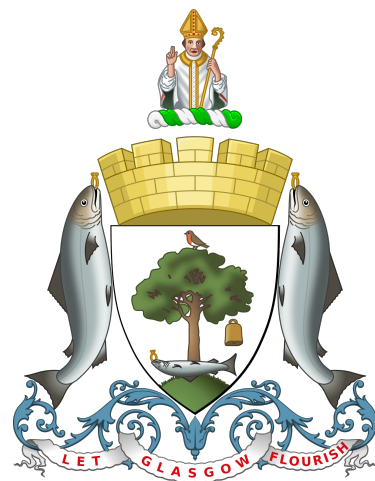
## St. Mungo's Riddle

by Fr. David St. John

I remember watching an episode of the BBC drama "Shetland" from a few seasons ago. This is a police procedural that takes place in the Shetland Islands located in the distant north of Scotland.

In this episode, two people have matching tattoos, depicting a tree, a bird, a bell, and a fish.

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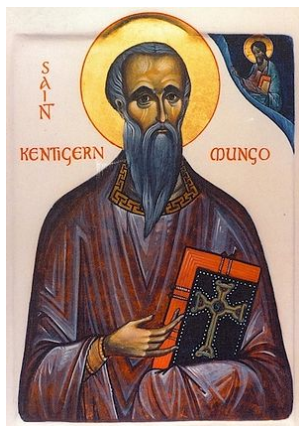


Upon being informed of this tattoo, detective inspector, Jimmy Perez, recites the following riddle:

“Here’s the tree that never grow. Here’s the bird that never flew. Here’s the bell that never rang. Here’s the fish that never swam.”

The tattoos and the riddle are associated with the symbols found on the coat of arms of Glasgow, Scotland’s capital city.

Now for a little background:



St. Kentigern (popularly known in Scotland as St. Mungo) was born in approximately 518 A.D. Once ordained, and later consecrated as bishop, St. Mungo, at the age of 25, built a church at the confluence of the Clyde and Molendinar rivers. For over thirteen years he labored in the district, living an austere life, and making many converts by his holy example and his preaching. A large community grew up around him which became known as "Clasgu" and ultimately grew into the town and city of Glasgow.

So what are the answers to St. Mungo’s riddle?

The tree that never grew was a hazel tree that had died. Mungo brought it back to life by praying over a frozen branch from the tree, which then burst into flame.

The bird was a wild robin that had been accidentally killed. St. Mungo prayed over the dead bird and brought it back to life.

The bell had been badly damaged. When St. Mungo prayed over the bell, it was restored and thereafter rang sweetly and perfectly.

The fish has to do with a ring that had been lost by the queen. Mungo miraculously discovered the ring inside a fish caught from the River Clyde.

St. Mungo preached the Christian faith for many years on the exact site upon which Glasgow Cathedral was later constructed. In one of his well-known sermons, he said: “Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word.” The city’s motto comes from that clarion call. Unfortunately, they found that upon the Coat of Arms, there was only room for the first three words. ♦



# Silent Prayers

By Abbess Aurore Barrett

One of my favorite forms of prayer is silent prayer, just speaking silently to God from my heart. Each time, as I prepare myself for my "Silent Prayer" time with God, I first settle myself down in the corner of my favorite chair, holding a crucifix in my hands or wrapping a rosary around them, and place my prayer shawl around my shoulders or over my head. I always have a small journal and pen near me, listening for God's voice.



*"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."* Matthew 6:6 New King James Version)

Silent prayer is a form of prayer where thoughts and feelings are directed towards God, without the need for spoken words. It involves quieting the mind and body to focus on the divine presence. Silent prayer can help individuals cultivate a deeper relationship with God or their spiritual beliefs. It's not a ritual or set of words to recite as in a Missal, but rather an inner state of being. Silent prayer can be practiced anywhere, at any time, and by people of different faiths.

Silent prayer, also known as contemplative or interior prayer, involves communicating with God or a higher power through inner thoughts and feelings, rather than spoken words. It's a way to deepen one's connection with the divine through stillness. It's a form of prayer where thoughts and feelings are directed towards God, without the need for spoken words.

*"The language of the heart is silence—not a bleak, empty silence, but a profound and meaningful silence that ceaselessly sings the glory of God."* - Archimandrite Meletios Webber

St. Teresa of Avila emphasized the importance of silence in prayer, stating that "in the silence of the heart, God speaks." She believed that true prayer is a matter of listening to God's voice, not just talking to Him, and that silence allows for this listening to take place.

