



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

2013

Pictures from Space

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, "Pictures from Space" (2013). *Spiritual Essays*. 297.

<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/297>

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.

Pictures from Space

On every globe-map of the world that I have seen, Antarctica is at the bottom, and Australia is near the bottom. This represents a standard practice of representing the North Pole as the top of the world. If a chart-maker were to place the South Pole at the top, it would be contrary to existing conventions, and might cause confusion among those who seek to communicate about the relative locations of visible earth features. Yet, it is possible to reverse the top and the bottom of a globe without in any way affecting the actual location of land features, or of the people who live on the earth. The reality of earth would remain unchanged, but understanding of "top" or "bottom" would be significantly altered. When we see pictures of the earth from space, concepts of "top" or "bottom" lose their meaning entirely, though the earth remains where it is.

Some interior beliefs we have about reality are like the usual globe maps of the earth, seemingly the correct way to view all our ways of thinking and relating, until we find through experience that they are not the only or the best descriptions of our place in the world. Just as the first images of the earth that were taken from space suddenly gave us a new and broader perspective of our home planet, so the occasional insights or religious experiences open for us fresh and life-enhancing outlooks. Revelatory views from "inner space" can sometimes elicit reverence, awe, or perhaps twinges of fear, when we consider the implications for us.

If we recall some of the enlightening experiences that we have had, we can reflect on them and become aware of the ways we responded to them. We are liable to have at first been quite cautious about admitting even to ourselves that we have had such experiences. When our minds were opened to new ways of viewing familiar beliefs or patterns of thought, we might have then feared that we would be forsaking our values if we accepted those thoughts and beliefs as our own. Yet, early or late in the sequence of successive experiences that opened our minds and hearts, we came to trust what we discovered, and probably learned to appreciate such occurrences as appropriately beneficial. We might well have grown to the point of welcoming new or expanded ways to understand long-held viewpoints or habitual ways of making judgments

The view of earth from space is different from the perspective we have from our location on our planet, but the image of our globe from outside is beautiful and quite meaningful to us, especially if we reflect upon what we see. When God inspires us with new perspectives on inner realities, our interior world can seemingly be turned upside down with life-changing insights. But if we reflect on our experiences, we will find that God has not

done us a disservice but has enabled us to see more beauty in our world of relationships, ideals and desires than we thought or imagined could be ours.

Inspirations are God's pictures of our personal home, taken not from outer space, but from inner space.