

## ANGELS AND DEMONS THE FIGHT AGAINST THE POWER OF DARKNESS



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Angels and demons are not the fruit of man's fantasy, nor the mere expression of his hopes and fears. They exist, they are real beings, endowed with a purely spiritual nature, far more perfect than ours, a keen intelligence and a powerful will.

They continually intervene in our lives; the holy angels, by the good inspirations which they suggest to us; the demons, by their temptations, What are the real powers of angels and demons? How should we behave in the face of angelic action and how to react in the face of diabolical activity? More specifically, how to resist the temptations of the devil, his extraordinary action, the infestations and possessions?

What to think of witchcraft, sabbaths and black masses? Are there still wizards and witches today? Does spiritism and macumba have any diabolical influence? Is there any relationship between Rock n 'Roll and Satanism?

To answer these questions, the authors of *Angels and Demons - The Fight Against the Power of Darkness* consulted a number of specialized works, gathering the teaching of a hundred Catholic theologians, moralists, and canonists; They also visited the pages of numerous national and foreign newspapers and magazines. They present here, in accessible language, the result of their research, placing in the hands of the unskilled reader a dense work of biblical and theological content and at the same time of pleasant and appealing reading.

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*“Be sober and watch, for the devil your adversary walks like a roaring lion, seeking to devour. Resist him strong in the faith.” (First Epistle of St. Peter 5: 8)*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Angels, the Demons, and the Man

*“(Jacob) had a dream: A ladder rose from the earth and reached to heaven, and angels of God ascended and descended through it.” (Gen 28:12)*

CONSIDERING the beauty of a maritime landscape at times, the elegance of the waves that come gently to the limpid sand in a swirl of foam; seagulls and other seabirds that glide sweetly, without apparent effort, in the breeze; the brightness of the luminosity that reverberates in the waters and seems to be confused with them in the horizon line; in the face of all this we feel the quiet majesty of God, his immense wisdom, infinite love for us men, giving us, without our merit, such wonders.

But if, beyond the natural senses, we would consider the same panorama with the eyes of the Faith, we would realize that the wonder is even greater, and the divine wisdom and goodness even more perfect; His concern for us men, even more excellent and loving.

And that, along with all that material perfection, guarding and directing it, we would know that they are spiritual creatures, incomparably more perfect than us, and whose mission is to help us

better know and love the Creator, advise us in our doubts, protect us in all dangers, help us in all difficulties: the angels.

### **The Holy Angels**

Crowning the creation, above the inanimate beings, of the plant and animal world, of the man who is king of this work, God placed the angelic spirits, endowed with intelligence (incomparably more perfect than ours), but not subject to the limitations of the body, like us.

Saint Thomas explains that God created all things to make manifest His goodness and in some way to participate in that goodness. Now this participation and manifestation would not be very perfect, if there were, besides creatures, merely material, others composed of matter and spirit (men) and, finally, purely spiritual ones, that could more fully assimilate the perfections. divine.

The wonderful truth of the existence of angels - beings intermediate between God and men - is illustrated poetically in the Scriptures by the dream of Jacob, Patriarch of the Elect People: "(Jacob) had a dream: A ladder rose from the earth and reached heaven and angels of God ascended and descended upon it "(Gen 28:12).

From the apex of the scale of creation, the pure spirits descend to lower creatures, ruling the material world, supporting protecting man; and they come up to God to offer him the glory of creation, as well as the prayer and the good works of the righteous.

This angelic reality was foreseen by the ancient peoples, amid the mists of paganism and superstitions, in the form of benevolent geniuses of fountains, woods, and seas, which would guarantee the harmony of the universe, and were conducive to men.

But it was the divine revelation that presented to men the true figure of the angelic spirits, freed from every form of superstition. The Holy Scriptures and Tradition provided the fundamental elements, which the great Doctor theologians of the Church - especially St. Thomas Aquinas - systematized, giving us a solid and coherent doctrine about the angelic world.

It is this doctrine that we seek to synthesize in the present work, following the Angelic Doctor as well as more recent authors who dealt with the subject.

We are sure that knowledge of this doctrine will be profitable for all believers. Knowing angels better, we will have more intimacy with them and thus be led to resort more often to their protection and protection on our earthly journey to Paradise. Especially in the tremendous struggle we must wage against the Adversary, the Slanderer, who walks about us like a fierce lion, wanting to devour us (1Pt5,8-9): Satan!

### **SATAN AND THE REBEL ANGELS**

From the marvelous reality of the holy angels we thus descend into the dark reality of the infernal spirits, the demons.

Even more than in relation to angels, ancient pagan peoples (as well as today's primitives) had the perception of demons. To such an extent that rationalist minds of the last century and this century wanted to see in the biblical conception of angels and demons a mere Babylonian and

Greek influence. This appreciation is completely false because the biblical and Christian conception of angels is entirely immune from the superstitious nonsense of the pagans.

Concerning demons, the ancient peoples (Babylonians, Chaldeans, or Greeks) were very confused because they could not solve the problem of the origin of evil. In their view, good and evil are mixed and confused in such a way that both gods and wicked geniuses are ambiguous, representing and practicing both good and evil.

Among the Greeks, the word *daimon* meant the gods and other beings with divine forces, especially the evil ones, from whom men were to guard themselves by magic, witchcraft and hiding.

The conception revealed in Holy Scripture and Tradition 6 is quite another: demons are not deities, but mere creatures, endowed with a natural perfection far above that of man, but infinitely below the perfection of God their creator.

If they are wicked, it is not because they are essentially evil in nature, but because they are perverse; made good by God, the evil angels or demons revolted and would not submit to the Creator, serve them, and worship Him as their creature condition required.

Once rebellious, the rebellious angels fixed themselves on evil, and began to tempt man, seeking to drag him to eternal perdition. This demonic activity - the temptation - theologians call ordinary, because it is the most frequent and also the least spectacular of their actions on man. In addition to this activity, he can - with God's permission - disturb man more intensely more sensitively, provoking visions, making him hear noises and feel pain; or, acting upon the inferior creatures - the animal plants, the atmospheric elements - in this way to reach man. It is the personal or local infestation, the most visible less frequent activity, called therefore extraordinary. In certain extreme cases, demons may even possess man's body to torment him. We have here the possession, the rarest extraordinary manifestation of the Evil One.

God has not left us at the mercy of depraved spirits. In addition to the special protection of our Guardian Angel and other heavenly spirits, he gave the Church the preventive and liberating means to confront the devil's action: prayers, sacraments, sacraments (blessings, medals, scapulars). The most effective of these supernatural means, for cases of infestation and possession, are only the exorcisms, whereby the devil is given orders, by virtue of the name Jesus, to abandon the person's body or the place it infests or possesses.

Due to their importance, we will dwell a little more on the study of exorcisms, considering their theological foundations, the way they are practiced, and the Church's legislation thereon.

From the spontaneous act of the devil we pass that which he develops at the invitation of man, either by direct and explicit invocation, or by indirect and implicit. With regard to magic, witchcraft and other forms of superstition, we leave aside the controversial hysterical aspects (which would extend the present study too far and escape its objective), limiting us to consider its theological possibility, affirmed, moreover, by the Magisterium of Church and the unanimity of theologians and moralists ..

We dedicate some pages to the revival of Satanism today, highlighting the role of Rock"Roll, especially Heavy Metal in its diffusion. By way of illustration of the doctrine developed here, we present some cases of infestation by diabolical possession, some arising from spontaneous intervention of the spirit of darkness, others as a consequence of evil or explicit covenant with the devil; Finally, we add a report of a series of human sacrifices here in Brazil in honor of macumba and candomblé entities (which entities are nothing but demons), which alarmingly reveal how much our country is enveloped by this wave of modern Satanism, the consequence of his apostasy from the Catholic Faith.

We hope this study will help revive devotion to the holy angels, our faithful friends, counselors, and protectors; and at the same time, alert Catholics to the danger of spiritist or macumba sessions, and other forms of superstition (such as the use of amulets, divinations, etc.), which can lead, often unintentionally, at least implicit communication with the infernal spirits.

May the Blessed Virgin, who forever crushes the head of the infernal serpent (cf. Gn3,15), protect and bless this modest effort. We also invoke the patronage of the glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph and the protection of the invincible Archangel Saint Michael - who defeated Satan in the "praelium magnum in caelo" (Ap12,7-10) - and the holy angels who responded to his battle cry: Did you want God? "- "Who is like God? "

## **I - THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMY OF THE LORD**

The notions that flow among the faithful, even among the most fervent, about the holy angels are very vague and superficial. Mere reminiscences and images of childhood, in most cases not unlike fictional and somewhat mythological entities such as fairies and goblins.

The current iconography, unfortunately, does not help to reveal the true physiognomy of angels, presenting us with winged beings, with dress and feminine aspect; or chubby, childish, foolish little angels, playing lightly on clouds that look like cotton candy ... These angels do not exist, nor are they the ones we deal with here.

From the data of Holy Scripture and Tradition, the writings of the Holy Fathers, the teaching of the ecclesiastical Magisterium, the lesson of the Doctors and theologians, we want to present the true nature of the holy angels: purely spiritual beings, endowed with acute intelligence and a powerful free will ruling below God over all other creatures, rational and irrational, as well as the forces of nature, the elements of the atmosphere, and forever subduing the infernal spirits.

These are the holy angels, princes of the armies of the Lord, but also our friends and protectors.

### **The Brave Angelic World**

*"And I heard the voice of many angels around the throne ... and their number was thousands of thousands." (Ap5,11)*

Beyond the visible and material world, God also created the invisible and spiritual world, the brave angelic world.

The existence of angels was denied in ancient times among Jews by the Sadducee sect (cf. Acts 23.8). Later by certain Protestant sects, such as the Anabaptists. In our day she has atheists,

atheists, materialists and positivists, who believe only in what their eyes see and their senses feel. The rationalists, to find a seemingly rational excuse for their unbelief, claim that angels were invented by the Jews at the time of the Babylonian captivity by imitating the entities worshiped there; or else they consider angels to be merely a poetic and symbolic way of referring to divine virtues and human vices. Against all these speak the data of reason, the common belief of peoples, and divine revelation.

### **Angels exist**

For the simple reason, regardless of revelation, man can somehow come to know of the existence of angels. Indeed, the existence of purely spiritual beings does not dislike reason. And an examination of creation in the mere light of the intellect may lead us to the conclusion that the existence of purely spiritual creatures is in keeping with the harmony of the universe, for thus would be represented the three possible kinds of beings: the purely spiritual, above man; others, purely material, below man; finally, composite beings, endowed with matter and spirit - men.

And the common belief of peoples, constant everywhere and in every age, has always affirmed the existence of these beings superior to men and inferior to divinity.

One thing, however, is the mere possibility of the existence of purely spiritual beings, and another is their objective reality. The existence of angels (and demons, fallen angels) would be an insoluble problem for us if there were no special divine revelation in this respect through Scripture and Tradition, \* which assure us of the certainty of the existence of angels.

\* Tradition, in a broad sense, is the set of ideas, feelings and customs, as well as facts that, in a society, are transmitted in a living way from generation to generation.

In the strict theological sense, Tradition is called the set of revealed truths that the apostles received from Christ or the Holy Spirit, and transmitted, independently of the Holy Scriptures, to the Church, which retains and transmits them without alteration.

This revelation was made to our first parents, and was preserved in humanity through oral transmission by the Patriarchs. Over time (and also by the devil's work, no doubt), this early revelation became corrupted, leaving only vestiges in ancient and present paganism. In the mists of this paganism we find incorporeal beings, sometimes evil and sometimes benign, almost always worshiped as deities or quasi-deities.

In order to preserve the Jewish people from contamination by this pagan polytheistic deformation, the sacred Authors for a long time avoided nominally mentioning the spirit of darkness. And for the same reason, there are not many details in the Old Testament about the nature of angels and demons, though they are mentioned at every step. The definitive revelation is verified only by our Lord Jesus Christ. However, the Bible does not bring all the revelation about the angelic world, and it is necessary to resort to Tradition. This, as is well known, is found in the documents of the Holy Fathers \* and early ecclesiastical writers, as well as in the Magisterium documents - popes and council - in the liturgy and monuments of Christian antiquity (cemetery catacombs, etc.).

