



**Digital Commons@**

Loyola Marymount University  
LMU Loyola Law School

---

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

---

2011

## Challenges

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, "Challenges" (2011). *Spiritual Essays*. 198.

<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/198>

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](mailto:digitalcommons@lmu.edu).

## Challenges

It is not just young boys who “dare” one another to accept challenges, such as climbing a ladder up the side of a tall building. Young girls also take risks, not necessarily the same ones as boys, but very likely trying the kinds of things which parents would never suggest to them. New and exciting undertakings, whether self-initiated, or resulting from “I dare you,” might be a phase of childhood, but we all continue to grow and expand our levels of experience up to the end of our lives. Like trees that do not stop growing when they become tall, we have an inbuilt desire for “more” even if we cannot identify clearly what we are seeking.

Teachers and parents continually challenge young people in ways that they consider appropriate for promoting growth, not harm. They do not use the language of “dare you,” but they know from their own experience that none of us develops by carrying out only those tasks that we learned to perform when we were little children. A child might need “training wheels” on a first bicycle, but soon learns how to achieve balance, and is then able to attempt further new and enjoyable possibilities of bicycle riding that might last through life.

As adults, we take purposeful risks for the sake of our ideals, or to achieve our goals, or to realize some of our desires. Our fulfillment depends upon daring to follow our personal and particular calling, a life-task that is never complete, though we might well find much joy and satisfaction in continuing to investigate new information, experiment with both ideas and practices, and regularly assess our progress.

Some of the ventures we initiate involve exploring our own interior lives, through reflection, meditation, and prayer. The risk is real, though we and God might be the only ones to know the courage involved in freely and consciously examining a motive, recalling a painful memory, or acknowledging a deep and highly personal desire. We know how easy it is to keep busy, to surround ourselves with ever-changing sights and sounds, and to avoid all thoughts and feelings about our purpose in life. But to live requires movement, and some of that movement forward requires attention to what is within us, not to mere external realities.

The endeavor of becoming quiet, separated for a time from familiar sights, sounds, and activities, might daunt us at first, since we do not know for certain what will arise in our consciousness, or from where. We might encounter a thought from a dark corner of our mind, or an experience of love from the heart of God, or both. The goal of attending to interior thoughts and feelings is not primarily to gain new knowledge, though we will

surely learn something about ourselves, but to have an experience of peace – peace of mind and peace of heart.

Seeking peace – interior peace – dares us at a deep level, because we who are so used to controlling our external and internal environment as much as possible cannot create peace inside ourselves. We can engage in practices that encourage and allow for experiences of peace, but much like waiting for a timid child to come to us if and when it chooses, our most effective option is to remain open to the awareness that “all is well,” no matter what our circumstances might be.

The challenge of peace is that we might have to temporarily leave aside our busy daily engagements for what we might consider to be non-productive quiet-time in order to experience the peace that most deeply comforts and supports us as persons.