DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG
GENERAL DIOCESAN NORMS FOR THE LAITY
AND THE USE OF DELIVERANCE PRAYER

Article-1
All individuals have authority over their own selves and bodies and thus they are free to use both imprecatory prayers (directly commanding demons to leave) and deprecatory prayers (directed to God to cast out the demons).[1]

Article-2
In accordance with natural law, the laity have authority over their own selves and their children. Husbands have rights and authority over wives and wives have rights over the bodies of their husbands by virtue of the marital debt. In these cases, they have the right to use imprecatory prayers.[2]

Article-3
In the case of deliverance prayers for others, the faithful can pray directly to God, thus making it a deprecatory prayer. For their own pastoral protection, the faithful are not to use imprecatory prayers, ie., directly commanding demons to leave, over others whom they do not have authority.[3]

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[1] See Monsignor Stephen Rossetti, "Guidelines for Laity." Also, Father Chad Ripperger, *Deliverance Prayers for Laity,* 9. On the imposition of hands as a priestly and patriarchal gesture of blessing, and the continuation from Old to New Testaments, see Father Hardon, *Catholic Bible Dictionary*, 223. Also, Unger and Harrison, *Dictionary,* 1402-09. For an overview of power and authority in the Catholic tradition, see Dan Schneider, *Liber Christo,* 220-252.
[2] Ephesians 5:33, see Monsignor Rossetti, "Guidelines for Laity" and Father Ripperger, *Deliverance Prayers for Laity*, 9. For a detailed explanation of the structure of authority, see Father Ripperger, *Diabolic Influence,* 117–186.
[3] Monsignor Rossetti, "Guidelines for Laity" and Father Ripperger, *Deliverance Prayers for Laity*, 10. Saint Thomas Aquinas delineates whether to "beseech" or "command" as based upon one's intrinsic relationship towards a person, place, or object. He distinguishes between *solemn adjuration* (in the name of the Church and by her ministers) and *simple imperative adjuration* (lawfully made by anyone depending upon one's office vis-à-vis the other). See *ST* 2.2, q.90. On the distinction between solemn and private adjurations and the application of this section of the *Summa*, see McHugh and Callam, *Moral Theology*, 360-2. The authors make note of special charisms among the laity to drive out demons, citing two saints as examples: the monk and Desert Father, Saint Anthony of Egypt, and the consecrated religious and Doctor of the Church, Saint Catherine of Sienna. Notably, they cite here the special charism of the consecrated celibate, and one must always exercise prudence and guard against the sin of presumption.

Disciplinary Norms:

1). The laity are advised not to pray over another individual unless with the authority they have over their spouses, and their children in accordance with natural law.

2). The laity are advised not to lay hands on another individual in a posture of prayer with, for, and or over an individual outside the authority structure of the natural law (see art. #2).

3). The laity must take care to not mimic Sacramental actions, especially regarding blessings, the laying on of hands, and anointing with blessed oil.

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In the case of deliverance prayers for others, the faithful can pray directly to God, thus making it a deprecatory prayer. For their own pastoral protection, the faithful are not to use imprecatory prayers, ie., directly commanding demons to leave, over others whom they do not have authority.[6] 0

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Disciplinary Norms:

1). The laity are advised not to pray over another individual unless with the authority they have over their spouses, and their children in accordance with natural law.[7]

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3). The laity must take care to not mimic Sacramental actions, especially regarding blessings, the laying on of hands, and anointing with blessed oil.[9]

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[7] Father Ripperger, *Deliverance Prayers for Laity*, 9. See Father Ripperger, *Dominion*, 150–64. The right to command like the right to bless, is based upon one's office. There is often a lack of distinction, however, between *praying over* another and *praying with* another. The Church affirms that "laypersons exercise the ministry [of blessing] in virtue of their office" clarifying with "such as parents on behalf of their children." The *Roman Ritual* lists those individuals in the Old Testament who administered an office from which they blessed (or prayed over) others: "patriarchs, kings, priests, Levites, and parents—by allowing them to offer blessings in praise of His name and to invoke His name." (*Roman Ritual*, 26, 22).

[8] For more clarification, see 1985 CDF document, *Letter to Ordinaries Regarding Norms on Exorcism.* In the Rite of Ordination the priest's hands are anointed. The significance of this is seen when a priest receives last rights, where it is customary that the back of this hands (not the palms) be anointed, since they have already been anointed as a priest forever. Thus, a priest's hands are sacred and set aside for sacred purposes. When God initiated the first priesthood, he gave the command to Moses to ordain Aaron and his sons. He not only specified sacred vestments, but also a consecration to include the anointing of their hands. The Vulgate reads: "And you will consecrate the hands and sanctify them so that they may serve as a priesthood for me" (Exod 28.41). That the gesture of imposition of hands is reserved for the ordained clergy is affirmed by exorcist Father Gabriel Amorth, who "criticized the laying of the hands by the laity" (Rossetti, *Pope's Exorcist*, 19-20). Parents can, and should, lay hands in blessing their children, but it is not advisable to be done outside of the familial construct. Modern exorcists who concur with Father Amorth include Monsignor Stephen Rosetti, Father Chad Ripperger, Father Winston Cabading, Father Dan Rahill, and Monsignor Charles Pope.

[9] For more disciplinary norms, see the 2014 CDF document, *Instructions on Prayers for Healing*.

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