

The Roman Rite of Exorcism - 1952 A.D.



Introduction

That there is a world of demons is a teaching of revealed religion which is perfectly clear to all who know Sacred Scripture and respect and accept its word as inspired of God. It is part of the whole Christian-Judaeo heritage. There are some who hold that even if revelation were not so absolute, an inference of the existence of evil spirits can be drawn from the magnitude of evil in the world. They say that human malice and depravity even at its worst is not sufficient to account for it, and it must be concluded that the devil is a real person and that his sway is tremendous. As Franqois Mauriac writes in his life of St. Margaret of Cortona: "Evil is Someone, Someone who is multiple and whose name is legion... It is one thing to be in the realm of the demons, as we all are when we have lost the state of grace, and quite another to be held and surrounded, literally possessed by him."

One gets the impression that the teaching about the devil's existence is not a particularly popular one in our time. C. S. Lewis in his *Screwtape Letters* says something to the effect that if the little inexperienced novice devils, about to start out on their work of seducing men, can convince men that the devil does not exist, then half the battle is already won.

The first book of the Holy Bible recounts the seduction of Adam and Eve by the Prince of Darkness; but it is to the last book that we must go for his origin. "Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels battled against the dragon. The dragon and its angels fought back, but they did not prevail and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels were thrown down with it." (Rv 12:7-9)

Christ our Lord overcame Satan on the cross, and ever since the latter's empire is shaken. Man is delivered from the power of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of the Son. Yet the devil is not completely vanquished or trodden underfoot once for all, and the warfare against him is carried out by Christ and His Church until the end of time. Therefore, St. Paul is prompted to admonish us: "Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens... In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one." (Eph 6.11-16)

Against these unclean spirits the Church uses as her weapons prayers, blessings, holy water,

and other sacramentals to combat the ordinary power that the former wield over men. But apart from this ordinary and general power that Providence allows Satan there is also a special and terrible satanic influence called possession -- the domination by the demon over man's bodily organs and his lower spiritual faculties. In later Christian times the term obsession is used instead of possession, the former connoting a lesser kind of demonic disturbance. That Christ reckoned with this satanic power in the same way that the Church has throughout her centuries is evident from the New Testament; see for example Mt 9.32-34, Lk 8.2, Mk 9.13 ff.

To be possessed can mean that Satan has gained mastery over the will so devastatingly that sinfulness passes beyond ordinary depravity in the world, and its cause must be sought in a power above the order of nature. To be possessed can mean that Satan has beclouded the intellect, so that the light of faith cannot illuminate it. To be possessed can mean that Satan has befuddled a person's reason; in fact, simple and superstitious folk have wrongly made lunacy synonymous with diabolical infestation. In some instances of possession recounted in the New Testament, molestation by the devil is manifested in various disturbances of the human body itself, where he has gained control over a man's sight, hearing, speech, or the physical organism in general. (Mk 5:1ff)

Christ handed down to the Church the power He once exercised over demons. The early Christians were deeply influenced by what they had learned of their Master's dealing with evil spirits, and there was on their part frequent use of the charismatic gifts of healing the sick and driving out devils. But the prayers and forms used for exorcism in the first centuries have not come down to us, outside the ones used in baptism. Exorcism became part of the baptismal rite somewhere around 200 A.D. Thus the ancient liturgical records which date from the third century, those dealing with baptism, give us the early Christians' belief about Satan and his intervention in the affairs of man. In the devil's hatred for God he turned on man, who is made in God's image. In consequence of original sin men are no longer temples of the Holy Spirit but rather the habitations of the demon. Not too much distinction is made between the possessed and the unbaptized. Isidore of Seville puts both on the same level, and says that exorcism is the ceremony of banishing the most wicked influence of the devil from catechumens and possessed alike. (*Dictionnaire D' Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, V, Pt. 1, 963 ff.)

It is difficult to fix precisely the time of origin of a special rite for exorcism. The evidence would indicate that in the early Church acts of exorcism consisted mainly in the sign of the cross, invoking the name of Jesus, and renunciations of Satan and adjurations and threats uttered against him. But later on, especially in the Latin Church, the rites of exorcism become more and more numerous, until in the highly imaginative Middle Ages there is actually a profusion of them. To this period we must attribute beliefs and practices which are superstitious to an extreme. Devils are believed to exist in the guise of certain material bodies. Demonic possession is confounded with epilepsy and other mental or psychic disorders. Rituals of this time prescribe that the subject remain in the presence of the exorcist throughout the period of exorcism, that he observe a strict fast and limit his diet to blessed water, salt, and vegetables, that he wear new clothes, that he abstain from the marital act. No less complicated are the

injunctions for the exorcist. And by the time we come to the fourteenth century magical practices have been introduced into the ceremonies.

No doubt the present rite for exorcism will undergo improvement and revision along with the general revision of the liturgical books recommended by Vatican Council II. But compared to former times the rite as given in the Roman Ritual today is characterized by great sobriety. Some minds might still discern traces of a certain naivete, yet at any rate it has been purged of the unfortunate accretions of a period ruled much more by human credulity than by the unadulterated doctrine of the Church. No longer, for example, does the official text afford any grounds for the erroneous notion that diabolical possession is necessarily a divine retribution visited upon a grievous sinner. God allows this terrible evil in His wisdom without the afflicted person being necessarily at fault. It is one thing to have fallen into the slavery of sin or to be afflicted with a bodily or mental infirmity, and quite another to have the devil enter into a man and take possession of him.