Here are some specific quotes from St. Teresa of Avila on silent prayer:

"God is the friend of silence – we need to listen to God because it's not what we say but He says to us and through us that matters."

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"If you sincerely want to learn to pray: keep silence. We can hear the voice of God in silence."

"In your silence and stillness, let God's Spirit within you make itself known."

"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts."

"It is this will to be alone with God and to talk with Him that distinguishes true prayer from delusion, because this will is the love of God."

"True prayer is a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us."

St. Ignatius of Loyola emphasized the importance of silent prayer, particularly through contemplation. He also highlighted the value of simply being present with God in silence, allowing the mind to rest and the heart to turn towards God. He believed that silence allows the restless mind to become still, enabling the heart to turn more fully towards God. He encouraged spending time in silence, either in a physical space or in a quiet, contemplative space within the mind.

St. Ignatius often used phrases like "Take, Lord, receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, my whole will, all that I have and all that I possess. You gave it all to me, Lord; I give it all back to You." This prayer encapsulates the idea of surrendering oneself to God's will and trusting in His guidance.

In essence, St. Ignatius' understanding of silent prayer emphasizes the importance of being present with God, both physically and spiritually, and engaging in practices that help to calm the mind and focus the heart on His presence.

If you think you cannot pray to God through Silent Prayer or don't have the time to devote to this type of prayer, read here about a wife and mother who found her own way to do this:

Susanna Wesley, January 20, 1669 – July 23 1742, (mother of John and Charles Wesley ~ Founders of the Methodist Movement), made prayer a central part of her daily life, dedicating two hours each day to it. She famously used a signal to let her children know she was going to pray by pulling her apron over her head, to indicate when she was praying and needed privacy. Susanna and Samuel Wesley had 19 children. At her death, only eight of her children were still alive.

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Samuel Wesley spent time in jail twice due to his poor financial abilities, and the lack of money was a continual struggle for Susanna. Their house was burned down twice; during one of the fires, her son, John, nearly died and had to be rescued from the second story window. She was the primary source of her children's education.

All of this, and she still found time for private prayer.

Finally, prioritizing prayer involves making it a regular and meaningful part of your life, not just an occasional act, but a consistent practice. This can involve setting aside dedicated time for prayer, finding quiet spaces, and even incorporating prayer into daily routines and activities. Ultimately, prioritizing prayer means making it a habit and a source of strength and connection with God. ♦

## My Prayer Shawls

By Abbess Aurore Barrett

Currently I own five Prayer Shawls. My first one came from India. It is a large soft black cotton square with white symbols imprinted on it. A perfect shawl to wear in the cool autumn days and nights. My second prayer shawl was given to me upon completion of my formation as a Belle Coeur Sister. It is a soft blue color made of a cashmere-like material, a long shawl with fringed ends. Perfect for cold winter days and evenings. My other three shawls are all from the same company, made of a silky chiffon type material, long rectangles which can be wrapped around my shoulder or as a covering over my head. Each is in a different color, white, pink, and peach, and are imprinted with the Words of God. I wear them during our long hot summers here in Las Vegas. All of my prayer shawls are beautifully made, soft, durable, and comforting. I use them not just for praying, but for times when I may feel a little stressed or anxious about something, when I find myself needing some extra God comfort and protection.



(These beautiful prayer shawls can be purchased from: [www.prayerscarves.com](http://www.prayerscarves.com) ♦

# Olga of Alaska: A Saint From Among the People

by Fr. David St. John



In 1794, when St. Herman left his beloved Valaam Monastery in Russia to come to the shores of Alaska, he found an indigenous people who were ready for, and easily

accepting of, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

St. Herman came to Kodiak, and eventually settled on nearby Spruce Island - a Thin Place in Alaska, replete with moss-covered trees, mist-shrouded mountains, and endless vistas of flowing water. There, he found a people who lived their boundless spirituality. They saw God in all of creation; in every branch of every tree, in every animal, on the land, in the air, and in the sea. These people didn't just embrace a foreign religion - it already grew in them.

To them, all of life was mysterious and sacred. They lived off the land, foraging and hunting, and they believed that all the animals and fish they brought back for food actually allowed themselves to be caught.

They offered themselves up to the people, for their subsistence. That is why the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was so easily accepted by them. Christianity and the life of Jesus was the fulfillment of what they already knew.