\* They are called Holy Fathers or Fathers of the Church, certain ancient ecclesiastical writers who have distinguished themselves by orthodox doctrine and holiness of life and are recognized by the Church as witnesses of divine tradition.

The existence of angels is a truth of faith, proved by Scripture and Tradition. Sacred Scripture often refers to rational beings, inferior to God and superior to men; therefore, according to her, these beings, which we call angels, exist.

\* Truth of faith is that which is found in Revelation and is proposed by the Church to the faithful as truth to be believed. The pertinent denial of a truth of faith constitutes heresy.

This truth was solemnly defined as dogma by the Lateran Council IV (1215): "God... From the beginning of time has created two kinds of beings out of nothing - the spiritual and the bodily, that is, the angels and the world." Equally expressed is the First Vatican Council (1870).

### **The Nine Angelic Choirs**

There are differences between angels, but it is not stated in Revelation as to its origin or its precise mode. It is a matter of free discussion whether the angels are all of the same species, or whether there are as many species as there are choirs, or whether each individual constitutes a species of its own (St. Thomas's opinion).

According to a tradition dating back to the Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, theologians usually group them into nine angelic orders or choirs, distributed in three hierarchies (names are taken from Holy Scripture):

\* A renowned ecclesiastical writer of the early centuries, whose identity has not yet been established, for a long time confused with the sage converted by St. Paul in the Areopagus of Athens (cf. Acts 17:34). One of his most famous works is *De coelesti hierarchy* - On the celestial hierarchy, in which he establishes the order of the Angels, determined by their degree of assimilation to God, union with God, the gift of divine light that they receive and transmit to the lower Angels. .

\* For example: Seraphim (Is6,2); Cherubim (Gn3,24; Ex 25,18; 1Rs 6,23; Sl7,11; Ez10,3; Dn3,55); Archangels (1Ts 4.15; Jd9); Angels, Powers, Virtues (1Pd3,22); Principalities, Dominations (Eph 1: 20-21); Thrones (Cl.16).

**First hierarchy** - Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones;

**Second hierarchy** - Dominations, Powers, Virtues;

**Third hierarchy** - Principalities, Archangels and Angels.

The angels of the first three choirs or first hierarchy - Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones continually contemplate and glorify God: "I saw the Lord sitting on a high and high throne... The Seraphim were above the throne... the other and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts" (Is 6,1-3). "The Lord reigns ... He is seated on cherubim" (Ps 98: 1); the next three choirs - Dominations, Virtues, and Powers - deal with world government; Finally, the last three - Principalities, Archangels, and Angels - execute God's commandments: "Bless the Lord, all ye strong and mighty angels, who execute his commands and obey his words" (Ps 102: 20).

They can all, however, be called generically angels, being available to God to fulfill their wills. Although the Gospel, in the Annunciation to Mary, refers to the angel Gabriel (Lc 1,26), this does not mean that he belongs to the last of the angelic hierarchies, because the sublimity of this embassy suggests that it is one of the first spirits. who stand before God.

**The three archangels** - as Saint Michael, Saint Gabriel, and Saint Raphael are commonly known - probably belong to the highest angelic hierarchy. We'll talk about them later.

Although we do not know the exact number of angels, we do know from Scripture and Tradition that they are very many. This is what we read in the book of Revelation: "And I heard the voice of many angels around the throne ... and their number was thousands and thousands" (Rev 5:11). And in the book of Daniel: "It was thousands upon thousands of thousands (the angels) who ministered to him, and billions to those who stood before him" (Dan 7: 10).

Many theologians deduce that the number of angels is greater than the number of men who existed from the beginning of the world and will exist until the end of time. The reason for this is given by St. Thomas in saying that, since God sought primarily the perfection of the universe in creating beings, the more perfect they are, God created them with greater prodigality. Now angels are more perfect than men, therefore they were created in greater numbers.

## ANGELIC NATURE

"Then the angel of the Lord turned him over from the top of his head, and took him by the hair, and led him with the boldness of his spirit unto Babylon into the pit" (Dan. 14: 32-35).

Such is the splendor of an angel that the people to whom they appear often fall to the ground in fear and reverence to worship them, thinking that it is God Himself — according to the account of the Scriptures and the lives of the saints. And so St. John tells in Revelation: "I fell at the angel's feet to worship him; But he said to me, See, do not do so. because I am a servant of God like you .... Worship God "(Rev. 22: 9). It is this wonderful nature that we will study now.

### Rational and free beings

Angels are intellectual or rational beings, inferior to God and more perfect than men. They are pure spirits, not linked to a body like us; they are endowed with a bright intelligence and free will and powerful.

Having been created by God out of nothing, like everything else, angels, by the very fact that they are purely spiritual, are immortal, for they have no connection with corruptible matter, like men.

Unlike the nature of man, which is composed (that is, made up of two distinct elements, body and soul) angels have a simple, purely spiritual nature. Although the human soul is equally spiritual, it was created by God to live in substantial union with the body; when death occurs and the soul is separated from the body, it remains in a state of violence, until the resurrection of the bodies occurs.

Angels do not need a body like man. Thus, it is a much more perfect being, being inferior in nature only to God Himself. One cannot therefore, in thinking of angels, conceive of them as a

human soul separated from his body. The latter is not capable of what the angel can do in its simple nature.

Like man, angels really exist as people; that is, they are individual substances, endowed with intelligence and free will \*. In other words, they have a real existence, distinct from other beings, being able to know, to love, to serve, to choose between one thing and another. They are therefore not imaginary, fictitious beings conceived by man as merely a poetic way of expressing themselves, or as personifications of human virtues and vices or the forces of nature, nor emanations of the power of God.

\* The definition of person given by Boethius is classic: "Rationalis naturae individua substantia" - "Individual substance of rational nature".

Angels were elevated to the supernatural order, that is, called to participate in the life of grace, whose end is the beatific vision of God. This elevation is free, but it is discussed at what time it occurred (for St. Thomas, it was at the very moment of its creation); It is by faith that the angels were to be tested, but it is not known what would have been. After the trial the time of deserving ceased for them; It is also of faith that the good angels have enjoyed and ever enjoy the beatific vision, and that the wicked have been condemned to eternal punishment.

### **Angelic Knowledge and Communication**

It is a matter of free discussion all that pertains to angelic knowledge, to communication with one another, as well as to one's act of will; It is true that their ability to know - though incomparably superior to that of man - is limited: they do not naturally know the divine mysteries, nor the free or contingent future; \* it is also certain that they have full free will.

\* Angels (and also demons, who are perverted angels), by their very nature, have no ability to know the future that depends on a free act of God or man; But given their keen intelligence and their knowledge of nature and its laws, they can predict the course of events, scenes, and causes. They can also, because of their deep psychological penetration and knowledge of the human soul, make more or less likely conjectures of how men will react to a given circumstance, and thus predict what will follow.

To give an idea of the perfection of angelic knowledge, it seems appropriate to transcribe the explanation of Cardinal Lepicier, a great expert in the field.

Comparing the mode of human knowledge with the angelic one, emphasizes the Cardinal that God infused into the intellect of the angels, as soon as he created them, representations of all natural things. These images "are not only representative of the general principles governing each particular science, but also distinctly contain all the details virtually contained in those principles, so that one and the same image informs the angelic mind of the particularities of each science. There can therefore be no confusion in the angelic mind as it goes from observing one to observing another.

"An angel, with a simple glance at the image representing - say - the animal kingdom, knows not only the various species of animals in existence, but also each individual that exists or has existed within each species, as well as its particular properties and characteristics. your means of action.

And so is the knowledge of any object, whatever it may be, that is in the realm of nature, whether organic or inorganic, material or spiritual visible or invisible.

A free or contingent future is one that depends, either on divine will or on human will. It is distinguished from the necessary future, which does not depend on free will, but stems from causes that, once put in place, necessarily lead to a certain effect. So in the evening is day; the seed, thrown to the earth, will germinate within a certain time, without all the conditions necessary for it, regardless of divine will (which is already manifested in the act of species creation) or human nature.

“From here it can be seen that human science is far exceeded by the science of the angelic mind, both in extent and in precision.” \* \* Cardinal A. LEPICIER, *The Invisible World* pp. 42-43.

St. Thomas explains the communication of angels to one another as follows: Like us men, angels have the inner verb or mental verb, with which we speak to ourselves or formulate concepts within. But while we can communicate this thought to others only through the oral word, or by some other external means, for between us and the others there is the barrier of our body, which guards thought, angels do not have this corporeal barrier; thus it is enough for them, by an act of will, to turn to other angels, for their thinking - that is, this inner verb or mental verb - to manifest to them.

Since angels are different from each other, and some are more perfect than others, the most perfect illuminate the less perfect by communicating to them what they see most in God.

In the same way, they can enlighten men by communicating good thoughts to them, though differently from the way in which one angel communicates with another. Because the human mind needs the fantasy contest to understand things, angels communicate truths to man through sensitive images.

As for the human will, only God or man himself can move it effectively; the angel, or another man. they can only move it by persuasion.

### **Power of angels over matter**

It is somewhat mysterious to us how angels, spiritual beings, can move matter.

However, such power is formally revealed, as can be seen, for example, in the book of Daniel. The prophet had been thrown into the lions' den to perish; by divine action the animals did no harm: "My God sent his angel, and shut the lions' mouths, and they did no harm to me" (Dan 6,21). However, to feed him, God wanted to use the prophet Habakkuk, led to the grave by an angel.

Scripture narrates: "Now the Prophet Habakkuk was in Judea, and he had boiled a broth, and crumbled some loaves in a bowl, and was going to take them to the field to the reapers that were there. And the angel of the Lord said to Habakkuk, "Take this meal you have to Babylon to give to Daniel in the den of lions." And Habakkuk said, Lord, I have never seen Babylon, and I do not know where the grave is. Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown of his head, and took him by the hair, and led him with the boldness of his spirit unto Babylon into the pit "(Dan. 14: 32-35).

The Savior Himself was carried by the devil to the high mountain to be tempted (cf. Mt 4: 5-8).

In St. Matthew, about the Resurrection of Our Lord, it is written: “An angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and came and rolled the stone, and sat upon it” (Mt 28,2). Theological Summary, I, pp.: 52,107,110-112.

Although the question, as we said, is a mysterious one, we will try to synthesize St. Thomas Aquinas' doctrine here.

First of all, it should be remembered what the holy Doctor teaches about the way angels find themselves in one place: while corporeal beings manifest their presence in a place circumscribing it by the physical contact of their body with the place occupied, incorporeal creatures delimit the place through operative contact. I mean, they are where they act.

**As for the way angels move matter, this is the following Thomist explanation:**

The higher self can move the lower because it has in itself more eminently the virtualities of these lower beings. Thus the human body is moved by something superior to it, the soul, which is spiritual, which, through the will, which is also immaterial, moves the bodily limbs at will; therefore, do not dislike reason that a spiritual substance can move matter.

However, in the case of the human soul, it can only directly move that body with which it is substantially united; other things, it can move only through this body; \* now, as angels are spiritual beings, being not substantially united with any material body, their force of action upon matter is not bounded by any determined body; hence it follows that they can freely move any matter.

\* For example, to move a pen over the paper in writing, we need to hold it by hand and through this print the impulse that will slide the pen and trace the letters we want; I cannot directly move the pen by a simple act of will: by the act of will I grab the pen and move my hand according to my intentions.

This movement is produced by the operative contact of the angel with matter, propelling a first local movement; By this first local movement the angel can produce other motions in matter using her own resources, with the blacksmith using fire to bend the iron.