The general rules for exorcism that follow are a clear indication that we have come a long way from the superstitious notions that prevailed in the era of the Middle Ages. Noteworthy among these rules are the ones that direct that the parties concerned should have recourse to the holy sacraments, and that the sacred words of Holy Writ should be employed rather than any forms devised by the exorcist or someone else. The instructions given below indicate that the Church has carefully guarded the extraordinary power over Satan committed to her by Christ, and that Catholic exorcism is poles removed from any form of dabbling in the spirit world which springs from human chicanery or malice.

-- Translator

Part XIII. Exorcism

Chapter I

General Rules Concerning Exorcism

1. A priest -- one who is expressly and particularly authorized by the Ordinary -- when he intends to perform an exorcism over persons tormented by the devil, must be properly distinguished for his piety, prudence, and integrity of life. He should fulfill this devout undertaking in all constancy and humility, being utterly immune to any striving for human aggrandizement, and relying, not on his own, but on the divine power. Moreover, he ought to be of mature years, and revered not alone for his office but for his moral qualities.
2. In order to exercise his ministry rightly, he should resort to a great deal more study of the matter (which has to be passed over here for the sake of brevity), by examining

approved authors and cases from experience; on the other hand, let him carefully observe the few more important points enumerated here.

3. Especially, he should not believe too readily that a person is possessed by an evil spirit; but he ought to ascertain the signs by which a person possessed can be distinguished from one who is suffering from some illness, especially one of a psychological nature. (From the emended text of the 1952 edition.) Signs of possession may be the following: ability to speak with some facility in a strange tongue or to understand it when spoken by another; the faculty of divulging future and hidden events; display of powers which are beyond the subject's age and natural condition; and various other indications which, when taken together as a whole, build up the evidence.
4. In order to understand these matters better, let him inquire of the person possessed, following one or the other act of exorcism, what the latter experienced in his body or soul while the exorcism was being performed, and to learn also what particular words in the form had a more intimidating effect upon the devil, so that hereafter these words may be employed with greater stress and frequency.
5. He will be on his guard against the arts and subterfuges which the evil spirits are wont to use in deceiving the exorcist. For oftentimes they give deceptive answers and make it difficult to understand them, so that the exorcist might tire and give up, or so it might appear that the afflicted one is in no wise possessed by the devil.
6. Once in a while, after they are already recognized, they conceal themselves and leave the body practically free from every molestation, so that the victim believes himself completely delivered. Yet the exorcist may not desist until he sees the signs of deliverance.
7. At times, moreover, the evil spirits place whatever obstacles they can in the way, so that the patient may not submit to exorcism, or they try to convince him that his affliction is a natural one. Meanwhile, during the exorcism they cause him to fall asleep, and dangle some illusion before him, while they seclude themselves, so that the afflicted one appears to be freed.
8. Some reveal a crime which has been committed and the perpetrators thereof, as well as the means of putting an end to it. Yet the afflicted person must beware of having recourse on this account to sorcerers or necromancers or to any parties except the ministers of the Church, or of making use of any superstitious or forbidden practice.
9. Sometimes the devil will leave the possessed person in peace and even allow him to receive the holy Eucharist, to make it appear that he has departed. In fact, the arts and frauds of the evil one for deceiving a man are innumerable. For this reason the exorcist must be on his guard not to fall into this trap.
10. Therefore, he will be mindful of the words of our Lord (Mt 17.20), to the effect that there is a certain type of evil spirit who cannot be driven out except by prayer and fasting. Therefore, let him avail himself of these two means above all for imploring the divine assistance in expelling demons, after the example of the holy fathers; and not only himself, but let him induce others, as far as possible, to do the same.
11. If it can be done conveniently the possessed person should be led to church or to some other sacred and worthy place, where the exorcism will be held, away from the crowd.

But if the person is ill, or for any valid reason, the exorcism may take place in a private home.

12. The subject, if in good mental and physical health, should be exhorted to implore God's help, to fast, and to fortify himself by frequent reception of penance and holy communion, at the discretion of the priest. And in the course of the exorcism he should be fully recollected, with his intention fixed on God, whom he should entreat with firm faith and in all humility. And if he is all the more grievously tormented, he ought to bear this patiently, never doubting the divine assistance.
13. He ought to have a crucifix at hand or somewhere in sight. If relics of the saints are available, they are to be applied in a reverent way to the breast or the head of the person possessed (the relics must be properly and securely encased and covered). One will see to it that these sacred objects are not treated improperly or that no injury is done them by the evil spirit. However, one should not hold the holy Eucharist over the head of the person or in any way apply it to his body, owing to the danger of desecration.
14. The exorcist must not digress into senseless prattle nor ask superfluous questions or such as are prompted by curiosity, particularly if they pertain to future and hidden matters, all of which have nothing to do with his office. Instead, he will bid the unclean spirit keep silence and answer only when asked. Neither ought he to give any credence to the devil if the latter maintains that he is the spirit of some saint or of a deceased party, or even claims to be a good angel.
15. But necessary questions are, for example: the number and name of the spirits inhabiting the patient, the time when they entered into him, the cause thereof, and the like. As for all jesting, laughing, and nonsense on the part of the evil spirit -- the exorcist should prevent it or condemn it, and he will exhort the bystanders (whose number must be very limited) to pay no attention to such goings on; neither are they to put any question to the subject. Rather they should intercede for him to God in all humility and urgency.
16. Let the priest pronounce the exorcism in a commanding and authoritative voice, and at the same time with great confidence, humility, and fervor; and when he sees that the spirit is sorely vexed, then he oppresses and threatens all the more. If he notices that the person afflicted is experiencing a disturbance in some part of his body or an acute pain or a swelling appears in some part, he traces the sign of the cross over that place and sprinkles it with holy water, which he must have at hand for this purpose.
17. He will pay attention as to what words in particular cause the evil spirits to tremble, repeating them the more frequently. And when he comes to a threatening expression, he recurs to it again and again, always increasing the punishment. If he perceives that he is making progress, let him persist for two, three, four hours, and longer if he can, until victory is attained.
18. The exorcist should guard against giving or recommending any medicine to the patient, but should leave this care to physicians.
19. While performing the exorcism over a woman, he ought always to have assisting him several women of good repute, who will hold on to the person when she is harassed by the evil spirit. These assistants ought if possible to be close relatives of the subject, and for the sake of decency the exorcist will avoid saying or doing anything which might