It was into this world that Olinka Arrsamquq Michael, commonly known as Olga, was born in 1916. Her family, living in the settlement of Kwethluk, located in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region of Alaska, were reindeer herders.



Eventually she married. Her husband was originally the village postmaster and manager of the general store, and later was ordained as an archpriest in the church. So Olga now added the responsibilities of a matushka (the wife of a priest) to her life.

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Olga and her husband had thirteen children, eight of whom lived to adulthood.

Olga was a midwife who assisted countless women across the region with childbirth. She was known for her empathy and caring for those who had suffered abuse of all kinds, especially sexual abuse. Even though her family was poor, she was taught to be generous to those who were poorer. Despite the demands of her own large family she would often go to the homes of others to cook and clean for them. She sewed her own parkas, socks, mittens, and blankets to distribute among the villagers. She was also known for her uncanny ability to know when a woman was pregnant, even before the woman herself had a clue.

In November 1979, she died of cancer.

When Olga died, many people from distant villages wanted to come to her funeral, but since it was November, the winter weather threatened to make it impossible. However, a sudden wind from the south brought warm weather, thawing the ice and snow to make the trip to Kwethluk possible. The evening after her funeral, the normal harsh winter weather returned.

Olga had lived a simple life in which everything she did came out of a love of God and her family, friends, and neighbors - including those to whom she served as midwife, who lived in villages many arduous miles away. She would have laughed if someone had told her that one day she would be a Saint.

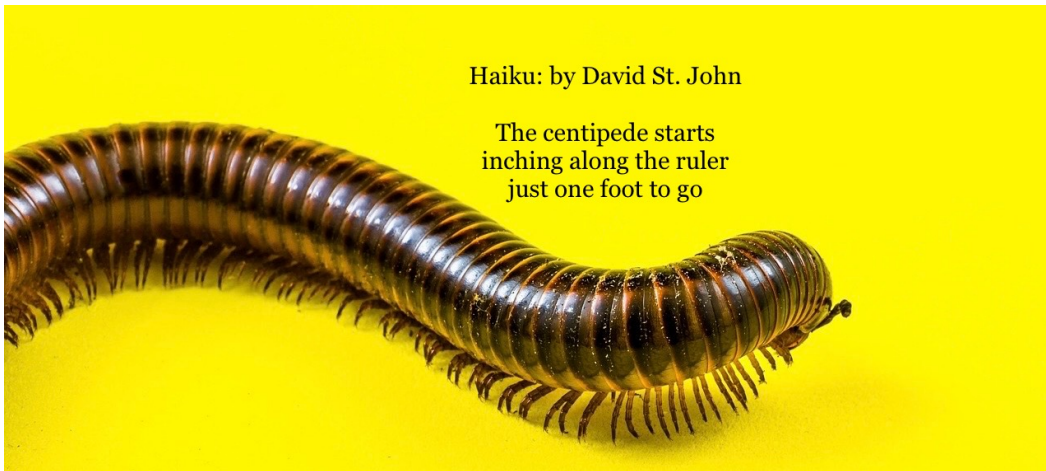
Olga was highly venerated in the region in which she lived, especially by many of the Orthodox women touched by her life story.

In putting her forward for sainthood in the Orthodox Church, it was said that “her humility, her generosity, her piety, her patience and her selfless love for God and neighbor were well known in the Kuskokwim during her earthly life.” In other words, it was said that she was an ordinary person, just like the rest of us, who lived and loved extraordinarily.

On November 9, 2023, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America announced her formal canonization as Saint Olga of Alaska. ♦

Haiku: by David St. John

The centipede starts  
inching along the ruler  
just one foot to go





# Poetry Corner:

## “Le Soleil un Cadeau”

by Aurore Leigh Barrett



The daylight is slowly fading  
the nighttime has yet to begin.  
The sun is moving down in the sky  
It soon should touch the ground.

And while it is up high in the sky  
The sun scorches all it can touch  
Animals pant from the heat  
Humans do so too!

And the bones of the dead  
are bleached white  
By the never-ending sun  
And these bleached bones  
become art in the  
Hands of an Artist.

Georgia O'Keefe used these  
bones as her palette  
Her palette of the colors she saw  
The bones bleached so white  
Almost stark in their whiteness  
Became her first famous canvas.

The sun can be treacherous  
as its heat beats down  
But it can also be beautiful  
as it bleaches the ground  
Respect its power  
And never forget  
it is a Gift!

From the book: “The Touch: Poems & Prose”,  
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