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## The Power of Trust

Fr. Randy Roche

*Loyola Marymount University*

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## The Power of Trust

When I was younger, "trust walks" were common on retreats and other gatherings that were intended to improve communications among participants. One person would be blindfolded, and "trust" the other to lead him or her around obstacles and through various experiences. On one such occasion, when I was wearing a blindfold, my leader chose to have us run together, but gave me no warning about a drop-off in the grassy area where we were in motion. I fell, and learned something about trust: each of us must decide the proper measure of trust that we will place in anyone.

Because trust depends upon our free choice, it is quite powerful. We might think that by trusting, we place all the initiative in another's hands. But we choose whether or not and to what degree we will trust another person. Rather than diminishing our humanity, we grow as persons through the many and varied levels of trust that we place in others. We can hardly do anything of value in this life without trusting God and our fellow humans. But our trust is neither generic nor total; trust is appropriately particular and is exercised in the complex of our circumstances.

The power of trust misplaced can be seen in choices people make about "security" that are based primarily on fear: opting for any and every service, law, or advertised product that promises protection from life's uncertainties. For us to experience the gift that God intends us to have through trust, we need to focus on the positive: What is it that we seek and desire? When we choose to trust leaders, programs, or medicines, we can do so with true power when we attend to the ultimate impetus from within, the love of God. When the Spirit of God suggests "Come," we are empowered by the source of our very life to take a step forward. God does not play tricks with us. Every decision to trust is best made with honest reference to our relationship with God.

One of the sayings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels is, "Your faith has saved you." In caring for people, Jesus was, and is now, primarily interested in our trust. We are not playing a game, as with a temporary blindfold, but quite often we really are unable to see how all possible variables will fit together; we are in a position to trust in God. Like a box with instructions "some assembly required" we cannot put our lives together all by ourselves. Because we are truly free, trust is the connection that we must have with God if we are to experience the power of God at work in and through us.

We tend to trust the people who manifest care for us. Usually, we trust more fully those who go out of their way on our behalf. Trust is earned; it is not deserved simply by certain persons' titles. We respect authorities, but we trust them when we learn about them, and reflect upon our experiences of them. Though we know by reason that God is absolutely trustworthy, our trust in God grows through what we learn from the results of individual acts of trust that we make. We also find support and encouragement in what others say about their experiences of God. And we can find in the Gospels many examples of Jesus' love, healing, forgiveness, and self-sacrifice that apply to us in the present, not just to the people of history. The Spirit of God living in us helps us to resonate with both the stories of others and our own inclinations towards trusting Jesus. We learn for ourselves that God is utterly trustworthy - incapable of willing us harm. God can challenge us by calling us to live up to the potential for which we are created, but lead us towards harm - never.

For us, the power of God is manifested in love. In us, the power of trust arises from and moves towards the love of God, and neighbor.