prove an occasion of evil thoughts to himself or to the others.

20. During the exorcism he shall preferably employ words from Holy Writ, rather than forms of his own or of someone else. He shall, moreover, command the devil to tell whether he is detained in that body by necromancy, by evil signs or amulets; and if the one possessed has taken the latter by mouth, he should be made to vomit them; if he has them concealed on his person, he should expose them; and when discovered they must be burned. Moreover, the person should be exhorted to reveal all his temptations to the exorcist.
 21. Finally, after the possessed one has been freed, let him be admonished to guard himself carefully against falling into sin, so as to afford no opportunity to the evil spirit of returning, lest the last state of that man become worse than the former.
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Chapter II

Rite for Exorcism

1. The priest delegated by the Ordinary to perform this office should first go to confession or at least elicit an act of contrition, and, if convenient, offer the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and implore God's help in other fervent prayers. He vests in surplice and purple stole. Having before him the person possessed (who should be bound if there is any danger), he traces the sign of the cross over him, over himself, and the bystanders, and then sprinkles all of them with holy water. After this he kneels and says the Litany of the Saints (see p. 330), exclusive of the prayers which follow it. All present are to make the responses.

Litany of the Saints

The Litany of the Saints is used in ordination, Forty Hours', processions, and other occasions. Both the Roman Ritual and the Roman Pontifical direct that the first three invocations be repeated. The music for this litany is given in the music supplement. The invocations are sung (or recited) by the chanters or the priest; the responses by all.

P:Lord, have mercy.

All:Lord, have mercy.

P:Christ, have mercy.

All:Christ, have mercy.

P:Lord, have mercy.

All:Lord, have mercy.

P:Christ, hear us.

All:Christ, graciously hear us.

P:God, the Father in heaven.

All:Have mercy on us.

P:God, the Son, Redeemer of the world.

All:Have mercy on us.

P:God, the Holy Spirit.

All:Have mercy on us.

P:Holy Trinity, one God.

All:Have mercy on us.

*** After each following invocation:**"Pray for us."

Holy Mary, *

Holy Mother of God, *

Holy Virgin of virgins, *

St. Michael, *

St. Gabriel, *

St. Raphael, *

All holy angels and archangels, *

All holy orders of blessed spirits, *

St. John the Baptist, *

St. Joseph, *

All holy patriarchs and prophets, *

St. Peter, *

St. Paul, *

St. Andrew, *

St. James, *

St. John, *

St. Thomas, *

St. James, *

St. Philip, *

St. Bartholomew, *

St. Matthew, *

St. Simon, *

St. Thaddeus, *

St. Matthias, *

St. Barnabas, *

St. Luke, *

St. Mark, *

All holy apostles and evangelists, *
All holy disciples of the Lord, *
All holy Innocents, *
St. Stephen, *
St. Lawrence, *
St. Vincent, *
SS. Fabian and Sebastian, *
SS. John and Paul, *
SS. Cosmas and Damian, *
SS. Gervase and Protase, *
All holy martyrs, *
St. Sylvester, *
St. Gregory, *
St. Ambrose, *
St. Augustine, *
St. Jerome, *
St. Martin, *
St. Nicholas, *
All holy bishops and confessors, *
All holy doctors, *
St. Anthony, *
St. Benedict, *
St. Bernard, *
St. Dominic, *
St. Francis, *
All holy priests and levites, *
All holy monks and hermits, *
St. Mary Magdalen, *
St. Agatha, *
St. Lucy, *
St. Agnes, *
St. Cecilia, *
St. Catherine, *
St. Anastasia, *
All holy virgins and widows, *

P:All holy saints of God,

All:Intercede for us.

P:Be merciful,

All:Spare us, O Lord.

P:Be merciful,

All: Graciously hear us, O Lord.

* After each following invocation: "Deliver us, O Lord."

