



A Kindly Providence

Louis Renner

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This comprehensive and illustrated volume is both a rich history of the Catholic Church in Alaska, and the autobiography of Fr. Louis Renner, S.J., who was a dedicated missionary in Alaska for 40 years. He tells here a compelling story of a full and fascinating life in service of the people and the Church of Alaska amid the incredible natural beauties, challenging elements and vast regions of the Great Land.

Beautifully interweaving the history of the people and Church in Alaska, Fr. Renner tells his story of a dedicated missionary priest who loved the people he served. A scholar, a teacher, and always a Jesuit priest, he taught German and Latin at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, edited the Catholic newsletter *The Alaskan Shepherd*, and ran missions at two different Indian villages on the Yukon River. This pastoral priest became a friend to people in all sectors of Alaskan society. Tony Knows, the governor of Alaska, even presented him with the "Governor's Award for Friend of the Humanities".

The outline of Fr. Renner's life is fleshed-out richly in *A Kindly Providence*. One reviewer writes that "all is there, a clear picture of his life. Renner is a very good writer— technically competent and very interesting. He kept this reader's interest throughout the 500-plus page book. I really wanted to see how it ended." Another writes: "Once I started to read it, I couldn't put it down. I had to finish it." Rich in detail, this book is a wonderful testimony to a model life of a happy priest in the twentieth century.

The book is based, not only on Fr. Renner's remarkable memory, but also on his personal diaries and correspondence, on official documents, and on accounts written by him of his unusual adventures during over forty years in Alaska. Substantial quotes from diaries, letters, and official documents give readers a feeling of being actually present at those events in far-off places. The many photographs illustrating the narrative lend an air of immediacy and give us a vicarious experience of the author's personal life.

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