Cardinal Lepicier notes that since angels have knowledge of the physical and chemical laws that surpass anything that science may or may have discovered, and, besides, they have immense power over matter, we can hardly say that they will find each other. phenomena in the universe that angels cannot produce in one way or another. These phenomena are sometimes so surprising that they seem to be true miracles. But they are not miracles, for though they far surpass the capacity of men, they are not above angelic power. He exemplifies:

“A quick look at the phenomena that occur in the physical world will be enough to give us an idea of the wonderful effects that angelic beings can cause. First, just as, due to the forces of nature, huge masses can displace, or, under the action of physical agents, the elements of matter dissolve or work together, such as when they cause storms, hurricanes and proclamations - so too. An angel, without the cooperation of any intermediary agents, moves the heavier bodies from one place to another, lifts them up and keeps them suspended for a while, stirs the heaviest substances

and collisions between them. May the same angel stir up cities and towns, cause earthquakes and break the waves of the sea, cause storms and hurricanes, stop the flow of rivers and, if he so wishes, divide the waters of the sea.

“In addition to all this, an angel can also, using his own strength, produce the most amazing optical effects, not only forcing unknown substances to sprinkle spurts of light, but also casting shadows that resemble ghostly representations. It can, without the aid of any instrument, set in motion the elements of matter, make the most harmonious music heard or produce the strangest noises, such as repeated bangs or sudden bursts. They are also angels who can gather clouds, cause lightning and thunder, tear up giant trees, raze buildings, tear fabrics and break the hardest rocks. It is also possible for them to have a pencil write, as it were automatically, certain phrases with an intelligible meaning, as well as to give objects different forms from those which are peculiar to their nature. They can, to some extent, suspend the functions of life, stop the breathing of a body, accelerate the circulation of blood and cause seeds thrown to the ground to grow shortly until they reach the height of a tree, with leaves, buds and even with fruits.

“It is possible for an angel to do all these things in the shortest possible time because of his power over the elements of matter, and without the slightest difficulty, perfectly imitating the works of nature and giving the impression that it is all about effects and natural causes.”\* \* Cardinal A. LEPICIER, *The Invisible World*. pp. 74-75.

### **Power of angels over man**

The angel can produce wonderful bodily effects. It can, through the movement it imprints on matter, produce changes in bodies, but in such a way that it only uses nature and unfolds its potentialities.

Thus it can, in men, favor or prevent nutrition or cause disease. But he cannot do anything that is completely above nature, such as raising dead people.

The angel also has the power to favor or hinder the movements of sensuality, delight, pain, anger, memory, and to affect in various ways the external and internal senses, that is, the five senses, memory and imagination.

In the same way, the angel can sharpen the force of intelligence and indirectly move both the intellect - exciting images in fantasy or proposing questions - and the will, asking it to choose something.

The angel can form for himself a body with which he appears to men as, for example, the archangel Saint Raphael made with Tobias. St. Augustine says that angels appear to men with a body that they can not only see but also touch, as proved by Scripture (Gen 18: 2 ff; Luke 1,26 ff; Ac 12: 7 ff; the book of Tobias).

The angel moves the body that assumes, as we could move a doll, giving the impression that it is alive, making them imitate the movements of man. When St. Raphael seemed to eat in the company of Tobias, he only made the body he was using to move as a man does under this circumstance, but without consuming the food.

Angelic spirits cannot do miracles themselves, but wonderful things that surpass human power, but not angelic power. For example, thanks to their extraordinary power and knowledge, they can cure diseases, restore sight to the blind (Tb11,15); do wonders such as lift a person up and carry him in the air (Dan 14: 15), make serpent speak (Gen 3: iff), etc.

## **ANGEL MINISTRIES**

*"Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord ... Armies of the Lord, bless the Lord." (Dn3.58-61)*

The ministries of angels are: in relation to God, to worship him, to praise him, to serve him, executing all his decrees in relation to the other angels, both to men and to all material, animate and inanimate nature; in relation to the other angels, the superior ones illuminate the inferior ones. making known to them what they see in God; as regards men, they are ministers of God to direct them to the heavenly homeland, protecting them, correcting them, instructing them, encouraging them; in relation to the material world, they are God's agents for the government of the universe.

### **Ministers of the heavenly liturgy**

The chief ministry of angels is to worship, praise, and serve God: "Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord ... Armies of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt Him for ever and ever" (Dan 3: 58-61). "Bless the Lord, all ye strong and mighty angels, who execute his commands and obey his words" (Ps 102: 20). "The Seraphim were upon the throne ... And they cried unto one another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts" (Is 6,2-3).

### **The holy angels thus perform the heavenly liturgy:**

"And I saw the seven angels standing before God... And another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden thunderbolt; and he was given many perfumes to offer the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne of God. And the fragrance of the perfumes of the saints' prayers went up from the hand of the angel unto the presence of God" (Rev 8: 2-4).

These pure spirits are therefore ministers of the altar and ministers of the throne of God: they sing the praises of God in the presence of the Most High, and present our prayers and good works to Him; at the same time they come down to us and bring us divine graces and blessings, a truth beautifully expressed in the vision of Jacob's ladder: "(Jacob) had a dream: A ladder rose from the earth and reached to heaven, and angels of God. they went up and down it" (Gen 28:12).

This truth, in practical terms, means that they are very powerful intercessors before God. The efficacy of the angelic intercession is witnessed, among many other passages of Scripture, by this one from the book of the Prophet Zechariah: "And the angel of the Lord answered and said, Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou have pity on Jerusalem and the cities? of Judah, against whom have you been angry? This is already the seventieth year ... This saith the Lord of hosts: I have great jealousy for Jerusalem and for Zion ... Therefore this saith the Lord, I will return to Jerusalem with the bowels of mercy" (Zech 1: 12-16).

This should move us to always and fervently resort to them.

## Warriors of the armies of the Lord

The Holy Scriptures present us with angels also in the form of warriors, as the militia of the armies of the Lord. Thus, the prophet Micah exclaims, "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven around him on the right hand and on the left" (1Ki 22,19). And the book of Joshua, narrating the Jews' struggle to conquer Palestine after leaving Egypt, says: "Now when Joshua was outside the city of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him. He had a drawn sword. He went to him and said to him, "Are you ours or your enemies?" And he answered, No; but I am the prince of your Lord "(Js5,13-14).

\* In the Old Testament angels are designated in various ways: "princes"; "Children of God"; "Saints"; "Holy angels"; "Watchful senses"; "Spirits"; "men".

God Himself, whom these warrior angels serve, is presented as the God of armies. The prophet Hosea, describing Jacob's faithfulness, records: "And the Lord God of hosts, this Lord was ever in his memory" (Hos 12: 4-5). Amos prophesies the transgression of Israel in the name of the Lord God of hosts: "Hear this, and declare it to the house of Jacob, saith the Lord of hosts." And further, "For you know, house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD of hosts, that I will raise up against you a nation that shall oppress you" (Am 3,13; 6,15). In the vision of the prophet Isaiah: "The seraphim ... cried to one another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts" (Is6,2-3). The same phrase is used in the Psalms of David: "Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of hosts; this is the King of glory. "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our citadel "(Ps 23:10; 45,8).

The Lord God of hosts, after the disobedience of our first parents, "set before the paradise of delights cherubim wielding a sword of fire to guard the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3: 24).

The heavenly hosts fought in heaven a "great battle" (Rev. 12: 7), defeating and driving out Satan and the rebellious angels.

And on the sublime night of Christmas, these heavenly warriors appeared to the shepherds: "And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly militia praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heavens and peace on earth to men of good will." (Lc2,8-14).

God entrusts to the heavenly militia the defense of those who love Him. According to the interpreters, an exterminating angel killed in the night all the firstborn of Egypt (Ex12,29); and when the Jews were persecuted by the army of Pharaoh, the angel of the Lord who was before them came between the Egyptians and the chosen people (Ex 14,19). When Sennacherib threatened the elect people, God sent one of his terrible angelic warriors: "That same night the angel of Yahweh went out, and cut off in the Assyrian camp a hundred and eighty-five thousand men" (2 Kings 19:35).

Sometimes the celestial combatants join the ground combatants to give them the victory, as in a decisive battle of Judas Macabeu:

"But in the midst of the battle the enemies appeared from heaven to five men on horses with golden bridles, which served as a guide for the Jews. Two of them, having Macabeu in their midst, covering him with their weapons, guarded him so that he could walk without risk from him; and

they threw darts and thunderbolts at their enemies, who were wounded by blindness and full of turmoil. Twenty and five hundred men were killed, and six hundred horses”(2Mc10,28-32).

**The Lord God of hosts also sends his warriors to deliver his friends from the hands of the wicked:**

“They laid (the Jews) their hands on the Apostles and put them in public prison. But an angel of the Lord, opening the doors of the prison in the night, and taking them out, said, Go, and presenting yourselves in the temple, preach unto the people all the words of this life. (Acts 5: 18-20).

“Herod... Also sent for the arrest of Peter... And when he touched Peter's side, he aroused him, saying, Arise quickly. And the chains of his hands fell. And the angel said unto him, Take up thy girdle, and put on thy sandals. And he did so. And the angel said unto him, Put thy robe upon thee, and follow me. And he went out and followed him, and did not know that it was what the angel intervened, but he thought he had a vision. And when they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that faces the city, which opened by itself. And going out, they passed a street, and immediately the angel departed from him: Then Peter came and said, Now I truly know that the Lord sent his angel, and delivered me out of Herod's hand, and all that I hoped for. the people of the Jews”(Acts 12: 1-11).

The Savior Himself, to make it clear to the Apostles that He suffered the Passion by spontaneous will, said to St. Peter, who wanted to defend Him by the sword: “You have judged that I cannot ask my Father, and that He cannot will he immediately set twelve legions of angels here?”(Mt 26,53).

**Executioners of God's vengeance**

These warriors also perform God's vengeance:

In the face of the sins of the Sodomites, God sent his angels:

“As for the men who stood at the door (of Lot's house and wanted to abuse the youths there), they (the angels) struck them with blindness, from the smallest to the largest, so that they could not find the entrance.” “The angels said to Lot... we are going to destroy this place, for there is a great cry that rose against them before the Lord. And the Lord sent us to destroy them (Gen. 19: 10-13).

“When King Sennacherib's messengers blasphemed you, your angel intervened and struck one hundred eighty-five thousand of his men.” (1Ma7.41).

Herod Agrippa, who had persecuted St. Peter and killed St. James, was “wounded by the angel of the Lord and eaten with worms” (Acts 12:23).

**In the end of the world:**

“The Son of man shall send his angels, and shall remove out of his kingdom all scandals, and they that do iniquity. And they will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”(Mt 13, 41-42).

“When the Lord Jesus (coming down) from heaven appears with the angels of his power, in a flame of fire, to take vengeance on those who have not known God and who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his power ”(2Th1,7-9).

### **Heavenly messengers**

The very name of angels already indicates their function: envoys or messengers of God. Indeed, the original Old Testament Hebrew refers to these pure spirits as malâk yahweh, that is, emissaries of God. The Greek version used the expression angelos, which was in turn translated into Latin by angelus, a word that served as the basis for Western languages.

The New Testament shows us the action of these emissaries of God, communicating to men the most important divine messages.

Thus, the archangel Saint Gabriel announces to Zacharias the birth of the Forerunner, Saint John the Baptist: .

The same angel announces to the Blessed Virgin the mystery of the Incarnation: “The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man named Joseph of the house of David; and the name of the Virgin was Mary ”(Lc 1,26-27).

An angel appears to Saint Joseph in dreams, also telling him about this mystery: “Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in dreams saying: Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to receive Mary as your wife, because what was conceived in her it is (work) the Holy Spirit ”(Mt 1:20).

The joy of the Savior's birth was announced by the angels to the shepherds: “In that same area there were shepherds who watched and kept their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto them, and the brightness of God surrounded them, and they were afraid. But the angel said unto them, Fear not; For, behold, I announce unto you a great joy that all the people shall have. You were born in the city of David the Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And here's the sign: You will find a boy wrapped in cloth lying in a manger. And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly militia praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest heavens, and peace on earth to men of good will ”(Lk 2: 8-14).