From all evil, *
From all sin, *
From your wrath, *
From sudden and unprovided death, *
From the snares of the devil, *
From anger, hatred, and all ill will, *
From all lewdness, *
From lightning and tempest, *
From the scourge of earthquakes, *
From plague, famine, and war, *
From everlasting death, *
By the mystery of your holy incarnation, *
By your coming, *
By your birth, *
By your baptism and holy fasting, *
By your cross and passion, *
By your death and burial, *
By your holy resurrection, *
By your wondrous ascension, *
By the coming of the Holy, *
Spirit, the Advocate, *
On the day of judgment, *

P: We are sinners,

All: We beg you to hear us.

* After each following invocation: "We beg you to hear us."

That you spare us, *
That you pardon us, *
That you bring us to true penance, *
That you govern and preserve your holy Church, *
That you preserve our Holy Father and all ranks in the Church in holy religion, *
That you humble the enemies of holy Church, *
That you give peace and true concord to all Christian rulers, *
That you give peace and unity to the whole Christian world, *
That you restore to the unity of the Church all who have strayed from the truth,
and lead all unbelievers to the light of the Gospel, *
That you confirm and preserve us in your holy service, *
That you lift up our minds to heavenly desires, *
That you grant everlasting blessings to all our benefactors, *

That you deliver our souls and the souls of our brethren, relatives, and benefactors from everlasting damnation, *
That you give and preserve the fruits of the earth, *
That you grant eternal rest to all the faithful departed, *
That you graciously hear us, *
Son of God, *

At the end of the litany he (the priest) adds the following:

P: Antiphon:Do not keep in mind, O Lord, our offenses or those of our parents, nor take vengeance on our sins.

P:Our Father (...) Give us this day our daily bread,

P:And lead us not into temptation,

All:But deliver us from evil.

Psalm 53

P:God, by your name save me, * and by your might defend my cause.

All:God, hear my prayer; * hearken to the words of my mouth.

P:For haughty men have risen up against me, and fierce men seek my life; * they set not God before their eyes.

All:See, God is my helper; * the Lord sustains my life.

P:Turn back the evil upon my foes; * in your faithfulness destroy them.

All:Freely will I offer you sacrifice; * I will praise your name, Lord, for its goodness,

P:Because from all distress you have rescued me, * and my eyes look down upon my enemies.

All:Glory be to the Father.

P:As it was in the beginning.

After the psalm the priest continues:

P:Save your servant.

All:Who trusts in you, my God.

P:Let him (her) find in you, Lord, a fortified tower.

All:In the face of the enemy.

P:Let the enemy have no power over him (her).

All:And the son of iniquity be powerless to harm him (her).

P: Lord, send him (her) aid from your holy place.

All: And watch over him (her) from Sion.

P: Lord, heed my prayer.

All: And let my cry be heard by you.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

Let us pray.

God, whose nature is ever merciful and forgiving, accept our prayer that this servant of yours, bound by the fetters of sin, may be pardoned by your loving kindness.

Holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who once and for all consigned that fallen and apostate tyrant to the flames of hell, who sent your only-begotten Son into the world to crush that roaring lion; hasten to our call for help and snatch from ruination and from the clutches of the noonday devil this human being made in your image and likeness. Strike terror, Lord, into the beast now laying waste your vineyard. Fill your servants with courage to fight manfully against that reprobate dragon, lest he despise those who put their trust in you, and say with Pharaoh of old: "I know not God, nor will I set Israel free." Let your mighty hand cast him out of your servant, **N.**, †so he may no longer hold captive this person whom it pleased you to make in your image, and to redeem through your Son; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

2. **Then he commands the demon as follows:**

I command you, unclean spirit, whoever you are, along with all your minions now attacking this servant of God, by the mysteries of the incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, by the coming of our Lord for judgment, that you tell me by some sign your name, and the day and hour of your departure. I command you, moreover, to obey me to the letter, I who am a minister of God despite my unworthiness; nor shall you be emboldened to harm in any way this creature of God, or the bystanders, or any of their possessions.

The priest lays his hand on the head of the sick person, saying:

They shall lay their hands upon the sick and all will be well with them. May Jesus, Son of Mary, Lord and Savior of the world, through the merits and intercession of His holy apostles Peter and Paul and all His saints, show you favor and mercy.

All: Amen.

3. Next he reads over the possessed person these selections from the Gospel, or at least one of them.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

P: The beginning of the holy Gospel according to St. John.

All: Glory be to you, O Lord.

A Lesson from the holy Gospel according to St. John

John 1.1-14

As he says these opening words he signs himself and the possessed on the brow, lips, and breast.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. (Genuflect here). And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

All: Thanks be to God.

Lastly he blesses the sick person, saying:

May the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, †and Holy Spirit, come upon you and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Then he sprinkles the person with holy water.

A Lesson from the holy Gospel according to St. Mark

Mark 16.15-18

Jesus said to them, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

A Lesson from the holy Gospel according to St. Luke

Luke 10.17-20

The seventy-two returned rejoicing, and said, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name.” Jesus said, “I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power ‘to tread upon serpents’ and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

A Lesson from the holy Gospel according to St. Luke

Luke 11.14-22

Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute, and when the demon had gone out, the mute person spoke and the crowds were amazed. Some of them said, “By the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he drives out demons.” Others, to test him, asked him for a sign from heaven. But he knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house. And if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that it is by Beelzebul that I drive out demons. If I, then, drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own people drive them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man fully armed guards his palace, his possessions are safe. But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he takes away the armor on which he relied and distributes the spoils.”

