



Diocese of St. Petersburg
Ministry of Healing, Deliverance, and Exorcism

I. POLICY

The Diocese of St. Petersburg Ministry of Healing, Deliverance, and Exorcism is the ministry of the Bishop of St. Petersburg and is intended to offer relief to those Catholics, non-Catholics and non-Christians who suffer from emotional wounds and the extraordinary attacks of the devil. The Bishop may appoint a priest to serve as Mandated Exorcist (hereafter “Exorcist”) as well as additional priests to serve as his assistants. These appointments may be on a stable or case-by-case basis. The Chancellor for Canonical Affairs (hereafter “Chancellor”) and Exorcist and their designates shall be responsible for conducting the ministry in accordance with Canon 1172 and *Inde ab Aliquot Annis* (On the Current Norms Governing Exorcisms). The Chancellor and Exorcist shall be responsible for the selection, training, oversight and, if necessary, removal of a Diocese of St. Petersburg Healing, Deliverance and Exorcism Ministry Prayer Team (hereafter Prayer Team) member necessary for the effective performance of this ministry. The Chancellor and Exorcist shall receive episcopal approval for all team members. The Chancellor, Exorcist, assisting priests and all team members shall act in accordance with the rules and guidelines presented herein or as may be declared by the Bishop from time to time.

II. CANON 1172

§1 No one can perform exorcisms legitimately upon the possessed unless he has obtained special and express permission from the local ordinary.

§2 The local ordinary is to give this permission only to a presbyter who has piety, knowledge, prudence, and integrity of life.

III. DIRECTIVES OF THE CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH (*Inde ab Aliquot Annis*)

1. Diocesan Bishops are strongly urged to see to the observance of these norms Canon 1172 of the *Code of Canon Law*, as listed in Section II, above.
2. From these prescriptions it follows, therefore, that no member of the Christian faithful (priest, deacon or lay), nor any priest unless he has permission from the Diocesan Bishop, can use the formula of exorcism against Satan and fallen angels, extracted from that which was made law by Pope Leo XIII, commonly known as the Chapter III or Leonine Prayer, and even less are they able to use the entire text for exorcism. Additionally, this prayer must be recited in Latin. Diocesan Bishops are to bring this to the attention of the faithful as it is deemed necessary.
3. Finally, for the same reasons, Diocesan Bishops are asked to be vigilant that those who do not have the required faculty do not serve in the leading of meetings where, in order to gain freedom, prayers are used which dignify demons by directly questioning them and in searching to make known their identity. This applies even in those cases in which true diabolical possession is excluded, but diabolical influence nevertheless seems in some way to be revealed.
4. The announcement of these norms, however, ought not to keep the faithful from praying that, as Jesus taught us, they might be delivered from evil (cf. Mt 6:13). Finally, pastors ought to avail themselves of this occasion to recall what the tradition of the Church teaches about the proper function of sacraments and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels, and the saints in the spiritual fight of Christians against evil spirits.

IV. DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG DELIVERANCE AND EXORCISM PROTOCOLS

A. CANONICAL CONCERNS

1. The ministry of Healing, Deliverance, and Exorcism in the Diocese of St. Petersburg operates according to the norm of canon 1172 of the Code of Canon Law, as listed in Section II, above.
2. In the Diocese of St. Petersburg, the Diocesan Bishop has appointed a priest to serve the people of God as an Exorcist on a stable basis.
3. The Exorcist is to meet regularly with the Bishop or his delegate during an active case to appraise him of any developments in the situation.
4. Priests of the Diocese are allowed to pray prayers of deliverance as they deem

necessary in their parishes; however, this practice should conform to this protocol and no priest may pray the Leonine Prayers without permission of the Bishop.

STEP ONE: INITIAL CONTACT- DECISION AND COMMITMENT

When a person believes himself or herself to be suffering from an extraordinary attack of the devil and thus seeks relief from the torments, he/she should normally contact his/her parish priest. The priest should attempt to gather basic information about the person's experience and counsel the person to determine whether a conversion to a more devout life of prayer and sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation, will alleviate the problem. Besides attending Mass and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the person should choose prayers or devotions to recite every day for approximately one month. A life of virtue should also be encouraged. This initial contact is about orienting one's life to the ordinary means of sanctification - prayer, sacraments, and virtue. It is about establishing discipline and obedience. This is prayer with a purpose, not from despair. If the caller continues to suffer after these practices for a period of three weeks, he/she should call his/her parish priest for further consultation.

If the attack involves a suspected demonic infestation of a home or place, a priest should bless the house using exorcised salt, Holy Water, and prayers from the revised *Book of Blessings* or *Manual of Minor Exorcisms*. A deacon may bless homes using the revised *Book of Blessings*. The *Manual of Minor Exorcisms* may not be used by deacons.

