Voices of Sisters
Spirituality



(Joan Sauro)



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Losing

They are blood sisters, Paula and Sister Lois, swimming together off the eastern coast in the wide and tumbling blue sea. Frolicking, laughing, they ride the dancing waves. And oh, how Lois loved to dance with swirling streamers back home in the chapel. She mimics the swirling with exaggerated swings, and her sister laughs as they bob up and down in the watery waves.

Spread out on the beach, their family watches the antics of the two in the water. Such joy in the sunlight!

They watch the sisters salute each other, lose each other, then reappear side by side. Frolicking and laughing. Losing and finding.

Then suddenly, one lost forever.

All the relatives on shore rush into the tumult, arms flailing, grabbing hold of Sister Lois' body like a piece of flotsam floating in the unforgiving sea. They bring her ashore and lay her face-up on the beach. Puddles of water. Stunned silence. Her blue eyes wide open through it all.

"She is seeing the face of God," someone says quietly.

Finding

A few hundred miles south, the ocean roars and whimpers, moody blue outside a retreat house. Many come with moods and desires of their own. And I am one.

Sitting at a window in view of the water, we are two women who pay no mind to the sea, no mind at all to its moods. We are concerned about the sea within.

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The director has deep-set blue eyes, steadfast, welcoming, patient. I have come a day's journey for her counsel. Two women wrapped in silence sit by a window near the ocean that rushes and recedes, while heartfelt words rise and fall.

Then the blue eyes smile, and the Sister of Mercy says what I will never forget.

Each day is composed of hours and we are in one. Pay no mind to the hour before and the hour to come, if indeed there be one. We have only this hour. Embrace it. Love it as best you can. Here is the face of God.

In each hour.

Venturing forth

As it happens, I am not the only one looking for the face of God in each hour. Our Sister Doreen is doing likewise. It is the hour for her to go beyond where she has gone.

She has been to the southern border five times, helping bring warm meals, clean clothes and bus tickets to safety for those fleeing for their lives. "Such beautiful people," she says. "All they want is security. Just a little peace, a little hope."

She has come a long way from Tipp Hill, in Syracuse, New York, where she grew up. Those times and streets are like a distant memory, all except for the light. She will never forget the traffic light with the green above the red.

She carries that light and its significance with her always.

"All my life I have tried to obey the green light. Now it says, '*Go*. No matter your 85 years, your creaky knees, your hearing aids. You can hear God's voice clear enough. *Go to Peru*.' "

God has never abandoned her, and she is grateful, excited and, yes, a little anxious.

The ocean still beckons, wild, willful, unpredictable. Just outside Doreen's door is our community cemetery. Sister Lois' body is buried with our sisters there. A small bouquet lies against her simple tombstone.

Not for a minute does her spirit rest. She is at Doreen's back as she makes her way down to the border. The sun is setting, a new day arriving.

The voice comes loud and clear. *Go. Cross the ocean to Peru. Love as best you can. Go with God with your eyes wide open.*



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This story appears in the **Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water** feature series. View the full series.