P: Lord, heed my prayer.

All: And let my cry be heard by you.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty Lord, Word of God the Father, Jesus Christ, God and Lord of all creation; who gave to your holy apostles the power to tramp underfoot serpents and scorpions; who along with the other mandates to work miracles was pleased to grant them the authority to say: "Depart, you devils!" and by whose might Satan was made to fall from heaven like lightning; I humbly call on your holy name in fear and trembling, asking that you grant me, your unworthy servant, pardon for all my sins, steadfast faith, and the power - supported by your mighty arm - to confront with confidence and resolution this cruel demon. I ask this through you, Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, who are coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire.

All: Amen.

4. **Next he makes the sign of the cross over himself and the one possessed, places the end of the stole on the latter's neck, and, putting his right hand on the latter's head, he says the following in accents filled with confidence and faith:**

P: See the cross of the Lord; begone, you hostile powers! **All:** The stem of David, the lion of Juda's tribe has conquered.

P: Lord, heed my prayer. **All:** And let my cry be heard by you.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

Let us pray.

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I appeal to your holy name, humbly begging your kindness, that you graciously grant me help against this and every unclean spirit now tormenting this creature of yours; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Exorcism

I cast you out, unclean spirit, along with every Satanic power of the enemy, every spectre from hell, and all your fell companions; in the name of our Lord Jesus †Christ. Begone and stay far from this creature of God. †For it is He who commands you, He who flung you headlong from the heights of heaven into the depths of hell. It is He who commands you, He who once stilled the sea and the wind and the storm. Hearken, therefore, and tremble in fear, Satan, you enemy of the faith, you foe of the human race, you begetter of death, you robber of life, you corrupter of justice, you root of all evil and vice; seducer of men, betrayer of the nations, instigator of envy, font of avarice, fomentor of discord, author of pain and sorrow. Why, then, do you stand and resist, knowing as you must that Christ the Lord brings your plans to nothing? Fear Him, who in Isaac was offered in sacrifice, in Joseph sold into bondage, slain as the paschal lamb,

crucified as man, yet triumphed over the powers of hell. (The three signs of the cross which follow are traced on the brow of the possessed person). Begone, then, in the name of the Father, †and of the Son, †and of the Holy †Spirit. Give place to the Holy Spirit by this sign of the holy †cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

P: Lord, heed my prayer.

All: And let my cry be heard by you.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

Let us pray.

God, Creator and defender of the human race, who made man in your own image, look down in pity on this your servant, N., now in the toils of the unclean spirit, now caught up in the fearsome threats of man's ancient enemy, sworn foe of our race, who befuddles and stupefies the human mind, throws it into terror, overwhelms it with fear and panic. Repel, O Lord, the devil's power, break asunder his snares and traps, put the unholy tempter to flight. By the sign †(on the brow) of your name, let your servant be protected in mind and body. (The three crosses which follow are traced on the breast of the possessed person). Keep watch over the inmost recesses of his (her) †heart; rule over his (her) †emotions; strengthen his (her) †will. Let vanish from his (her) soul the temptings of the mighty adversary. Graciously grant, O Lord, as we call on your holy name, that the evil spirit, who hitherto terrorized over us, may himself retreat in terror and defeat, so that this servant of yours may sincerely and steadfastly render you the service which is your due; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Exorcism

I adjure you, ancient serpent, by the judge of the living and the dead, by your Creator, by the Creator of the whole universe, by Him who has the power to consign you to hell, to depart forthwith in fear, along with your savage minions, from this servant of God, N., who seeks refuge in the fold of the Church. I adjure you again, †(on the brow) not by my weakness but by the might of the Holy Spirit, to depart from this servant of God, N., whom almighty God has made in His image. Yield, therefore, yield not to my own person but to the minister of Christ. For it is the power of Christ that compels you, who brought you low by His cross. Tremble before that mighty arm that broke asunder the dark prison walls and led souls forth to light. May the trembling that afflicts this human frame, †(on the breast) the fear that afflicts this image †(on the brow) of God, descend on

you. Make no resistance nor delay in departing from this man, for it has pleased Christ to dwell in man. Do not think of despising my command because you know me to be a great sinner. It is God †Himself who commands you; the majestic Christ †who commands you. God the Father †commands you; God the Son †commands you; God the Holy †Spirit commands you. The mystery of the cross commands †you. The faith of the holy apostles Peter and Paul and of all the saints commands †you. The blood of the martyrs commands †you. The continence of the confessors commands †you. The devout prayers of all holy men and women command †you. The saving mysteries of our Christian faith command †you.

Depart, then, transgressor. Depart, seducer, full of lies and cunning, foe of virtue, persecutor of the innocent. Give place, abominable creature, give way, you monster, give way to Christ, in whom you found none of your works. For He has already stripped you of your powers and laid waste your kingdom, bound you prisoner and plundered your weapons. He has cast you forth into the outer darkness, where everlasting ruin awaits you and your abettors. To what purpose do you insolently resist? To what purpose do you brazenly refuse? For you are guilty before almighty God, whose laws you have transgressed. You are guilty before His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you presumed to tempt, whom you dared to nail to the cross. You are guilty before the whole human race, to whom you prof erred by your enticements the poisoned cup of death.

