



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

2014

Harried Prayer

Fr. Randy Roche

Loyola Marymount University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Roche, Fr. Randy, "Harried Prayer" (2014). *Spiritual Essays*. 356.

<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/356>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Digital Commons @ Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spiritual Essays by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lmu.edu.

Harried Prayer

When confronted by some minor emergency, we would not expect to quietly reflect on our situation and then calmly request assistance of someone. Nor, with emotions high and adrenaline rushing in our systems while we face some perceived crisis, would we expect to serenely commend our concerns to God. While we might be able to think clearly and make good decisions under pressure, we communicate differently with one another, and with God, according to the intensity of our experiences.

We cannot always be as calm as we would like, since we are subject to thoughts and feelings associated with turmoil as well as those of peacefulness. Therefore, we can expect to pray in ways that are appropriate when we are agitated, stressed or anxious as well as when we can pause for quiet reflection.

During times of stress, some of us grow quite composed externally, but with much turbulence within. In speaking with others, we would likely control the level of our voices, use few words, and speak only whatever seems necessary rather than give expression to our feelings. If we pray at such a time, we are not likely to express our concerns at great length or to carefully choose what we say, but rather, we would relate with God spontaneously and directly, more from our hearts than from our minds.

If we tend to think that prayer is only possible when we are physically and emotionally in a settled condition, as is appropriate for meditation or contemplation, we would leave out of our relationship with God the majority of our life-experiences. God loves us in all the moments of our lives, not only the occasions when we feel especially consoled. We might prefer and more deeply treasure some of our more significant interactions with family members or friends, but we value too, especially when we reflect a bit, the laughs, surprises, tensions and difficulties that we have shared over time. God accompanies us by choice, not obligation, at every moment of every day, and is absolutely attentive to all our thoughts, feelings and decisions.

We readily share the highs and the lows of our lives with those we trust. We find it fitting to share weaknesses, doubts and even some failures with those we trust most deeply. With God, it is wholly fitting to communicate everything that is of real concern to us - by words when they help, but more often by intention or inner direction.

We might, as we do with others, find ourselves "censoring" thoughts and feelings prior to consciously admitting them to God. Trusting is always a choice, and for us it often seems to imply the risk of being misunderstood, or

worse, receiving disapproval. We could tell ourselves that "God already knows" as an excuse for not sharing our condition or our responses to events. But even our friends and all those who are somewhat perceptive often know when we are confused or enlightened, in pain or at peace. When we recognize that our present general state is known, we are often more prone to entrusting others with the particulars of our experiences than if we believed that our feelings and thoughts were totally opaque. God certainly knows all that takes place within us and around us, but only becomes one with us in our experiences when we freely disclose them.

Harried Prayer, as honest communication with God, is likely our most realistic kind of prayer when we are under stress.