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## Look Again

Fr. Randy Roche

*Loyola Marymount University*

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## Look Again

A Jesuit, who is very knowledgeable in many languages, showed me that the word "repent," is best understood as "take another look." When we look again at a sunset or a work of art, we are liable to receive more than the initial experience we had, which might have been primarily visual. And when we reflect on a first opinion or judgment, we might very well come to recognize a better way to proceed than if we had not looked again within ourselves.

"Repent" usually means to turn back from some form of negative or inappropriate thought or behavior, whereas "look again" does not pre-judge behavior, but encourages our use of the beneficial human power of reflection. By taking another look at almost anything we have in mind, we often gain new or deeper insight into either the subject we are considering, or ourselves, or perhaps both. After one look, we can turn away from a beautiful sight and perhaps be satisfied with what we received. But even if we do not literally look again at what our eyes had beheld at first, we still might "look again" within ourselves as to the meaning we receive, the joy we notice, or the depth of our feelings.

To look again is a relatively easy practice. But, like many good and helpful options that are available to us all, reflection becomes habitual only after we consciously choose to engage in looking again regularly, and when we begin to subsequently experience some recognizable benefits. Many of us have experimented with taking a few moments at a particular time of day to look again at some of the previous events of our day in order to appreciate or learn from them. Others have trained themselves to pause before any kind of meeting so as to consider at that moment the purpose they had in mind when they first decided to become involved.

Busy persons are continually moving from one moment to the next, fully occupied with the events before us, desiring to accomplish as much as we can in the time we have available. If we do not have a practice of reflection in the midst of, or in company with, our ongoing activities and decision-making, we might be missing much of the value and even the efficacy of our efforts. We do not always have to stop what we are doing in order to look again, as if we were vehicles moving in traffic with signal lights to guide our movements. We are amazingly, wondrously equipped to change the focus of our attention to an interior check on the value of our behavior even while our bodies give no outward signs that we are doing so.

Most of us have had the experience of walking determinedly towards a door while also considering whether or not we are well-prepared for whatever

situation awaits on the other side. We can recognize that this ability is a gift of God and consciously apply the practice of reflection to much of what we do and observe.

When we become aware that something has caught our attention, it is likely an invitation to look again.