STEP TWO: SECOND CONTACT- MOVEMENT AND PRAYER

If after approximately three weeks of attempting the ordinary means of sanctification specified in the Pastoral Plan of Action, and the Petitioner still labors under what he/she believes is torment from evil spirits, the priest can explore with the Petitioner any barriers to grace. A significant barrier to grace is unforgiveness. The majority of barriers to grace are related to behavioral issues. The Petitioner should exhibit evidence that he/she is committed to reordering his/her life. Obedience and discipline are important at this stage. If, upon meeting with the Petitioner, and in the opinion of the parish priest, the situation involves evidence of extraordinary demonic activity beyond his comfort or capability, the case should be referred to the Chancellor as to what course of action to take. If the priest believes referral to the Chancellor is not necessary, the Petitioner should be encouraged to participate in community prayer, adoration, Bible study, etc. for another three weeks. The parish priest can also call the Chancellor for counsel.

STEP THREE: THE DIOCESAN MINISTRY OF HEALING, DELIVERANCE, AND EXORCISM

PHASE I – Repentance leading to *metanoia*

Goal: To strengthen the petitioner's intellect and will through prayer and disciplined order.

Contact: Case Facilitator

1. After hearing from the parish priest, the Chancellor may recommend an additional course of action for the priest to take, or the Chancellor can accept the case. Additional course of action may include further instruction on the ordinary means of sanctification with the Petitioner.
2. If the case is referred to and accepted by the Chancellor, the Parish Priest will be asked to submit the contact information of the petitioner with a brief summary to the Chancellor.
3. The Case Facilitator of the Diocesan Healing Team for Deliverance and Exorcism will contact the petitioner who will assess the situation and offer a prayer prescription for the next 30 days which is emailed to the petitioner. (Healing Team Manual)
4. The Case Facilitator will ask the petitioner to send an email back to him, explaining the petitioner's understanding of the prescription. The Case Manager will make clarifications if necessary.
5. The petitioner is instructed to call the Case Facilitator again in 30 days, after the prayer prescription has been completed, for an initial report. During the 30 days, the petitioner is asked to journal/record any difficulties they encounter regarding praying the prescribed prayers.
6. The Case Facilitator will notify the intercessors on the prayer team to pray for the petitioner as he/she begins the prayer prescription. Only necessary information will be given to the intercessors, i.e. "first name of petitioner who is praying their first prayer prescription."
7. If the petitioner has not completed the prayer prescription at the end of the prescribed 30-day period, he/she will be asked to restart it, and another 30 days will lapse.

8. When the petitioner has fulfilled the prescribed 30-day period, the demonic activity in their life may cease and he/she may experience liberation. However, if diabolical activities have not ceased, the petitioner moves into Phase II, as a penitent.

PHASE II – identifying impediments to flow of grace

Goal: For the Penitent to remove all obstacles to the flow of grace. The Penitent needs to Regain his/her ability to discern the CLEAN from the UNCLEAN and to remove any unholy yoke.

Contact:

- Case Facilitator or trained lay person (Intake Specialist)
 - Mentor or accompaniment person
 - Parish priest
 - Prayer team
 - Catechetical Instructors
1. The penitent will have a face-to-face evaluation meeting with the intake specialist and other trained person(s), male/female specific. If the penitent is married, his/her spouse will also be present. (At no time shall the Chancellor or Exorcist, or a designate, meet with a female penitent without the presence of one or more female team members).
 - a. The short intake form will be filled out during the interview by the Case Facilitator or the Intake Specialist.
 - b. The Case Facilitator may assign a mentor/accompaniment person for the penitent:
 - i. The Case Facilitator or mentor/accompaniment person will work with the penitent to identify the impediments to the flow of grace in the penitent's life (habitual mortal sin, unholy soul ties, unholy attachments, etc.). This will be a process of the penitent renouncing, rejecting, and rebuking (RRR) the presence and/or influences of demonic activity they identify in their life.
 - ii. The penitent will be instructed to contact his/her parish priest to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 2. The penitent will be encouraged to return to the Sacraments as far as he/she is able.

- a. The prayer prescription will be modified to include:
 - i. Continuation of Phase I frequency of prayers
 - ii. Lifting of the Media Fast
 - iii. Scheduling of the *Liber Christo* Course
 - iv. Addition of 15 minutes of daily meditation on the daily Mass readings
- b. Intercessors will be notified by the mentor/accompaniment person, and given only necessary information, i.e., continue to pray for "first name of penitent, working through Phase II" and for those working with the penitent.
- c. An e-file of the progress of the case will be started and maintained.
- d. A catechist will also be assigned to work with the penitent.
- e. The catechist will explain the Creed to the penitent in a series of meetings to determine where there is a lack of assent to Catholic beliefs.
 - i. The catechist will also work with the penitent to explore other areas of Catholic teaching and practice to which the penitent does not assent.
 - ii. The family, medical and religious history of the penitent should be obtained and noted by the Chancellor, along with any particular instances of unusual or "preternatural" activities and any previous attempts to remedy the situation through prayer. Additional interviews may be scheduled as deemed necessary by the Chancellor, Exorcist, or designate. The Chancellor will forward the penitent's medical records to a mental health expert for his/her input and analysis. If there are not mental health records to obtain, the Chancellor will refer the penitent for a mental health examination.
- f. Should the Chancellor or Exorcist refer the penitent to appropriate medical and psychological professionals for their evaluations, he, or his designate, should obtain the appropriate release form from the petitioner to obtain relevant medical records. If a physical or psychological ailment is detected which could account for the penitent's symptoms, he/she should be encouraged to seek appropriate professional help.
- g. Psychiatric/Psychological Examination - Prior to the psychological/psychiatric examination, the psychologist/psychiatrist will be sent copies of the documentation already received (i.e., the Comprehensive Intake Questionnaire, the results of the physical examination, as well as other notes or materials which may have been