An angel advises the Holy Family to flee to Egypt because of Herod's persecution: “Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in dreams to Joseph and said unto him, Arise, turn the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I warn you; for Herod will go and seek a child to kill him ”(Mt 2,13).

After Herod's death, the angel appears again to Saint Joseph: “Dead Herod, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, because those who sought to take the life of the child died ”(Mt 2,19-20).

### **Comforters and comforters**

In several episodes, Holy Scripture shows us angels in their ministry of consoling and comforting men in trouble.

The prophet Elijah, being persecuted by the wicked queen Jezebel (who had introduced the idolatrous worship of Baal into Israel), fled into the wilderness; there, prostrate with discouragement and fatigue, he fell asleep. "And an angel of the Lord touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat." Elijah opened his eyes and saw by his head a loaf of bread and a bowl of water; ate and drank and fell asleep again. "And the angel of the Lord came again a second time, and touched him, and said unto him, Arise, and eat; for ye have a long way to go." The Prophet rose and drank and, refreshed, walked for forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb, where God would manifest Himself to him (1 Kings 19: 1-8).

In his earthly life the Savior himself was served and comforted angels.

So it was after the long desert fast and the temptation of the devil: "Then the devil left him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Mt 4:11).

In the terrible agony of the Garden of Olives, after Jesus exclaimed, "Father, if it pleases you, remove this cup from me," the Father sent an angel to comfort Him: "Then an angel from heaven appeared to him. comforted" (Lk 22: 42-43).

In the Resurrection "an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and came and turned the stone, and sat upon it; and his appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And the same angel comforted the Holy Women who had come to the Sepulcher: "Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified; he is no longer here, because he is risen as he said" (Mt 28,2-8).

### **God's Agents for the Government of the Universe**

It is through the holy angels that God exercises the government of the universe.

The Fathers and Doctors of the Church recognize in the angels a great power, not only over plants and animals, but even over man himself. Sacred Scripture also tells us about the angel who has power over the fire (Rev 14, 18), and the one who rules the waters (Rev 16,5).

St. Augustine says that each distinct species in the different kingdoms of nature is governed by angelic power.

According to St. Thomas, God Himself has established, to the smallest detail, His plan of world government. But he entrusts the execution of this plan, in varying degrees, first to angels, then to men, according to their various functions, and finally to other creatures.

Angels are the agents of God's execution in every domain. Since God rules everything, angels help and obey Him in everything. He exercises his designs in the cosmos through the ministry of angels. "Of course the galaxies of the sky, as well as the beasts of the forests and the birds that sing to us, and the wheat of our fields, the minerals and gases, the protons and neutrons suffer the action of angels," comments Mgr. Cristiani (Mgr L. CRISTIANI, *Les Anges, ces inconus*, p. 651.)

St. Thomas is categorical in this respect: "All bodily bodies are governed by angels. And this is not only the teaching of the Doctors of the Church, but also of all philosophers" (Suma vs. Gentiles, lib. III, c. 1.)

And Cardinal Daniélou explains: “It is therefore a doctrine established by tradition and reason. And we, for our part, think that the intelligent and strong government of which the order of the cosmos bears witness may well have the ministers of heavenly spirits, in spite of the rationalism of some of our contemporaries.” (Apud Mgr L. CRISTIANI, art. Cit., P.651)

### **Men's guides and protectors**

Angels, despite their excellency, by God's design, are our friends and companions. They protect us in need, guide us in danger, continually suggest good purposes, acts of love, and submission to God.

Because of its importance, the Guardian Angels doctrine deserves further development. This is what we will do in a separate chapter.

If God Himself continually uses angels, should we not always resort to the princes of the armies of the Lord, to the messengers of God, invoking them in all our needs?

The Guardian Angels

*"Behold, I will send my angel, which shall go before you, and keep you by the way, and bring you into the place which I have prepared." (Ex23.20-23)*

God, in his infinite love for men, has given each of us to the guard and special care of an angel, who accompanies us from birth to death: the Guardian Angel.

This doctrine has always been taught by the Church (cf. Roman Catechism, Part IV, chap. IX, no. 4.) and is based on testimonies of Holy Scripture and Tradition - Holy Fathers, Ecclesiastical Magisterium, Liturgy.

### **The Scriptures and the Holy Fathers**

The Old Testament makes continual references to these angels who serve as our protectors. Rather than explicitly teaching us this truth, it seems to assume it in his narratives.

Jacob in blessing his grandchildren, Joseph's sons, says, “May the angel who delivered me from all evil bless these children” (Gen. 48:16).

In the following words from God to Moses we find the manifold offices of the Guardian Angel of protection and counsel: “Behold, I will send my angel, which shall go before you, and keep you by the way, and bring you into its place. I prepared. Respect him, and hear his voice, and see that you do not despise him; For he will not forgive you if you sin, and my name is on him. If ye will hear his voice, and do all that I say unto you, I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and will afflict them that afflict thee. And my angel will walk before you”(Ex 23: 20-23).

Through the prophet Baruch, God communicates to Israel: “For my angel is with you, and I will take care of your souls myself” (Br6,6)

Psalm 90 expresses with great poetry God's solicitude toward us through the Guardian Angel: “Evil will not come upon you, and the scourge will not come near your tent. For he has commanded (God) his angels in thy behalf, to keep thee in all thy ways. They will carry you into their hands, lest your foot stumble upon any stone”(Ps 90: 10-12).

And another Psalm proclaims, "The angel of the Lord setteth his encampments round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps 33: 8).

Thrown into the lions' den by jealous intrigue, Daniel was rescued by an angel: "My God sent his angel, and shut the lions' mouths, and they did no harm to me" (Dan 6,21).

In the Book of Kings there is talk of an army of chariots surrounding the prophet Elisha (1 Kings 6: 14-17). St. Thomas sees here an image of the power of the Custodian Angels and the preponderance of the good angels over the evil ones.

There are numerous Old Testament passages that refer to the Guardian Angels doctrine. In no case, however, is the angels' solicitude for men as evident as in Tobias's book. \* That is why he is often quoted when it comes to matter.

\* This book of Holy Scripture is all rich with teachings on this doctrine, so it is not enough to transcribe here or there a passage from it; Thus, we invite the reader to read it directly in the Bible.

This teaching becomes more accurate in the New Testament, where the existence of the Guardian Angel is confirmed by the Savior Himself. To his disciples, warning them against scandals concerning children, he says: "You see that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven" (Mt18). , 10). These words make it clear that even small children have their Custodian Angels, as well as these angels maintain God's beatific vision as they come down to earth to care for and protect their custodians.

St. Paul also refers to the protective role of angels in relation to men: "Are they not all spirits in the service of God sent to minister in behalf of those who should obtain salvation?" (Heb 1:14).

### **The Holy Fathers early teach this doctrine.**

St. Basil (329-379), among the Greeks, states: "That each one has an angel to direct him, as a teacher and pastor, is the teaching of Moses" (Apud Card. J. DANIELOU, *Les Anges et leur mission*, p. 93.)

And among the Latins, St. Jerome (342-420) thus comments on the passage from St. Matthew (18.10), above, about the angels of children: "This shows the great dignity of souls, since each one has, since the birth, an angel in charge of its guard" (Comm. in Evang. 5. Matth., lib. III, ad ch. XVIII, 10 Apud Card. P. GA5PARRI *Catechisme Catholique pour Adultes*, p. 346.)

The belief in the existence and performance of the Guardian Angels is so firmly established in the tradition of the Church that since time immemorial a special festival has been instituted in praise of them (October 2).

### **The Teaching of Theologians**

From the data of Holy Scripture and Tradition, theologians have been expressing over the centuries a solid and consistent doctrine about the Guardian Angels.

The prince of theologians, St. Thomas Aquinas, in his celebrated *Suma Theological*, (*Suma Theológico*, 1, q. 113.) broadly expounds this doctrine.

The holy Doctor justifies the existence of the Guardian Angels by the principle that God governs inferior and variable things through superior and invariable ones. Not only is man inferior to the angel, but still subject to instability and variation because of weakness of his knowledge, passions, etc. Thus he is governed and supported by angels, who serve as instruments of God's special providence toward men.

The Guardian Angel's chief function is to enlighten us in relation to truth, to good doctrine; but their custody also has many effects, such as repressing demons and preventing us from causing other spiritual or bodily harm.

Each man has an angel especially in charge of guarding him, distinct from that of the human collectives to which they belong. These have special angels to guard them; while the angels of individuals belong to the last angelic choir, that of collectivities or institutions may be part of the superior choirs and hierarchies.

Since there are several titles by which a man needs to be especially protected (ie, considered as private or as holding a position or function in the Church or in society), the same man may have several angels to guard him.

The Blessed Virgin, Queen of Angels, also had not one, but the Guardian Angels. As a man Jesus had Guardian Angels; evidently not to protect Him, for the inferior does not guard the superior, but to serve Him.

**Even the infidels have Guardian Angels, and even the Anti-Christ will have them.**

The Guardian Angel will never leave man, even after death, if he goes to Paradise, for angelic custody is part of God's special providence toward man, which will never be wholly deprived of divine providence.

Although they are usually in heaven, contemplating God, the Guardian Angels know all that is happening on earth with their protégés; they can then almost immediately move from place to place to protect or influence them beneficially.

St. Augustine asks, "How can angels be far away when they were given to us by God to help us?"

"They do not depart from us, although one who is assailed by temptation thinks they are far away." (Apud AJ MacINTYRE, *The angels, an admirable reality* p.321.)

The Custodian Angels are never in opposition or real divergence from one another. The biblical account of the struggle between the angel of Persia and the Protector angel of the Jews (cf. Dn 10,13-21) in which the former wanted to retain the Hebrews in Babylon and the latter wanted to lead them back to their homeland finds the following: Explanation: Sometimes God does not reveal to the angels the merits or demerits of the various nations or individuals they guarded. While not knowing for certain the divine will, the Guardian Angels holyly seek to protect in every way those under their protection, even contrary to the wishes of other Custodian Angels. But as soon as God's will becomes clear to them, they all submit hurriedly, for what they always desire is to do the divine will.

Just as men, institutions, peoples and countries have an angel specially in charge of watching over them.

This doctrine is based on the words of Holy Scripture, where it is said that an angel led the Jewish people through the desert (Ex 23:20), and also in the passage already mentioned about the struggle between the angel of the Jews and the angel of the 3 Persians (Dan 10). , 13-21).

It is also what St. Basil teaches: "Some of the angels are prepared for the nations; others are companions of the faithful." (Apud Card. J. DANIELOU, *Les Anges et leur Mission*, p. 93.)

St. Michael the Archangel was the protector of Israel as an elect people (Dan 10: 13-21); He is currently the protector of the new people of choice, the Church. The apparitions of Our Lady in Fatima were preceded by that of the Angel of Portugal.

### **Effects of Angel Custody**

The effects of the custody of angels are, some bodily, some spiritual, ordained, one and the other, to the eternal salvation of man.

The effects are bodily, insofar as they prevent or rid themselves of the dangers or evils of the body, or assist men in material matters, as set forth in the book of Tobias (chap. 5 et seq.).

And they are spiritual whenever angels defend us against demons (Tb8,3); they pray for us and offer our prayers to God, making them more effective through their intercession (Rev 8,3; 12); suggest good thoughts to us, thus urging us to do good (Acts 8:26; 10: 3ff), \* by stimulating the imagination or sensory appetite; likewise, when they inflict upon us medicinal penalties to correct us (2Ki 24,16); or, in the hour of death, they strengthen us against the devil; angels lead heaven directly to the souls of those who die without having to go through purgatory, and bring to heaven souls who have already undergone the necessary purgation; they also visit the souls of Purgatory to comfort and strengthen them, enlightening them about the glory of heaven, etc.

