



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

2007

"Catholics Worship Mary"

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, "Catholics Worship Mary" (2007). *Spiritual Essays*. 103.
<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/103>

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.

"Catholics Worship Mary"

Whether they are serious or only mischievous, some people say of Catholics that they "worship" the mother of Jesus. The best answer might be: "No, we worship only God, but we do have 'friends in high places.'" God is not jealous of the time and devotion we give to friends, spouses, and all other people whom we treat with respect. Nor does God take offense if we have relationships with other of God's friends who have gone before us. The issue is really about the present state of those who have passed from this life.

Moses is recorded as having heard God say to him, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Exodus 3:6). These, and all our ancestors, whether recently departed from us, or going back many generations, have died. We say only of ourselves that we are alive. But what if those who have died are alive to God? We are quite aware of time, but God, and those with God, are outside of time. All are present to God, who is only (and always) in an eternal present.

Time is very important to us, measuring the length of our lives as we know them. We can count up the approximate number of years since famous persons died, or some of our family members died. Real as time is for us, time is not an aspect, quality, or attribute that pertains to God. God is not growing old, and has no date of birth. God created time for us, as a wonderful condition for human life – and death. Those who have died have left us, they have not left God.

We are concerned about our present state of health and well-being, and that of all the people we love. Most of us also have feelings of loss, grief, and affection for people we know who have died. If we reflect on the possibility that all of us are alive and present to God, we might become more aware of the positive meaning in another line from Scripture: "Love does not come to an end." (I Cor 13:8.)

If we think about our ancestors, who have died, or saints, or revered historical persons, we do not think of them as being older than when they died. They have moved out of the measurement of time. Their creator (and our creator) loves us all. We can and do die, but we cannot and do not depart from God's creative love. We have the capacity to refuse love of God and of God's other beloved creatures, but we remain always present to God who is always and only present – neither past nor future.

Many, many people report a wide variety of experiences relating with persons who have died. Some talk about receiving a deep sense of peace, with awareness that someone they loved is safe. The relationship has changed, not ended. More than memory is involved when we feel spontaneous affection for someone who has died. Just as not all prayer to God is composed of words, but might consist of yearning, or a sense of loving presence, so our connections with some who have died might be more affective than mental, touching our hearts more quickly than our minds. While some people say, for example, that they talk to their grandmother who died, others relate stories of gentle inspirations or warnings that they have received, as far as they can tell, from some who have died. And friendships with favorite Saints are as significant and supportive for many of us as are relationships with friends and family members whom we can see and hear and touch.

There is no book by "Miss Manners" about proper etiquette for relating with those who have died, but by paying attention to our experiences, we will learn what is appropriate for us.

We do not worship Mary, but we really do have friends among those who have died. The relationship with them is not the same as for those to whom we talk on the phone or face-to-face. But love knows no bounds, and is as infinite in varieties of experience as is the source of love: God.