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## Star Systems

Fr. Randy Roche

*Loyola Marymount University*

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## Star Systems

Those who win awards as best actress, best actor, or best athlete are usually called "stars." The system by which people from various professions and athletic teams are designated as "stars" relates to the brightness of the stars in the sky, not to their size, longevity, or distance from us. Human "stars" are members of an elite group, often receiving their status for brief periods of time. The stars in the skies are as different from the mortals who are given the name as Iceland is from an ice cube.

Humans "make" the stars, giving them a temporary honor based on particular accomplishments and popularity, usually with reference only to their value as entertainers. The stars above are unaffected by our opinions as to their beauty or purpose. New stars are forming now, independently of our desires or plans; some stars shined brightly for perhaps billions of years, and burned out or blew apart long before any of us looked up to the heavens. Human "stars" might live private lives independently of the desires of their admirers and critics, but their designation as "stars" is wholly dependent upon others.

Like us, and all that exists, the stars are part of God's ongoing act of loving creativity. There are more stars than we have yet been able to see or count. Of the stars that we can see with the aid of powerful instruments, there are more of them than the sum of all the humans who have ever lived on this earth. Each of the stars usually burns brightly for more years than our earth has been orbiting our particular star, the sun.

There are many different kinds of "stars" among us. From singers and musicians to athletes and actors, the variety of persons and personalities is great. The stars in the universe are so many and so varied that astronomers keep discovering not just more stars, but also systems of stars that are as different from one another as auto racers from ballet dancers. The stars above might not be thought of as famous entertainers, but they have been fascinating to us, their human observers of every culture, language, and nation, for as long as we have been humans.

We are pleased by the skills and perhaps the personalities of some of those who are the "stars" of our times and places. We might be grateful that they exercise their talents for us to enjoy. Rarely do we have an opportunity personally to thank a "star," though we might join in applause or vocal acclamation at a public event. Very few of us are

inclined to express gratitude to a star in the sky. But many of us experience gratitude for the benefits we derive from the star with which we are most familiar, the sun, and for the stars we are sometimes privileged to view in a clear night sky. We can thank God for them, as we can for all that is good.

If a singer is praiseworthy for singing beautifully, the creator of the stars is surely deserving of our admiration. The best singer in the world has a limit to the songs that he or she can sing. God has no limits in creating stars or anything else. What we can see of creation is admirable. What else there might be, we know only that the creator of the stars could do as much and more simply by wanting it. Creating stars is easier for God to do than for me to write the words: star systems.