### **There are several examples of this in Holy Scripture:**

The Acts of the Apostles relate the appearance of an angel to the centurion Cornelius, a religious and God-fearing man, to instruct him on how to know the true religion: The angel of God stood before him and said to him, "Cornelius... your prayers and your alms have come up as a memorial to the presence of God." And now send men to Joppa to call a certain Simon whose surname is Peter ... he will tell you what to do "(Acts 10: 1-6). And in the same Acts it reads as an angel inspires St. Philip Deacon to stray from his path, to make him meet with the minister of Queen Candace of Ethiopia and baptize him after instructing him in the doctrine. Christian (Acts 8:26)

The custody of angels frees us from countless dangers to both soul and body. However, it does not deliver us from all the crosses and sufferings of this life, which God sends us for our trial and purification; nor of those temptations that God allows us to show our faithfulness. But they always help us endure with patience and win with perseverance.

Sometimes it seems that angels are not listening to us; It is then necessary to pray more insistently until this help is realized. But it may happen that we are not heard, not because the angels lack the

power or desire to help us, but it is that what we are asking for is not the best for our eternal salvation, which is what they seek first of all.

### **Our Duties Regarding the Holy Custodian Angels**

Saint Bernard summarizes our duties in relation to our Guardian Angels:

**The.** Respect for your presence. We must avoid everything that can be such a pure and holy spirit. Above all, avoid sin. "How dare you," interjects the holy Doctor, "to do in the presence of angels what you would not do when I stood before you?"

**B.** Confidence in your protection. Being so powerful and continually standing before God, while knowing our needs, how can we not trust in His protection? The best way to prove this confidence is to turn to him for prayer in difficult times, especially in temptations.

**W.** Love and recognition for your protection. We should love him as a benefactor, a friend, and a brother, and be thankful for his most diligent protection. "Let us therefore be devotees" - writes the same Saint Bernard. "Let us be grateful to such cherished guardians, let us respond to his love, honor him as much as we can and how much we owe!" (Apud Jesus VALBUBUO OP, Treaty of the World Government - Introducciones, p. 930.) Prayer for Excellence To invoke and honor the Guardian Angel is the Holy Angel of the Lord: "Holy angel of the Lord, my jealous keeper, since he has entrusted to me divine piety, he always rules, keeps, rules and enlightens me."

The Three Glorious Archangels

*"Behold, Michael came to my rescue, one of the first princes." (Dan 10,13) "I am Gabriel, who stands before (the throne) of God." (Luke 1:19,) "I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord." (Tb12.15)*

The Church and the faithful people especially venerate the three glorious Archangels - St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael.

Although they are commonly called Archangels, according to theologians and commentators of Scripture, they certainly belong to the first of the angelic choirs, the Seraphim.

### **St. Michael: "Who is like God?"**

In Hebrew: mîkâ'êl, which means: "Who (is) as God?" The Scriptures refer nominally to Archangel St. Michael in four passages: two of them in Daniel's prophecy (chap. 10,13, 21; and ap12, 1); one in the Epistle of St. Jude Thaddaeus (chap. only, verse 9) and finally in Revelation (chap. 12,7-12).

In the book of Daniel the Holy Archangel appears as the "prince and protector of Israel," who opposes the "prince" or celestial protector of the Persians. \*According to St. Jerome and other commentators, the protector angel of Persia would have wished for some Jews to remain there. to further spread the knowledge of God; but St. Michael would have wished and asked God that all Jews should return to Palestine soon, so that the temple of the Lord could be rebuilt more quickly. This spiritual struggle between the two angels would have lasted twenty-one days.

\* In scripture angels are often called princes.

St. Jude, in his Epistle, alludes to a dispute between St. Michael and the devil over the body of Moses: the glorious Archangel, by God's disposition, wanted Moses' tomb to remain hidden; But the devil sought to make him known in order to give the Jews an opportunity to fall into idolatry, influenced by the surrounding pagan peoples.

In Revelation, St. John presents St. Michael captaining the good angels in a great battle in heaven against the rebel angels headed by Satan, called dragon there:

“And there was a great battle in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought against him; but they did not prevail, and their place was no more in heaven. And that great dragon, that ancient serpent, called the devil, and Satan, who seduces all the world, was precipitated; and it was precipitated on the earth, and they were precipitated with their angels”(Rev 12: 7-12).

The Church has not defined anything particular about St. Michael, but it has allowed the beliefs born of the Christian tradition regarding the glorious Archangel to have free course in the piety of the faithful and in the elaboration of theologians.

The first belief is that St. Michael was, in the Old Testament, the defender of the chosen people - Israel; and today it is from the new chosen people - the Church. Such a godly belief is in line with what is said in the book of Daniel: “Behold, to my help came Michael, one of the first princes. ... Michael, who is your prince” - that is, of the Jews (10,13 and 21). “The great prince Michael will rise up, who is the protector of the children of your people” - from Israel (12,1). This belief is very old, and is already confirmed by the Pastor of Hermas, famous Christian book of the second century, which reads: “The great and worthy Michael is the one who has power over this people” (Christians). Moreover, such a belief is shared by theologians and the church itself, which manifests it in many ways.

The second general belief is that St. Michael has the power to admit or not to souls in Paradise. In the Roman Office of this Saint in the Old Breviary, St. Michael was called “Praepositus paradisi” - “Guardian of Paradise”, to which God himself addresses himself in the following terms: “Constitute you the super omnes animal sus-cipiendas” - “I have made you chief over all souls to be admitted.” And at the Mass for the Dead, it was said: “Signifer Sanctus Michael representet eas in lucem sanctam” - “O Standard Bearer Saint Michael, lead them to the holy light.”

The third belief, or rather opinion, is that St. Michael ranks first in the angelic hierarchy. On this point there is disagreement among theologians, but such an opinion has in its favor several Greek Church Fathers and seems to be corroborated by the Latin liturgy, which referred to the glorious Archangel as “Princeps militiae coelestis who honorificans coelorum cives” - “Prince of the militia” heavenly, whom the inhabitants of heaven honor”; and by the Greek liturgy that calls it “Archistrategos”, that is, “Generalissimo.”

**The great commentator of the Holy Scriptures, Fr. Cornelius a Lapide, 16th century Jesuit, writes:**

“Many people believe that Michael, both for the dignity of nature and grace and glory, is absolutely the first and prince of all angels. And this is proved first by Revelation (12,7), where it is said that Michael fought against Lucifer and his angels, resisting his pride with the humble cry: ‘Who (is) like God?’ Therefore, just as Lucifer is the chief of demons, Michael is of the angels,

being the first among the seraphim. Second, because the Church calls him the Prince of the Celestial Militia, which is set at the entrance of Paradise. And it is in his name that the feast of all angels is celebrated. Third, because Michael is today worshiped as the protector of the Church as he once was of the Synagogue. Finally, fourthly, it is proved that St. Michael is the Prince of all angels, and therefore the first among the Seraphim, because St. Basil says in the Homily of Angelis: "To you, O Michael, general of the heavenly spirits, that by honor and dignity you stand before all other heavenly spirits, I beseech thee ..." (Cornelius A LAPIDE, Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram, t. 13, pp. 112-114)

The same goes for countless other authors, including St. Roberto Bellarmino.

In the Middle Ages, St. Michael was the special patron saint of the Cavalry Orders, which defended Christianity against methane danger.

### **St. Gabriel: "Strength of God"**

In Hebrew: gabrí'êl, which means "Man of God" or "God was strong" or "Force of God."

## **II - Angels and Demons Fighting the Power of Darkness**

The fall of the evil angels

*"You have broken my yoke from the beginning, you have broken my bonds, and have said, I will not serve!" (Jer 2:20)*

God created the angels in a high state of natural perfection and further elevated them to the supernatural order. It is by faith that all angelic spirits were created good. \* \* This is a compelling consequence of the truth of faith, that all angelic spirits were created by God, attested by the Nicene-Constantinopolitan symbol (the Creed of the Mass), which proclaims, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of visible and invisible things"; this truth was still defined in the Lateran and First Vatican Councils IV

Sacred Scripture calls them "sons of God" (Job 38: 7), "saints" (Dan. 8: 13), "angels of light" (2 Cor 11: 14). However, the Holy Books themselves refer to "unclean spirits" (Lc8,29); "Evil spirits" (Eph 6:12); "Worse spirits" (Lk 11,26); and other analogous expressions.

This indicates that certain angels became evil, had their will perverted. In short: they have sinned.

### **The battle in heaven**

*"You have broken my yoke from the beginning, you have broken my bonds, and said, I will not serve!" (Jer 2:20).*

This verse of the Prophet Jeremiah about the revolt of the elect people against God has been applied to the Lucifer revolt. In the face of Lucifer's rebellion "I will not serve!" - St. Michael answered with the cry of fidelity: "Who is like God!" (Meaning of the name Michael in Hebrew).

In the apocalypse, St. John describes this mysterious battle then fought in heaven:

"And there was a great battle in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon with his angels fought against him; but they did not prevail, and their place was not found

in heaven. And it was precipitated that great dragon, that ancient serpent, which is called the Devil and Satan, who seduces all the world; and he was precipitated on the earth, and his angels were precipitated with him”(Rev 12: 7-9).

Jesus himself bears witness to this fall: "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning" (Lk 10,18). "(The Devil) was a murderer from the beginning, and did not remain in the truth" (Jn 8,44).

### **The angels could sin**

How could the angel have sinned, since he is not subject to passions or misunderstanding, as we men?

"How to understand such a choice and rebellion to God in beings of such keen intelligence?" - asks John Paul II. The Pontiff replies: "The Fathers of the Church and theologians do not hesitate to speak of blindness, produced by the overvaluation of the perfection of their being, to the point of concealing the supremacy of God, which required, on the contrary, an act of docility. and obedient submission. All of this seems concisely expressed in the words, "I will not serve" (Jer 2:20), which manifest the radical and irreversible rejection of taking part in building the kingdom of God in the created world. Satan, the rebellious spirit, wants his own kingdom, not that of God, and stands as the Creator's first adversary, as an opponent of Providence, an antagonist of God's loving wisdom."(Apud Mons.C. BALDUCCI, El déablo, p. . 20.)

And the Pope explains that angels, being rational creatures, are free, that is, they have the ability to choose for or against what they know to be good: "Also for angels freedom means the possibility of choosing for or against the good they know, that is, God Himself." (John Paul II, Mcm, ibid.)

By creating the rational and free angels, God wanted them - with the help of grace - to be the agents of their own happiness or their loss if they cooperated or resisted grace. To deserve eternal happiness, he put them to the test.

It is by faith that all angelic spirits have been subjected to a test. However, we do not know what this proof would have been. Theologians seek to wonder what it would have been. The Sin of the Evil Angels What was the proof to which the angels were subjected? And what was the sin of those who succumbed to the test?

### **A sin of pride**

It is commonly believed to have been a sin of pride, of pride, for Scripture says that "it was in pride that all perdition began" (T 4,14).

St. Athanasius (14th century) explicitly states: "The great remedy for the salvation of the soul is humility. Indeed, Satan did not fall through fornication, adultery or theft, but it was his pride that precipitated him to the bottom of hell. Because he said, "I will go up and set my throne before God and be like the Most High" (Is14,14). And it is by these words that he fell and that eternal fire became his fate and his inheritance."(Apud Card. P. GASPARRI, Catechisme Catholique pour Adultes. P. 345.)

### **What would this pride have consisted of?**

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, this pride was that the evil angels directly desired the final bliss, not by a concession from God, by the work of grace, but by their own virtue, as a mere consequence of their nature. In this way they wanted to manifest their independence from God; They thus refused the homage they owed to God as their creator and wished to replace Him and have dominion over all things: to be as gods (cf. Gn3,5).

St. Thomas also makes reference to the following passage from Isaiah - referring to the king of Babylon, but generally applied to Satan - to illustrate his sin and the evil angels that accompanied him in the revolt: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O bright star [in Latin : "Lucifer" J, who, at daybreak, shone? ... Who said in your heart, ... I will be like unto the Most High "(Isa. 14: 13-14).

The sin of Lucifer and the angels who rebelled against him would therefore have been a sin of pride, that is, of complacency in his own excellence, with less of the honor and respect due to God.