Therefore, I adjure you, profligate dragon, in the name of the spotless †Lamb, who has trodden down the asp and the basilisk, and overcome the lion and the dragon, to depart from this man (woman)†(on the brow), to depart from the Church of God †(signing the bystanders). Tremble and flee, as we call on the name of the Lord, before whom the denizens of hell cower, to whom the heavenly Virtues and Powers and Dominations are subject, whom the Cherubim and Seraphim praise with unending cries as they sing: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. The Word made flesh †commands you; the Virgin's Son †commands you; Jesus †of Nazareth commands you, who once, when you despised His disciples, forced you to flee in shameful defeat from a man; and when He had cast you out you did not even dare, except by His leave, to enter into a herd of swine. And now as I adjure you in His †name, begone from this man (woman) who is His creature. It is futile to resist His †will. It is hard for you to kick against the †goad. The longer you delay, the heavier your punishment shall be; for it is not men you are condemning, but rather Him who rules the living and the dead, who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire.

All:Amen.

P:Lord, heed my prayer.

All:And let my cry be heard by you.

P:The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

Let us pray.

God of heaven and earth, God of the angels and archangels, God of the prophets and apostles, God of the martyrs and virgins, God who have power to bestow life after death and rest after toil; for there is no other God than you, nor can there be another true God beside you, the Creator of heaven and earth, who are truly a King, whose kingdom is without end; I humbly entreat your glorious majesty to deliver this servant of yours from the unclean spirits; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Exorcism

Therefore, I adjure you every unclean spirit, every spectre from hell, every satanic power, in the name of Jesus †Christ of Nazareth, who was led into the desert after His baptism by John to vanquish you in your citadel, to cease your assaults against the creature whom He has, formed from the slime of the earth for His own honor and glory; to quail before wretched man, seeing in him the image of almighty God, rather than his state of human frailty. Yield then to God, †who by His servant, Moses, cast you and your malice, in the person of Pharaoh and his army, into the depths of the sea. Yield to God, †who, by the singing of holy canticles on the part of David, His faithful servant, banished you from the heart of King Saul. Yield to God, †who condemned you in the person of Judas Iscariot, the traitor. For He now flails you with His divine scourges, †He in whose sight you and your legions once cried out: "What have we to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Have you come to torture us before the time?" Now He is driving you back into the everlasting fire, He who at the end of time will say to the wicked: "Depart from me, you accursed, into the everlasting fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." For you, O evil one, and for your followers there will be worms that never die. An unquenchable fire stands ready for you and for your minions, you prince of accursed murderers, father of lechery, instigator of sacrileges, model of vileness, promoter of heresies, inventor of every obscenity.

Depart, then, †impious one, depart, †accursed one, depart with all your deceits, for God has willed that man should be His temple. Why do you still linger here? Give honor to God the Father †almighty, before whom every knee must bow. Give place to the Lord Jesus †Christ, who shed His most precious blood for man. Give place to the Holy †Spirit, who by His blessed apostle Peter openly struck you down in the person of Simon Magus; who cursed your lies in Annas and Saphira; who smote you in King Herod because he had not given honor to God; who by His apostle Paul afflicted you with the night of blindness in the magician Elyma, and by the mouth of the same apostle bade you to go out of Pythonissa, the soothsayer. Begone, †now! Begone, †seducer! Your place is in solitude; your abode is in the nest of serpents; get down and crawl with

them. This matter brooks no delay; for see, the Lord, the ruler comes quickly, kindling fire before Him, and it will run on ahead of Him and encompass His enemies in flames. You might delude man, but God you cannot mock. It is He who casts you out, from whose sight nothing is hidden. It is He who repels you, to whose might all things are subject. It is He who expels you, He who has prepared everlasting hellfire for you and your angels, from whose mouth shall come a sharp sword, who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire.

All:Amen.

5. **All the above may be repeated as long as necessary, until the one possessed has been fully freed.**
6. **It will also help to say devoutly and often over the afflicted person the Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Creed, as well as any of the prayers given below.**
7. **The Canticle of our Lady, with the doxology; the Canticle of Zachary, with the doxology.**

P: Antiphon for Canticle of Our Lady: Magi from the East came to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their treasure chests they presented Him with precious gifts: Gold for the great King, incense for the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial. Alleluia.

Canticle of Our Lady (The Magnificat)

Luke 1:46-55

P:"My soul * extols the Lord;

All:And my spirit leaps for joy in God my Savior.

P:How graciously He looked upon His lowly maid! * Oh, see, from this hour onward age after age will call me blessed!

All:How sublime is what He has done for me, * the Mighty One, whose name is `Holy'!

P:From age to age He visits those * who worship Him in reverence.

All:His arm achieves the mastery: * He routs the haughty and proud of heart.

P:He puts down princes from their thrones, * and exalts the lowly;

All:He fills the hungry with blessings, * and sends away the rich with empty hands.

P:He has taken by the hand His servant Israel, * and mercifully kept His faith,

All:As He had promised our fathers * with Abraham and his posterity forever and evermore."

P:Glory be to the Father.

All:As it was in the beginning.

Antiphon:Magi from the East came to Bethlehem to adore the Lord; and opening their

treasure chests they presented Him with precious gifts: Gold for the great King, incense for the true God, and myrrh in symbol of His burial. Alleluia.

