



FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

April 23, 2023

Swimming and the Spiritual Life: The Sound of Silence

Last week, we began our series on what swimming can teach you about the spiritual life. This week we'll continue with the next lesson: the value of silence.

You wouldn't know it from the pool deck (attending a swim meet with the cheers of parents and kids echoing through a very echoey pool isn't exactly peaceful) but silence comes part and parcel with swimming. Sure, there's a lot of chatter and joking around on the deck, or between sets, but as soon as you push off that wall, it's you and the pool. All you can hear is the wash of water in and out of your ears.

Part of being a swimmer is making peace with that silence. When you have long sets to do, there's not much to occupy your mind. The visual is pretty constant (you see that same black line on the bottom of the pool over and over and over again) and the audio stimulation is pretty muted. You can't check out completely, because you have to keep track of how many laps you've done, but otherwise the only thing to naturally occupy your mind is the thought of how much your arms hurt as you try to power through to the end of the set. Over time, I learned to take advantage of that silence. Those long sets were where I did a lot of my thinking. Papers for school were written during those practices. A lot of the grand mystery of life questions were contemplated while splashing back and forth across the Don Richards Pool. Things in my day that I needed to process were chewed through then.

In silence, God speaks. When your life is filled with too much noise and distraction, it's easy to miss what God is trying to say to you. It can be natural for people to want to fill the moments of silence in their life. Some people get uncomfortable when things are too quiet, and the means of filling that void are almost endless: music, TikTok, texting, Netflix, etc. When you stop filling your life with background noise, even for a moment, and give God a chance to speak, you might be surprised at what He has to say. The sport of swimming forced me to make peace with those moments of silence (earbuds short circuit in the pool). I'd encourage you to seek out moments of silence (even short ones) for yourself to seek out moments of silence (even short ones) for yourself.

—Joe Moreshead