These elements are found in every sin, "explains Fr. Bujanda, " for whoever offends God prefers his own will rather than the divine will, and enjoys it.

### **Revelation of the Incarnation**

It is not formally revealed what exactly the proof of angels consisted of; theologians make theological hypotheses, such as St. Thomas's above.

Francisco Suarez, a seventeenth-century Jesuit theologian, raises another hypothesis: the proof of angels would have consisted of God's anticipated revelation of the Incarnation of the Word. The evil angels would have revolted against their submission to the human nature of the Incarnate Word, which, as nature, would be to the angelic nature.

A variant of this hypothesis is that it states that Lucifer and the revolted angels did not want to submit to the Mother of the Incarnate Word, for their dignity would be placed above the angels themselves, though inferior to them by nature.

This hypothesis, however, is linked to another question: whether the Word would have incarnated even without Adam's sin. Suárez, with some adaptations, follows the opinion of Duns Escoto and Santo Alberto Magno, who maintain that he does; St. Francis de Sales also participates in this opinion.

St. Thomas, however, is of another opinion. He argues: "Following the Holy Scripture, which everywhere presents as the reason of the Incarnation the sin of the first man, it should be said that the work of the Incarnation is ordained by God as a remedy against sin. In such a way that if sin had not existed, there would not have been the Incarnation, although divine potency is not limited by sin, so that God may be incarnate even if there was no sin "(Suma Theológica, 3, q. 1, a. 3.)

St. Bonaventure recognizes that Thomistic opinion is more consonant with the Faith, while the other favors reason more. (In III Sent., Dist.I, a.2, q.2.)

Although both opinions are sustainable, the common Doctors think the Thomistic hypothesis is more likely, being prevalent among the Holy Fathers.

St. Augustine states: "If man had not fallen, he would not have become flesh" (Ser. 174,2).

In her favor also speaks the Symbol of the Apostles, that is, the Creed, when it proclaims, "Who [the Word] for us men and for our salvation has come down from heaven." Also the paschal liturgy, which sings: "O happy blame, that such a Redeemer has merited us!"

Father Christiano Pesch SJ says that the Thomist position has become so common that there are few defenders of Suárez's wife today regarding the Incarnation of the Word.

It follows that Suarez's hypothesis regarding the sin of angels would also be undermined. (C. PESCH 53, De Angelis, III, p. 71; see also Mons. P. PARENTE. Incarnazioni, col 1751; I. SOLANO, From Verb incarnato, pp. 15-24.)

### **The stubbornness of demons**

We men have some psychological difficulty in understanding that demons, for one sin, were eternally condemned, while Adam and Eve could be forgiven. Hence, from the earliest times of Christianity, there has been no shortage of authors who have held the possibility of the reconciliation of fallen angels with God.

This doctrine has been condemned by the Church, and St. Thomas explains why this is not possible: first, because the proof to which angels were submitted in order to merit eternal bliss has had for them the same effect as it has for us men death; that is, it ends the period in which we can acquire merits, and introduces us into eternal life, unchanging by nature. The good angels, having been faithful, came to enjoy eternal bliss; the evil angels or demons were rushed into hell for all eternity.

Secondly, because of the angelic nature: angels, once made a choice, cannot turn back, either for good or for evil. Because they are not subject to the mobility of human passions, their intelligence is perfect, so that they cannot make provisional choices like man. Before making a choice, the angel is perfectly free; Once this is done, his will adheres to her forever, for all the reasons that led him to make this choice were already perfectly clear to him before he made it.

### **The place of condemnation of demons**

#### **The hell**

The tremendous reality of hell, as a created place for demons and precepts, is attested by the Divine Savior as He speaks of the Last Judgment: "Depart from me, cursed, into the eternal fire, which was prepared for the Devil and the his angels" (Mt 25,41).

St. Peter teaches that God did not forgive the angels who sinned and precipitated them into Tartarus to be tormented (2 Pet 2: 4).

And St. Jude writes that God "has bound in everlasting chains within the darkness" the prevaricating angels (Jude v.6).

Just as the place for good angels is heaven, so for demons is hell. But demons have two places of torment: one because of their guilt, which is hell; another, due to the temptations to which men submit: the dark atmosphere, at least until the end of the world.

### **The demons of the air**

The doctrine says that demons roam the air to tempt men is clearly stated by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "The prince who exercises power over this air ... the rulers of this dark world, the evil spirits scattered in the air." (Eph2.2; 6.12).

And it is confirmed by the Church, for example, in the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, which Pope Leo XIII composed and ordered to recite at the end of the Mass, in which he invokes the Prince of the heavenly militia, so that - by divine power - he may fall into hell. to Satan and the other evil spirits who walk the world to lose souls. ”

### **The "hierarchy" between demons**

Among demons there is a "hierarchy" which stems from the fact that, being angels, some have a more perfect nature than others. That is why it is said that Satan is the prince, the chief of demons.

Not that there is a submission between them for love or respect, as in the true hierarchy; demons hate each other and only unite circumstantially to torment men. It is the same as - Saint Thomas explains - among bad men: they form gangs and submit to a boss, only as a means of best committing their robberies or murders against honest men (Suma Teológica, I, Q. 109, A.1-2)

### **The names of demons**

The Jews had no specific word to indicate evil spirits; The general designation of the devil for fallen angels comes from the Greek version of the Old Testament. The word daimon, among the Greeks, meant beings with superhuman forces, especially evil ones. The Hebrew word sâtan means adversary, accuser; Satan, the chief of demons, is also known in Scripture as the Devil (from the Greek diabolos, which means slanderer).

In the Holy Scriptures appear the names of various demons: Azazel, demon that inhabits the desert (Lev 16: 8-10,26); Asmodeu, who killed the seven husbands of Sarah (Tb3,8); the name Beelzebub (or Beelzebul, whose meaning seems to be "god of dung," by which the rabbis would indicate the sacrifices offered to idols) is presented as a synonym for Satan or prince of demons (Matt. 12: 14; Mc3,22-26). ); Lucifer was the word chosen in the Vulgate \* to translate into Latin the expression "shining star" or "shining star" from Isaiah's prophecy (Is 14:12), which is often interpreted as a reference to the fall of the Devil; In general this appellation is used equally as a synonym for Satan.

Vulgate is called the Latin translation of the Bible made largely by St. Jerome, who began his work around the year 384. This Latin translation was refined at the initiative of the Holy See, giving rise to the so-called Vulgate Sixto-Clementine published in 1592. by Pope Clement VIII, still in use today.

## **Demon Psychology**

*"He was a murderer from the beginning and didn't really stay, he's a liar and the father of lies."*  
(Jn8,44)

Based on the Holy Scriptures and other sources, we could highlight some aspects of the psychology of Satan and his evil angels.

Although demons are different from each other, they resemble their desire to do evil and their fallen nature; so what is said about Satan your boss can be said of the other demons.

### **A perverted will**

Demons, pure spirits, as angels as they are, do not have the weaknesses and weaknesses of men; whence his revolt against God is permanent, unchanging, eternal. His will, no longer objecting to the High Good, became a perverted will fixed on evil. In this way, demons desire nothing but evil in all their voluntary acts, and even when they do some good (such as restoring one's health, obtaining wealth, or teaching them something), they only do so. then to take away the evil, to lead the person to eternal perdition, which is the only thing that they crave for men.

Having been created good by God, their nature is still good in itself; but they have become perverted beings in their will, seeking no more their ultimate end, which is God's service and glory, but just the opposite, that is, to do everything to prevent God from being glorified. Unable to reach Him directly, they seek to act upon God's creatures as far as He permits.

### **Homicidal and liar Cunning, fake, deceptive**

The Divine Redeemer summed up this diabolical psychology in a nutshell: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not remain in the truth; because the truth is not in him; When he tells a lie, he speaks of his own things, because he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8,44).

The devil is a murderer and the father of lies, the quintessential liar who hates the truth, because the truth leads us to God: "I am the way, the truth, the life" (Jn 14,5); he hates the Creator and, having separated from God, has separated himself forever from truth and life. It is through lies that he gives death, spiritual death.

St. Augustine, regarding Jesus' statement that the devil is a murderer and a liar, comments: "We ask where the devil came from the beginning, and answer that he killed the first man, not burying his dagger or inflicting it. any damage to his body but to persuade him to sin and precipitate him from the bliss of paradise. " (Apud J. MALDONADO SJ, Comments on the Four Evangelies, p. 563)

Fr. João Maldonado, 16th century Jesuit scholar exegete, remarks about the same phrase - "Because he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44): "Most of the authors understand this from those words that the devil said to Eve: 'You will be like gods, knowing good and evil.' (Gn3,5); words in which he evidently lied; that is, he united the lie with (spiritual) murder, perpetrating both crimes at the same time. ... The devil is called the father of lies because he is the author and inventor of the lie, so that it can be said that he gave birth to it." (J. MALDONADO SJ, op. Cit., P. 564-566)

When he tempts man, seeking to distance him from God, he lies presenting a false image of reality, concealing his true ends and entangling his victim in deception, sophistry and falsehood.

### **He is cunning, false, deceptive**

“Satan is distinguished by his cunning,” writes Msgr. Cristiani. What does this word mean? Cunning is a deceptive device. The being who acts cunningly has bad intentions. If he speaks, it is not to tell the truth, but to deceive, to lead to error, to untruth. Satan is false. It cannot be trusted. What is missing first of all is fairness, loyalty, candor. He is mistaken, voluntarily obscure and covert.” (Mgr L. CRISTIANI, *Presence of Satan's Gift of the Modern Monde*, p. 306.)

### **Superb dementia, deadly envy**

Behind this concealment lies his hidden desire, as expressed by Msgr. Cristiani: “To be like God! This act of pride is the very foundation of Satan's psychology! ... 'You will be like gods!' He himself, in his fall, considers himself a god. Your pride is not dead. Pride brought to self-worship is what makes the devil turn against the Creator. It is pride that, having removed him from God, made him the Adversary. In the book of Ecclesiastics this consequence of pride is made evident: 'The principle of pride is to forsake the Lord and have your heart cut off from the Creator, because the principle of pride is sin, the one who gives himself to him spreads abomination.' (Ecl10, 12-13). We then understand why Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, the Life, has defined Satan as the Father of lies, the murderer from the beginning. And to us this term of murder, far from being excessive, says nothing but an aspect of the total truth: Satan is, above all, the DEICIDE!” (Mgr L. CRISTIANI, *op. Cit.*, P. 308.)

The pride of Satan and his evil angels knows no bounds: “What a demented pride,” comments Mgr. Cristiani - in this word of Satan to Christ, showing him in spirit all the kingdoms of the earth: 'All this I will give you if you worship me on the ground! ÚltimoThe ultimate ground of satanic ambition is this: To take from God his worshipers, to make the worship of men converge upon himself!

"Let us sum up: pride, the will to make God, the cunning, the envy and the hatred of man, all leading to the lie, the murder, the deicide: behold Satan!". (Mgr L. CRISTIANI, *op. Cit.*, P. 308.) He does not care about the defeats he continually suffers, not even the final and definitive to which he is condemned; his pride is satisfied with the little triumphs he obtains in the effort to bring souls to eternal perdition.

Cardinal Lepicier comments: “Shielded by the satisfaction of certain partial victories and the hope of great triumphs, while not worrying about the shameful defeats suffered, Satan continues madly in his quest to drag souls to eternal perdition. His banner is always raised and his foolish shout of defiance and revolt is heard everywhere: 'I do not want to serve!' (Jer 2:20). (Card. A.LEPICIER. *The Invisible World* p. 240.) The Father of Vulgarity

Another aspect of the damn demon psychology is vulgarity. Hating God, he hates all that is true, beautiful, good. He hates composure, dignity, seriousness, serenity.

Abbot João Cassiano was already observing in the 5th century: “It is beyond doubt that there is among impure spirits what the vulgar calls vagabond spirits, who are first of all seductive and

buffoons. They constantly post themselves in certain places and have fun fooling rather than tormenting those they encounter. They are content to fatigue them for their derision and their delusions ...”(Apud Mgr L. CRISTIANI, op. Cit., P. 311.)

