



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

2012

Sailing

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, "Sailing" (2012). *Spiritual Essays*. 214.
<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/214>

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.

Sailing

I have never sailed a boat, even a small one, on my own. I have been sailing with others just enough to appreciate how it is possible to travel in almost any direction, no matter which way the wind blows. But even the experts at sailing are unable to go anywhere if the wind dies down completely.

The wind of the Spirit blows continuously and reliably enabling us to move about in every aspect of our lives. The more sensitive we are to the changes in direction of this wind, the better will be our journeys. Although we can avail ourselves of the wind to go wherever we choose, we can end up on the rocks or tipped over into the water if we do not attend to the indications provided us for the safer or better way to travel. The Spirit is not an inanimate object or a creature for us to use in any way we wish, but a living and active manifestation of love, always favorable to us, and therefore often favoring one direction rather than another.

Our common experience of nature's breezes and winds is that they come and go without our being able to control them. We can often predict their intensity and general direction, and make plans based on our observations and practical knowledge. These winds do not advise or guide us. Rather, according to our desires and plans, we adapt our behavior to either go with the movements of air or to resist them. The breath of the Spirit deserves a different kind of response from us, because our experience of inspiration is not the same as that of the winds that blow.

We can freely choose whether or not to accept inspirations and whether or not to move in the directions indicated, but we do not create these common experiences any more than we call up the winds to blow when and where we might wish. To ignore inspirations would be like sailing a boat but failing to make any adjustment when the wind changes direction - a prelude to capsizing. Positively, when the wind of the Spirit or the gentle, just-perceptible breeze of the Spirit presents us with a thought, invitation or suggestion, we have an opportunity for making positive choices on behalf of ourselves and others. We are, at such moments, in the same advantageous position as if a trusted, loyal and loving person came up to us and said, "Try this."

Sailing a boat or following our inspirations involves our free and conscious cooperation. We need to adjust our physical or spiritual sails to receive what we need in order to continue moving forward. The impersonal winds that blow across the waters may, from our perspective, be at times helpful for our purposes and at other times contrary. The very personal Spirit of God

always blows in our favor, but only when we trust will our sails be filled, enabling us to journey to our destination with confidence and in peace.

Not everyone can learn to sail a boat, but all of us are capable of growing in our conscious acceptance of inspirations.