



**Digital Commons@**

Loyola Marymount University  
LMU Loyola Law School

---

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

---

2008

## Love and Fear

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, "Love and Fear" (2008). *Spiritual Essays*. 28.

<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/28>

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).

## Love and Fear

“Perfect love casts out fear.” (I John 4:18) Though our love is limited, God, whose love is perfect, can and will cast fear out of our lives.

We all experience anxious moments and perhaps fear of loss, of pain, of change, or of losing control. Fear is never welcome in itself. Yet, every great and small movement of apprehension can serve as a built-in sensor that give us warnings, like the lights on the dashboard of a car. We need to pay attention to manifestations of fear when they arise within us, but we do not want to be ruled by our feelings. We will decide for ourselves whether or not we need to take action. The alerts we receive from our feelings are healthy reminders of our human weaknesses, but are not obstacles to the exercise of our spirituality.

Fear is not, or should not be, a problem in itself. We do not mistake the siren of an emergency vehicle as being more important than the proximity and purpose of a police car, fire truck, or ambulance. When we investigate the source of our anxiety, we can give it whatever attention it deserves, and, having addressed the source of our uncomfortable feelings, they will dissipate. If we were to directly attack our feelings, as if there was something wrong with them, we would do ourselves harm. Rather, we seek creative solutions for the implied or real threats that are indicated by the presence of fear.

When we become aware of fear, dread, alarm, apprehension, or anxiety, we can ask God to cast it out, believing that in the process, we will be empowered to get past the causes of the feelings, even if the object of our concern does not go away. Our reliance upon God’s love for us is often the difference between being engrossed in negative reactions or moving towards satisfying resolutions. Quite often, when we seek God’s help to deal with frightening challenges, we first gain some insight into the root causes of the disturbance that grips our minds and hearts. Then, as we bring these into the presence of Love, we experience a change in perspective, and a lessening of the feelings that trouble us.

Fear is a feeling, and feelings pass. When they are gone, it is as though they never there. Love abides; love does not come to an end. Fear cannot cast out love, though it surely can capture our attention for a period of time. If we focus on the feelings of fear, they continue, and perhaps become more intense. If we look for the source or cause, and bring that to the Lord, we open ourselves to that helpful intervention which is exactly appropriate and perfectly adapted to our

present need. God's love for us is infinite. The only limitation on God's love is what we place on it. So the surest, best response to everything from a bout of panic to a vague sense of unease is to turn to God.

Perfect love casts out fear.