It is the famous buffoon demons, who carve butter, dry cow's milk, unleash swarms of wasps or bees, etc., all to make men lose their temper, curse, curse.

Mons. FM Catherinet, French demonologist, analyzing the action of demons according to the Gospel narratives, draws from them the following profile: “Fearful, obsequious, powerful, ill-fated, versatile and even grotesque ...” (Mgr FM CATHERINET .319.)

In a letter to Msgr. Cristiani, Father Berger-Bergès, famous exorcist, writes: “You ask me ... what is the psychology of Satan, when he is subjected to the action of exorcisms ... It is necessary to define and summarize the psychology of Satan by these words: PRIDE, WITHOUT YOUR VICTIM, TENACITY!” (Mgr L. CRISTIANI, op. cit., p.312.)

The power of demons

*“Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” (2 Cor 11, 14)*

EVERYTHING AS WE SAY ABOUT ANGEL'S POWER AND WAY OF ACTING ABOUT MATTER APPLIES ALSO TO DEMONS, WHO ARE FALLEN ANGELS BUT CONSERVING THE ANGELIC NATURE AND THE INHERENT POWERS.

### **Power of demons over matter**

We have already seen earlier how the presence of angels in a place does not occur physically (physical contact), because they are incorporeal beings, but through their performance (operative contact): angels are where they act.

By virtue of their spiritual nature, they can exercise their activity both outside and within their bodies, as St. Bonaventure observes: “Demons, because of their subtlety and spirituality, can penetrate any body and remain there without the smallest obstacle and impediment”. (In II Sent., Dist. 8, p. 2, a. A., Q. 1, cf. Mons. C. BALDUCCI, Gli Indemoniati, p.12)

In a direct and immediate way demons can produce only local or extrinsic motions in matter, transferring something from one place to another, without altering the nature or substance of that thing; indirectly, through these local movements, they can act upon the very substance of matter by modifying the position or quantity of its constituent elements.

God willing, demons, by their angelic nature, could cause all kinds of physical disorders. Cardinal Lepicier states that it can be said that there is practically no phenomenon in the world that cannot be realized in one way or another by angels; soon also by demons. (Cardinal A. LEPICIER, The Invisible World, pp. 74.75.) And often they do so, causing storms, cataclysms, fires, and other disasters as well as ghostly apparitions, infernal noises, and disturbances of every order.

### **Power of demons over man**

In relation to man, demons can only operate directly and immediately upon what is matter in him, or is and is necessary dependence upon it; they can act on the functions of vegetative life as

they are linked to matter and on sensory life because it depends on bodily organs. As far as the proper functions of intellectual life are concerned, demons can only come to them indirectly and immediately, that is, by acting upon the corporeal part and the sensory life, which the soul must use to carry out its spiritual activities. In other words, demons can act directly on man's bodily part, but only indirectly on his intelligence and will.

As St. Thomas teaches, (Summa Theological. 1-2, q. 80, a. 1-3.) Understanding, by its own inclination moves only when something enlightens it in order to the knowledge of the truth. Now demons do not want to lead understanding to the truth, but rather to darken it as a means of leading man to sin. Therefore they cannot directly move man's intelligence, and so seek to influence it indirectly through their action on imagination and sensibility.

Nor can demons directly move the human will, for this only man or God himself can do; Even if the Evil One, by divine permission, takes possession of the body of man and ennobles his mind - as in possession - he cannot compel him to sin, for the will would not participate in the evil deeds thus performed, which would be consequently only material sins.

In order to move the will of man, demons must somehow convince him, persuade him to do evil deed, even under the guise of a good.

### **The persuasive action of the devil**

“The devil does not force; he proposes, suggests, persuades, alicia ”

The devil has no power to make men do or fail to do something; therefore he seeks to persuade them to be led by their evil.

“He does not force them: he proposes, suggests, persuades, entices” writes Fr. J. de Tonquédec SJ, French exorcist and demonologist. He adds: “In Eden he gave Eve reasons for her to transgress the divine order (Gen 3: 4-5, 13); in the wilderness, our Lord asked for the attraction of universal domination (Mt 4: 26-27). ” (J. de TONQUÉDEC SJ, *Quelques aspects of Satan's Lation*, p. 495.)

St. Thomas also refers to this work of persuasion of the devil, explaining that the human will only moves internally by the action of man himself or of God; externally it may be requested by the object which, however, does not force man to choose what he does not want. (Summa Theological, 1-2, q. 80, a. 1.)

Father Candido Lumbreras OP, comments this passage by Doctor Angelico: “What influence can the devil have on the sins of men? ... The devil can offer the senses its object, speak to reason, either inwardly or outwardly; alter the moods and produce dangerous images, excite at last the passions that can move the will and make the understanding better. ”(C. LUMBRERAS OP, *Treatise on Addictions and Sins - Introduction*. p.766.)

Commenting on another passage from St. Thomas, explains Fr. Jesus Valbuena OP:

“That angels may enlighten and indeed enlighten human understanding, is a truth attested by a multitude of places in the Holy Scriptures... Also evil angels are able to produce, with their natural virtue, false enlightenments in the understanding of men. as St. Paul warns us to be alert "after Satan himself disguises himself in light" (2 Cor 11: 14).

Saint Thomas says that in the senses of man, whether internal or external, angels can influence and act from within and from without, that is, extrinsically and intrinsically; but, in relation to human understanding and will, they can only move and influence them indirectly and externally, that is, by proposing to these spiritual powers their objects, which are truth and good, and indirectly influencing them by their means. senses, passions, sensible bodily changes, etc., although they can never bend or completely bend the will of man if he is in a normal state ”(J. VALBUENA OP, Treaty of Gobierno del Mundo— Introduccion, p 898.)

In the cases of Eve and Our Lord, the devil “presented his reasons” by taking a corporeal form, producing sounds and articulating words orally; In most cases, however, the devil, to persuade man to sin, combines his action with sensitivity, memory, and imagination.

### **The wicked doctrines of the devil**

The devil has a lying doctrine, which opposes the doctrine of Christ.

In his introduction to the Treatise on Angels by St. Thomas Aquinas, Father Aureliano Martínez OP comments: “The devil has his wicked doctrines, which the Apostle calls the spirit of error and the teachings of the devil (1Ti4,1), with Who, as the god of this world, blinds the minds of men, that the light of the Gospel may not shine upon them (2 Cor 4: 4); doctrines which it propagates through false apostles and deceiving workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ; and no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light (2 Cor 11: 13-14), tempting the faithful to incontinence (1 Cor 7: 5) and to wrath (Eph 4:27). ” (MARTÍNEZ OP, Treaty of Los Angeles - Introduction, p. 511.)

It was for this reason that the Divine Savior defined the devil as one who “did not abide in the truth; because the truth is not in him; When he tells the lie, he speaks of his own things, because he is a liar and the father of lies ”(Jn 8:44).

Through this action of persuasion the devil seeks in temptation not only to induce us to commit this or that sin, but to draw us completely away from God.

### **Limits to the Demon's Action**

As powerful as it is, with a greater ability to act than any other created being, the devil, however, is not omnipotent. As a mere creature, it has its limitations, stemming from three factors: its own nature, the particular condition of each demon, and God's permissive will.

### **Limits imposed by their very nature**

With every creature, the devil is limited in his work by his own nature: however great his power, he cannot exceed the limits of his created nature.

He is a finite, contingent being. One must therefore not in any way judge that he is capable of knowing everything (omniscience), of being able to do everything (omnipotence) and being everywhere (omnipresence): these attributes are unique to God.

His intelligence, while remaining intact, is deprived of all supernatural help. Demons have lost with sin all form of supernatural knowledge; While good angels see in God the state of a soul

(whether it is in divine grace or sin), demons can only guess, the same goes for certain future events that God reveals to angels.

By their nature, neither good angels nor demons can know the free future or contingent future that is, that which depends on divine will and human free will but only God, who can reveal it to his angels. Another natural limit to the devil's action is, as we have seen, his inability to act directly on human intelligence and will; He has to use indirect means: sensitivity, imagination, passions, and above all persuasion.

### **Limits due to the particular condition of each demon**

Another limit to demonic acting comes from the diverse condition of each demon. Just as there are inequalities between men, so there are no equal between angels and demons. Therefore, not all demons have the same power.

Another limiting factor is the relative position of each demon on the scale of the fallen angels, and any orders and prohibitions that may exist between them.

### **God-imposed limits**

The devil can only act to the detriment of man with God's permission.

Cardinal Lepicier teaches: "We must always remember that, no matter how great the power of the devil, there are limits that have been wisely set for him by the Almighty. He can undoubtedly harm us, but not beyond what he is allowed, and well knows that his power cannot last long. It may be that the knowledge of the short duration of your kingdom contributes to redoubling your activity in the present times; but all their efforts obey the impenetrable designs of Providence, which only allows their influence to be exercised to a degree, so that we may stand under the protection of God and earn, by our merits, the final victory and crown of the immortal. glory awaiting us in heaven "(Cardinal A. LÉPICIER, OSM, *The Invisible World*, p.242.)

In the book of Job, in which he is first named in Scripture, Satan appears as an agent of evil, but absolutely subordinate to God.

Although envious of the righteous Job and wanting to test his virtue through unhappiness, Satan can only act with divine authorization. He needs permission, or even a delegation from the Lord. His action is strictly limited to the will of God, which permits, firstly, to attack his servant solely on his property and not on himself; later in his person, while maintaining his life (Job 1, 6-12; 2, 1-7).

St. Paul reassures us: "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond your might; but with temptation he will give you the strength to go out and endure it "(1 Cor 10:13).

Why does God allow the devil to tempt man, but often to harm him in so many ways? As is evident from so many Scripture passages and the teachings of the ecclesiastical Magisterium, this divine permission is meant to sanctify man through trials, to punish him for some grave offense, to serve as an occasion for the manifestation of divine power in a visible way. , as in the case of the exorcisms of the possessed.

## **Power of good angels over demons**

St. Thomas teaches that good angels, even though by nature they belong to a lower hierarchy than some demon (eg in relation to Satan), always have dominion over fallen angels. For angels enjoy the perfection of the friendship of God, from which the demons are deprived; and this perfection is superior to mere natural excellence, the only one remaining in demons (Suma Theológica, I, q. 109, a.4.)

This is why Cardinal Lepicier observes: “The wisdom of God becomes even more manifest when we consider that He has placed evil spirits under the rule of good angels and has given every man in this world a good angel who enlightens him, guides him, his steps and defend him against his enemies. Therefore the assaults of the enemy of souls are annihilated by the intervention of those spirits who remain faithful to God, and the devil ends up contributing to the greatest glory of the Creator.” (Cardinal A. LÉPICIER, op. Cit., P. 241.)

## **III - ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY ACTION OF THE DEMON**

God rules the world, respecting its order and its laws; that is, normality, simplicity, the usual of things; Everything that comes out of this line that looks wonderful, prodigious, miraculous is exceptional, very rare. God has created us free and expects from us a free consent to the faith without being influenced by a habitual manifestation of the preternatural and the supernatural.

However, to prove ourselves, that we may deserve eternal bliss, as well as often to our punishment, God allows the devil to torment us.

The evil inclination comes from three causes: from our nature, wounded by original sin; of the world and the devil. Yet Satan continually arouses in us the threefold lust with insistent temptations of pride and pride, of lust, of greed on every level.

This is the ordinary, ordinary, current of the devil — that is, temptation. In addition to it, the Evil One can take extraordinary action.

Extraordinary demonic action or activity can thus be qualified for two reasons: first, for its astonishing, sensational, spectacular character; second, for its relative rarity (compared to the common stock). We are referring to infestation and diabolical possession.

We will deal first with temptation; next, the two forms of infestation - local and personal; in the next chapter of possession.

### **The temptation**

*“Blessed is the man who endures (with patience) temptation, for after he has been tried, he will receive the crown of life, which God promises to those who love him.” (TgI.12)*

The most common and constant action of the devil in relation to man is temptation. Because of its common aspect and also because it is the most frequent, it can be called the ordinary action of the devil.