Meanwhile the home is sprinkled with holy water and incensed. Then the priest says:

P:Our Father... (the rest inaudibly until:)

P:And lead us not into temptation.

All:But deliver us from evil.

P:Many shall come from Saba.

All:Bearing gold and incense.

P:Lord, heed my prayer.

All:And let my cry be heard by you.

P:The Lord be with you.

All:May he also be with you.

Let us pray.

God, who on this day revealed your only-begotten Son to all nations by the guidance of a star, grant that we who now know you by faith may finally behold you in your heavenly majesty; through Christ our Lord.

All:Amen.

Responsory:Be enlightened and shine forth, O Jerusalem, for your light is come; and upon you is risen the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary.

P:Nations shall walk in your light, and kings in the splendor of your birth.

All:And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

Let us pray.

Lord God almighty, bless †this home, and under its shelter let there be health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, goodness, mildness, obedience to your commandments, and thanksgiving to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. May your blessing remain always in this home and on those who live here; through Christ our Lord.

All:Amen.

P: Antiphon for Canticle of Zachary:

Today the Church is espoused to her heavenly bridegroom, for Christ washes her sins in the Jordan; the Magi hasten with gifts to the regal nuptials; and the guests are gladdened

with water made wine, alleluia.

Canticle of Zachary

Luke 1:68-79

P: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel! * He has visited His people and brought about its redemption.

All: He has raised for us a stronghold of salvation * in the house of David His servant,

P: And redeemed the promise He had made * through the mouth of His holy prophets of old

All: To grant salvation from our foes * and from the hand of all that hate us;

P: To deal in mercy with our fathers * and be mindful of His holy covenant,

All: Of the oath he had sworn to our father Abraham, * that He would enable us

P: Rescued from the clutches of our foes * to worship Him without fear,

All: In holiness and observance of the Law, * in His presence, all our days.

P: And you, my little one, will be hailed 'Prophet of the Most High'; * for the Lord's precursor you will be to prepare His ways;

All: You are to impart to His people knowledge of salvation * through forgiveness of their sins.

P: Thanks be to the merciful heart of our God! * a dawning Light from on high will visit us

All: To shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadowland of death, * and guide our feet into the path of peace."

P: Glory be to the Father.

All: As it was in the beginning.

Antiphon: Today the Church is espoused to her heavenly bridegroom, for Christ washes her sins in the Jordan; the Magi hasten with gifts to the regal nuptials; and the guests are gladdened with water made wine, alleluia.

Then the celebrant sings:

P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

Let us pray.

God, who on this day revealed your only-begotten Son to all nations by the guidance of a star, grant that we who now know you by faith may finally behold you in your heavenly majesty; through Christ our Lord.

All:Amen.

Athanasian Creed

P:Whoever wills to be saved * must before all else hold fast to the Catholic faith.

All:Unless one keeps this faith whole and untarnished, * without doubt he will perish forever.

P:Now this is the Catholic faith: * that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity;

All:Neither confusing the Persons one with the other, * nor making a distinction in their nature.

P:For the Father is a distinct Person; and so is the Son; * and so is the Holy Spirit.

All:Yet the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit possess one Godhead, * co-equal glory, co-eternal majesty.

P:As the Father is, so is the Son, * so also is the Holy Spirit.

All:The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, * the Holy Spirit is uncreated.

P:The Father is infinite, the Son is infinite, * the Holy Spirit is infinite.

All:The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, * the Holy Spirit is eternal.

P:Yet they are not three eternals, * but one eternal God.

All:Even as they are not three uncreated, or three infinities, * but one uncreated and one infinite God.

P:So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, * the Holy Spirit is almighty.

All:Yet they are not three almighties, * but they are the one Almighty.

P:Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, * the Holy Spirit is God.

All:Yet they are not three gods, * but one God.

P:Thus the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, * the Holy Spirit is Lord.

All:Yet there are not three lords, * but one Lord.

P:For just as Christian truth compels us to profess that each Person is individually God and Lord, * so does the Catholic religion forbid us to hold that there are three gods or lords.

All:The Father was not made by any power; * He was neither created nor begotten.

P:The Son is from the Father alone, * neither created nor made, but begotten.

All:The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, * neither made nor created nor begotten, but He proceeds.

P: So there is one Father, not three; one Son, not three; * one Holy Spirit, not three.

All: And in this Trinity one Person is not earlier or later, nor is one greater or less; * but all three Persons are co-eternal and co-equal.

P: In every way, then, as already affirmed, * unity in Trinity and Trinity in unity is to be worshiped.

All: Whoever, then, wills to be saved * must assent to this doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.

P: But it is necessary for everlasting salvation * that one also firmly believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: True faith, then, requires us to believe and profess * that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man.

P: He is God, begotten of the substance of the Father from eternity; * He is man, born in time of the substance of His Mother.

All: He is perfect God, and perfect man * subsisting in a rational soul and a human body.

P: He is equal to the Father in His divine nature, * but less than the Father in His human nature as such.

All: And though He is God and man, * yet He is the one Christ, not two;

P: One, however, not by any change of divinity into flesh, * but by the act of God assuming a human nature.

All: He is one only, not by a mixture of substance, * but by the oneness of His Person.

P: For, somewhat as the rational soul and the body compose one man, * so Christ is one Person who is both God and man;

All: Who suffered for our salvation, who descended into hell, * who rose again the third day from the dead;

P: Who ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty, * from there He shall come to judge both the living and the dead.