collected.) Releases for the results of these examinations are to be signed by the penitent. These results are to be released to the Chancellor. When the material indicated above (including the results of the psychiatric examination) has been gathered, a discussion follows by the Chancellor and Exorcist.

STEP FOUR: CONSULTATION WITH EXORCIST/FORMAL EXORCISM

In those rare cases when no reasonable medical or psychological cause can be identified for the penitent's symptoms, the Chancellor or Exorcist may choose to gather any information which is necessary for him to reach moral certitude of demonic possession of the penitent. Beyond the absence of physical and mental aberrations, moral certitude should be built upon the presence of one or more phenomena described in the Praenotanda of the Solemn Rite of Exorcism or other similar signs (the presence of certain preternatural or even supernatural phenomena, such as superhuman strength, aversion to sacred objects, occult knowledge or the ability to understand other languages, and the testimony of the penitent that he or she can sense another being controlling him/her.)

RELEASE POLICY REGARDING EXORCISM

A release form with a hold harmless clause is to be signed by the petitioner before the exorcism is attempted. This release form is to be kept by the Diocese of St. Petersburg with any other pertinent records in a confidential file in the Diocesan archives.

The Exorcist must have moral certitude before proceeding with the use of the Solemn Rite of Exorcism. Moral certitude should be built upon the absence of any known physical or mental aberration, such as might cause the situation. The Exorcist may also use various binding prayers or the Leonine Prayers to evaluate the petitioner's reaction and by that reaction come to moral certitude as to whether or not some demonic influence is present.

If the Exorcist is morally certain that the penitent is suffering from a case of diabolical possession, he must receive from the penitent, who herein is called an Energumen (*Energumen is a Thomistic term used to describe an unbaptized person, possessed by an evil spirit. Today, it is used to describe a person afflicted by an evil spirit in an extraordinary manner*) or the Energumen's parent – if a minor, legal guardian, or that person who holds power of attorney for the penitent), a signed release form with a hold harmless clause and a letter describing the case and the reasons by which he reached moral certitude the use of the Solemn Rite of Exorcism is necessary. This signature is to be witnessed by two others. This release form may not be changed orally.

The Exorcist shall then present a written request to the Bishop for permission to pray the

Solemn Rite of Exorcism over the Energumen. The letter of request should include information about the nature of the affliction, the medical and psychological history of the Energumen and a description of how the exorcist arrived at a moral certitude. If the Bishop approves the use of the Solemn Rite of Exorcism for the Energumen, the Exorcist will schedule and conduct a series of exorcism sessions involving his assistants, members of the Diocesan Prayer Team and any other persons he deems necessary. The use of the Solemn Rite shall be conducted within the norms of the rite and the policies of this Diocese. Upon completion of the prayer sessions, the Exorcist shall prepare a letter to the Bishop summarizing the activities involving the use of the rite and the results. The copies of the letter and all other information related to the case shall be presented to the Chancellor.

CAUTIONS AND RELATED ITEMS

Everyone who participates in or is present at an exorcism – even as a witness – is obliged to confidentiality.

Every precaution should be taken to ensure privacy. Requests to discuss a particular case with the media must have both the permission of the individual afflicted (and/or the family) as well as the explicit approval of the Bishop. The Exorcist should use pastoral discretion when discussing the topic in general or when explaining the Church's teachings publicly. Consultation with the Bishop and permission is needed if the Exorcist is to give a public teaching about the ministry or interview with the media.

All participants should be reminded of the necessity of being in the state of grace for the Rite; for this purpose, the Exorcist and other assisting priests should avail themselves to the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the exorcism.

Proper pastoral care following the exorcism should be undertaken to ensure that the matter has been successfully completed. Often, it is necessary to repeat the Solemn Rite of Exorcism many times before the evil one departs permanently.

STEP FIVE: AFTER CARE

Following the exorcism sessions, the Exorcist, Chancellor, or a designate should work with the parish priest, the liberated, and the family members to follow up with an after care plan intended to prevent a reoccurrence of the conditions which lead to possession, oppression, or obsession.