



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

2006

Stepping into Love

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, "Stepping into Love" (2006). *Spiritual Essays*. 234.
<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/234>

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.

It is only right that I consider God's desire in my life and the freedom of choice that I have to seek His will.

What can we do to be like Jesus in loving others? And I'm very interesting in which way or what to pray to be more in love with Jesus?

Stepping into Love

Many of us have had at least one experience of falling in love, which might help us to understand some aspects of our relationship with God, especially with the person of Jesus Christ. But "stepping into love" might better highlight the unique bond we can have with God in Christ.

At some time in our lives, we might have been surprised by the intensity of our emotions, and say that we had "fallen in love." The degree of feelings that one person can have for another is no measure or guarantee of that other person's feelings. In our relationship with God, we might be surprised by an experience of powerful affection, but nothing that we might think or feel can come close to the intensity of the love that God has had for us since the moment of our creation.

God did not fall in love with us. Not even our good looks and wonderful dispositions have led to the firm and irrevocable decision to love us that comes from the heart of Christ! The relationship originates not in us, but in the One who thought of us, wanted us to exist, and at all moments and in every circumstance loves us while continuing to create us.

How does our love for God grow; how do we step into the flow of love that surrounds us more completely than the ocean waters surround the creatures of the sea? If we reflect on some of our experiences, we might recall that we have, at times, found ourselves with an unexpected and quite positive feeling that arose from nothing that we had initiated or planned. Some quality of a person, or an event such as a sunset, or some irruption of thought that came to mind in a moment of quiet, touched us; an emotion at a deep level of consciousness arose from within, and left us with a peace and joy that we could not possibly have caused by anything that we said or did. God, as creator, can and does express love for us by touching directly our interior senses. If we say "yes" to such experiences, and give thanks for them, they will occur more frequently, though perhaps in a manner more

subtle or in circumstances that are connected with fulfilling our responsibilities towards others.

Though God has all the initiative in matters of love, we can follow up on our interest in the relationship as we can do with any other person. If we can try to know more about some person from his or her friends, family members, and acquaintances, we can read what is written about God in Scripture and a myriad of books that are available to us, and we can talk with people we know who love God. Whatever steps we take to know and love God are quite often those thoughts and actions that are inspired, fostered, and guided by God, who is love.

We come to know and appreciate other people through conversation and shared activities. Prayer can be both a conversation and a shared activity, since the very possibility of communication with the invisible and infinite God is a personal gift more than something that we do by our own power or according to our own interests. We can exercise our gift of belief that God wants us to come closer each day by speaking and by listening – both are important.

We can ask another person, “Do you love me” or, “Do you have the same feelings for me that I have for you?” From God, we have statements in nature, in Scripture, in Liturgy, and in most forms of worship, declaring a love that is personal and without limit. We can make our own declarations to God, expressing our thoughts and feelings in words of our own and in words that have been written by others. God, who made us capable of expressing ourselves, is pleased with all that comes honestly from our hearts, including reverence, awe, and other sentiments that often cannot be put into words.

We might invite one or more persons to share a meal with us, with the intention of getting to know them better. Most of us understand that such occasions are ultimately expressions of care, not just the logical means of nourishing our bodies. Jesus invites us to a meal, in which love is the essence of all that is shared.

No matter how much we might love someone, it is unlikely that we would ask of him or of her what we are encouraged to ask of God: “Please fill my heart with love for you to match your love for me.” Such a request - to be made capable of loving God more than we already do – is definitely one way of “stepping into love.”