



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

2012

God's Language

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, "God's Language" (2012). *Spiritual Essays*. 259.

<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/259>

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.

God's Language

Which language does God use? God speaks the language that is most familiar to each of us. Our intention to communicate seems to be the only essential in conversing with God, not any particular language or specific means of communicating. We do not have to be careful of proper grammatical construction and literary forms. We do not have to stand, sit or kneel when we talk with God. Tears, sighs, and gestures are acceptable, as are the whole range of human emotions, from anger and disappointment, to love and affection. Could any language possibly exist that God would find unfamiliar?

Though we are capable of conversing with a small group of people, and might even be able to keep the exchange of ideas going when several languages are being used, few if any of us can fully and personally interact with more than one person at a time. Yet, right now, people are communicating with God all at the same time, and experiencing God as responding to them in their uniqueness. God not only understands every language and mode of expression of each and every person, but also responds in the manner that is uniquely appropriate to each of us in the present moment.

However, God is not some kind of cosmic switchboard, through which all our communications flow in their multiplicity of languages and manners of thinking and feeling. Our experience is not that of relating with a thing, but with someone. People of every age write and speak of their direct personal contact with God. But not all people, for we differ from one another not only in language, but in culture, faith, and our understanding of the meaning and purpose of life.

Some of us find spontaneous informal communication with God to be familiar and easy, while others relate more readily in formal prayers and rituals. For some, maintaining very close connections with traditions as handed on by culture groups is most important; for others, continual growth and change in response to their individual experiences are of primary concern. God does not require that we all communicate in the same way, or that we must all use specific words or forms of expression. God relates with each of us as we are at this present time. Not one of us has ever been turned away because of the language we use, or because of how we use that language.

God relates with us in any and all of our languages, but does God have a language that is different from all of ours? Teens and clubs and interest groups sometimes use expressions that only the members of their groups know. But we are all members of God's group, so there are none with whom God would have reason to use a language that would exclude others. Rather, as our experiences verify, God has particular ways of communicating with us that go beyond language, and are unique to God: Only God can use that language to address us, yet all of us can understand it.

To recognize God's language most easily, we can consider some of the ways that we perceive God's presence and action: from metaphorical smiles and hugs, to experiences of interior warmth that at times might even become physical warmth, and especially peace, sometimes deep peace, and even at times a peace that becomes sleep or the nearest thing to sleep while we are still awake. In addition, we can recognize some of our heartfelt desires as being at the same time also God's desires for us.

Which language does God use? Love.