



**Digital Commons@**

Loyola Marymount University  
LMU Loyola Law School

---

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

---

2009

## Refuge

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, "Refuge" (2009). *Spiritual Essays*. 66.

<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/66>

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).

## Refuge

Usually, we read or talk more about refugees than about refuges; we tend to think more about the plight of those whose homes have been destroyed by natural disasters or wars than the places and persons providing safety and security for those who have experienced significant loss. Our attention is drawn first to the negative events that deprive people of homes and livelihood; only later do we attend to the means of caring for them.

Since we are not now refugees, but might at any time experience a difficulty in our lives, we might find present encouragement and hope if we think about who or what might be a refuge for us. And we might do well to consider how we might provide refuge for those in present need.

A refuge might be a place, such as the cave or the stable that Joseph and Mary had at Bethlehem, but most often, refuge is provided by caring persons, whether a physical space or a secure place in mind and heart.

Where, or to whom, do we go when we are in trouble? We readily distinguish family members and friends who will surely be there for us from those who will probably not, even if, by titles and positions in society, they have responsibilities for our welfare. For fire safety at home and places of work, we should know where the alarms and extinguishers are located. We have much more reason to occasionally call to mind those to whom we can turn when our security is threatened.

If we have ever gone through a crisis when it seemed there was no place to go, no one who could understand or help, we might have been surprised by some unexpected assistance that we later suspected came to us from God. Or, we might have turned directly to God from our position of apparent helplessness. Many passages of the Scriptures refer to God as a refuge. On one occasion recorded in the Gospel of John, Jesus asked his closest friends if they were going to leave him. One of them said, "To whom shall we go? You have the words of everlasting life." (John 6:68). Sometimes we have no other refuge than God, which is far more good news than bad, even though we might wish for a tangible cave or a warm hug.

We are not God, but we might supply a connection for others with God by the care we manifest for them. Though we probably do not have an

image of ourselves as refuges, we make ourselves available to both God and others as human sources of security through ongoing appreciation for all that is "right" with our lives in the present. We do not merit, earn, control, or buy our well-being; all is gift. From an attitude and habit of thankfulness to God, we can easily be moved to compassion for refugees and others who are without homes for whatever reason. We can pray, speak, and act out of concern for them rather than limit ourselves to criticisms of those who should or could provide them with refuge.

When God is both our refuge in time of hardship and the recipient of our gratitude when we are not, we are the most likely of persons to make available for others in their needs, refuge.