All: At His coming all men shall rise again in their bodies, * and shall give an account of their works.

P: And those who have done good shall enter into everlasting life, * but those who have done evil into everlasting fire.

All: All this is Catholic faith, * and unless one believes it truly and firmly one cannot be saved.

P: Glory be to the Father

All: As it was in the beginning.

Here follow a large number of psalms which may be used at the exorcist's discretion but are not a necessary part of the rite. Some of them occur in other parts of the Ritual and are so indicated; the others may be taken from the Psalter. Psalm 90 (see p. 227); psalm 67; psalm 69; psalm 53 (see p. 559); psalm 117 (see p. 248); psalm 34; psalm 30; psalm 21; psalm 3; psalm 10; psalm 12.

Prayer Following Deliverance

P: Almighty God, we beg you to keep the evil spirit from further molesting this servant of yours, and to keep him far away, never to return. At your command, O Lord, may the goodness and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, take possession of this man (woman). May we no longer fear any evil since the Lord is with us; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Chapter III

Exorcism of Satan and the Fallen Angels

Whereas the **preceding rite** of exorcism is designated for a particular person, the present one is for general use --- to combat the power of the evil spirits over a **community or locality**.

The following exorcism can be used by bishops, as well as by priests who have this authorization from their Ordinary.

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel, illustrious leader of the heavenly army, defend us in the battle against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of darkness and the spirit of wickedness in high places. Come to the rescue of mankind, whom God has made in His own image and likeness, and purchased from Satan's tyranny at so great a price. Holy Church venerates you as her patron and guardian. The Lord has entrusted to you the task of leading the souls of the redeemed to heavenly blessedness. Entreat the Lord of peace to cast Satan down under our feet, so as to keep him from further holding man captive and doing harm to the Church. Carry our prayers up to God's throne, that the mercy of the Lord may quickly come and lay hold of the beast, the serpent of old, Satan and his demons, casting him in chains into the abyss, so that he can no longer seduce

the nations.

Exorcism

P: In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, by the intercession of Mary, spotless Virgin and Mother of God, of St. Michael the Archangel, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of all the saints, and by the authority residing in our holy ministry, we steadfastly proceed to combat the onslaught of the wily enemy.

Psalm 67(8)

P: God arises; His enemies are scattered, * and those who hate Him flee before Him.

All: As smoke is driven away, so are they driven; * as wax melts before the fire, so the wicked perish before God.

P: See the cross of the Lord; begone, you hostile powers!

All: The stem of David, the lion of Juda's tribe has conquered.

P: May your mercy, Lord, remain with us always.

All: For we put our whole trust in you.

We cast you out, every unclean spirit, every satanic power, every onslaught of the infernal adversary, every legion, every diabolical group and sect, in the name and by the power of our Lord Jesus † Christ. We command you, begone and fly far from the Church of God, from the souls made by God in His image and redeemed by the precious blood of the divine Lamb. † No longer dare, cunning serpent, to deceive the human race, to persecute God's Church, to strike God's elect and to sift them as wheat. † For the Most High God commands you, † He to whom you once proudly presumed yourself equal; He who wills all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth. God the Father † commands you. God the Son † commands you. God the Holy † Spirit commands you. Christ, the eternal Word of God made flesh, commands † you, who humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, to save our race from the perdition wrought by your envy; who founded His Church upon a firm rock, declaring that the gates of hell should never prevail against her, and that He would remain with her all days, even to the end of the world. The sacred mystery of the cross † commands you, along with the power of all mysteries of Christian faith. † The exalted Virgin Mary, Mother of God, † commands you, who in her lowliness crushed your proud head from the first moment of her Immaculate Conception. The faith of the holy apostles Peter and Paul and the other apostles † commands you. The blood of martyrs and the devout prayers of all holy men and women command † you.

Therefore, accursed dragon and every diabolical legion, we adjure you by the living † God, by the true † God, by the holy † God, by God, who so loved the

world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life; to cease deluding human creatures and filling them with the poison of everlasting damnation; to desist from harming the Church and hampering her freedom. Begone, Satan, father and master of lies, enemy of man's welfare. Give place to Christ, in whom you found none of your works. Give way to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, which Christ Himself purchased with His blood. Bow down before God's mighty hand, tremble and flee as we call on the holy and awesome name of Jesus, before whom the denizens of hell cower, to whom the heavenly Virtues and Powers and Dominations are subject, whom the Cherubim and Seraphim praise with unending cries as they sing: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.

P: Lord, heed my prayer.

All: And let my cry be heard by you.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

Let us pray.

God of heaven and earth, God of the angels and archangels, God of the patriarchs and prophets, God of the apostles and martyrs, God of the confessors and virgins, God who have power to bestow life after death and rest after toil; for there is no other God than you, nor can there be another true God beside you, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, whose kingdom is without end; we humbly entreat your glorious majesty to deliver us by your might from every influence of the accursed spirits, from their every evil snare and deception, and to keep us from all harm; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

P: From the snares of the devil.

All: Lord, deliver us.

P: That you help your Church to serve you in security and freedom.

All: We beg you to hear us.

P: That you humble the enemies of holy Church.

All: We beg you to hear us.

The surroundings are sprinkled with holy water.