## **Nature of Temptation**

In its etymological sense, to tempt someone means to test him to know his dispositions or qualities.

### **Probative temptation and deceptive or seductive temptation**

St. Augustine made a classic distinction between the tentative temptation (*tentatio probationis*) and the deceptive or seductive temptation (*tentatio deceptionis vel seducionis*).

The probative temptation is not intended to lead to sin, but to make one's virtue patent or to strengthen it through trial. In this sense one can speak of the temptation of God, such as the trials that the Creator, using the devil, sent Job to prove his faithfulness (cf. Job 14: iff).

One can also speak of tempting God when trying to test God by requiring a miracle or extraordinary action from Him in order to satisfy our curiosity, our whims, or to rid ourselves of the consequences of our thoughtlessness or recklessness. "To tempt God," writes D. Duarte Leopoldo e Silva, "is to expose oneself to danger, to great temptations without need, and then to ask a miracle not to succumb. God protects in danger, but we must not recklessly expose ourselves, because, says the Holy Spirit, whoever loves the danger in him will perish." (Con. Duarte LEOPOLDO AND SILVA, Concordance of the Holy Sanctuses, Salesian Typographic School, São Paulo, I edition, 1903.)

The deceptive or seductive temptation seeks to lead man to spiritual ruin; she proposes an evil to him under the guise of a good, trying to drag him into the desire for that evil, that is, into sin. It can then be defined as an incitement to sin. It consists of a stimulus, a solicitation of the will for evil.

When it proceeds from ourselves (internal temptation), it may best be indicated as inclination, rapture, stimulation; if it comes from others including the devil, we may refer to it as invitation, solicitation, incitement.

### **Natural Causes of Temptation: The World and the Flesh**

Not all temptations that man suffers come from the devil; also the world and the flesh have in them a large part: "Not all sins are committed at the instigation of the devil, but some are committed by the free will and corruption of the flesh" - St. Thomas teaches. (*Sum Theological*, I, q.114, a.3.)

The very root of temptation lies in human nature itself, free but too fragile, especially after it has fallen from its integrity as a result of original sin. "Each one is tempted by his own lust, which attracts and entices him," writes the Apostle St. James (James 1:14), who repeats the same idea just ahead: "Where do wars and strife come from among you? Do they not come from your lusts fighting in your limbs?" (Jas 4,1).

St. Paul describes this terrible reality in dramatic terms: "I feel a law prevail in me: wanting to do good, behold, evil presents itself to me. According to the inner man, I find satisfaction in the law of God; but in my members I experience another law which opposes the law of my spirit and binds me to the law of sin which reigns in my members" (Rom 7,21-24) \*

\* “Saint Paul describes the struggle within man between the flesh and the spirit. Man recognizes justice and the goodness of the law, but lust strongly excites him to disobey him ”(Fr. MATOS SOARES). The flesh here means human nature fallen as a result of original sin, which made it unruly. Of itself, the flesh, that is, human nature is good, for it is created by God.

### **This is the law of the flesh.**

The world also seeks to drag us into sin, for “it is under the yoke of the evil one” (1 John 5:19), and “the friendship of this world is the enemy of God” (Jas 4: 4). If we break with the world, he will persecute us, the Savior warns, for we are not of the world (Jn 15,19). Therefore, Jesus expressly said that he did not pray for the world (Jn 17,9).

One man can be tempting another man according to the spirit of the world. This is what St. Peter did, trying to divert the Lord from the way of the Cross: “From that moment Jesus began to reveal to his disciples that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, to suffer greatly from the elders, the high priests, and the scribes. , and was condemned to death, and rose on the third day. Peter took him aside and began to admonish him, saying, “God forbid, Lord!” This cannot happen to you! But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Depart from me, Satan! For you are an obstacle to me (that is, temptation); your thoughts are not of God, but of men!’ “(Mt 16,21-23).

We are therefore tempted by our own fragility, by our temperament, our character, our background, our environment, family, friends, situations and occasions; in one word: for the flesh and for the world.

### **The demonic temptation**

But, as the Apostle teaches, “We must not only fight against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this dark world, against the evil spirits scattered in the air...” (Eph 6) , 10-11).

There is no doubt that so many temptations are the direct work of the devil, whose own office, says St. Thomas, is to try. (Theological Sum, 1, q. 114, a. 2)

Most demonic activity is embodied in temptation. That is why the devil in the Gospel is called tempting (cf. Mt 4,3).

The other causes of temptation — the world and the flesh — may act dependently on each other; However, in temptations it is common for the attraction of the world to unite with the revolt of sensuality, and to both add the enticing action of the devil.

In such a way that, although theologians accept on the theoretical level the possibility that temptation may have only a natural cause in the world or flesh without necessarily entering into the action of the devil, on the practical level, in general, they admit that the Evil One, always lurks, takes advantage of all circumstances to ride the temptation and increase its intensity or malice.

Hence the warning of St. Paul: “If you feel angry, be without sin: let not the sun set your anger, that you may not give the devil an opportunity” (Eph 4: 26-27).

## **The man in the face of temptation**

### **Temptation is not a sin.**

Temptation itself is obviously not a sin. For the savior himself allowed himself to be tempted by the devil (Matt 4: 1-11; Mk 1: 12-13; Luke 4: 1-13).

As we said, the devil cannot act directly on human intelligence or will, and so seeks to influence them by indirect means in their scope to make us sin. Even though he can resist the tempter, man is often seduced.

To tempt us, the devil can excite the imagination in such a way as to form in it lucid or disturbing images and representations; interfere in body movements that favor bad acts or bad thoughts, intensify passions, seek to entangle us in sophistry, mistakes, etc.

However, man is not guilty of the temptations he suffers, except when they are the result of recklessness, allowed or sought voluntarily, for example, with improper glances, attendance at dangerous places, bad company, etc. Otherwise, he will be guilty only where he gives full and deliberate consent to the requests of temptations. \*

\* “Three things we must distinguish in temptation: suggestion, delight, and consent. Suggestion is not a sin, because it does not depend on our will. Simple delight, when involuntary, is not a sin either. Only consent is always criminal, because it is up to us whether or not to accept the suggestion of sin” (Con. Duarte LEOPOLDO E SILVA, op.cit., P. 34, n. 5).

As intense as a temptation may be, if the man fought against her all the time, he did not commit the slightest fault; On the contrary, he acquired merits for his sanctification, as St. James the Apostle writes: “Blessed is the man who suffers (with patience) the temptation, because after he has been tried he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.” (Tg 1.12).

### **Need for vigilance and prayer**

We must always be alert to face provocations, as our Lord recommended to us in the hour of His Passion: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit is indeed ready, but the flesh is weak” (Mt 26:41). St Peter advises him: “Be sober and watchful, for the devil, your adversary, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom to devour” (1 Pet 5: 8).

Watching, however, is not enough. We must resist the devil: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4: 7), assures us of St. James. “Resist [the devil] strong in faith,” says Saint Peter (1 Pet 5: 9).

And St. Paul exhorts: “Put on the armor of God, that you may be able to withstand the pitfalls of the devil... take on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on a bad day, and stand after you have overcome everything. Stand therefore, having your girdles girded with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness ... take the shield of faith, wherewith ye may blot out all the fiery darts of the evil one, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit. (which is the word of God)” (Eph 6: 11-17).

## **God does not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength**

We must, however, always bear in mind this consoling truth: It is certain that God does not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength. This is St. Paul's teaching: "No temptation has come upon you to overcome human forces. God is faithful: He will not allow you to be tempted above your strength: but with temptation He will also give you the means to go out of it and the strength to endure it "(1Ch 10,13).

### **The infestation**

"We must not only fight against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness, against the evil spirits scattered in the air." (Eph 6: 10-11)

TERMINOLOGY regarding the devil's extraordinary action upon men, things, and places is not uniform: some authors speak of obsession to designate this devil's action, whether it be his mere local presence or his action upon the devil. man, but without possessing it, either of possession. Others create special terms like circumsession to designate demonic action external to man.

We adopt here the terminology used by Mons. Corrado Balducci, for it seems simpler and more direct: local infestation, personal infestation and diabolical possession. (See Mons. C. BALDIJCCI, *Gli indemoniati*, p. 3; *El diablo*, pp. 156-158.)

We will deal first with the two forms of infestation - local and personal; in the next chapter of possession.

### **Local infestation**

Local infestation is a disturbing activity which the devil exerts directly upon inanimate nature (mineral kingdom, atmospheric elements, etc.) and lower animate nature (plant kingdom and animal kingdom), and also upon places, thereby indirectly reaching man. , always in a bad way.

In fact, all creatures, even irrational ones, through the curse of sin, came under the power of the devil (cf. Rom 8: 21ff). Thus, places and things, just like people, are subject to demonic infestation. We must not forget the work of the demons of the air, about which the Apostle warns us: "We must not only fight against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this dark world, against evil spirits scattered in the air ... "(Eph 6,10-11).

Infested houses and places fall into this category: objects that fly or move around, strange or disturbing sounds (footsteps, stones in the windowpanes or on the roof, howls, shouts, laughter); impression of invisible presences, sense of non-existent dangers, etc. ; visible, strange and sudden disturbances that occur in the plant and animal worlds (suddenly drying trees or crops, unknown animal diseases, pests, etc.).

Certain phenomena or calamities of appearance and natural structures (storms, earthquakes and other cataclysms, fires, disasters, etc.) may equally have the devil as author, if not direct (as in possession), at least partial and ruling. For example, the lightning that fell from heaven and consumed Job's shepherds and sheep, just as the desert wind that smashed the house of the Patriarch's children, crushing them under the ruins, was raised by Satan (Job 2). , 16-19). In that case these extraordinary demonic manifestations may be included.

Often, such manifestations occur concurrently with cases of personal infestation or diabolic possession.

### **Personal infestation**

Personal infestation is a disturbance that the devil exerts, no longer upon the material world and the irrational creatures, but upon a person directly without, however, impeding his use of intelligence and free will. Although exceptional, it is perhaps the most frequent of the three types of extraordinary evil activity — that is, local infestation, personal infestation, possession.

Like the local infestation, the staff also includes degrees of intensity, and diverse modality.

Personal infestation can be external or physical and internal or psychological, as exerted on the external or internal senses and the passions of man.

Often the infestation is both external and internal.

In external or physical infestation, the devil acts upon our external senses: the sight, causing seductive or otherwise terrifying apparitions; hearing by hearing rumors, obscene words or songs, blasphemies, invitations, pleasures or threats; touch, with provocative sensations, hugs, carnal movements; then pain, illness, etc.

But the devil can also act on the inner senses (fantasy and memory) and the passions.

Internal or psychological infestation consists of violent and tenacious suggestions: fixed ideas, expressive and absorbing images, deep movements of emotionality and passion - for example, disgust, bitterness, resentment, hatred, anguish, despair; or, on the contrary, inclination towards some illicit object, or inclination, solicitous but unruly in its mode and intensity.

Father Tanqueray comments: “The person feels, albeit with disgust, invaded by annoying, tedious fantasies that persist despite vigorous efforts to push them away; or by shivers of anger, anguish, despair, instinctive impulses of antipathy; or on the contrary, for dangerous tendencies for no reason to justify them.” (Adolphe TANQUERAY, *Need of Theotogie Ascetice and Mystique*. P. 958.)

The fits of melancholy and the rages of fury that afflicted Saul by the work of a demon and by divine permission (cf. 1 Kings 16: 14-23) are characteristic of internal personal infestation, psychological infestation.

Unlike the possessed, the infested keeps the disposition of his outward acts, although in many cases his freedom is diminished. It retains the power to react against suggestions from within (for example, suggestions from blasphemies), to judge the moral value of those suggestions, finding them abhorrent.

Perhaps one of the most frequent forms of personal infestation is the often unknown and incurable diseases that eventually lead to death, God willing. This is what we read in the book of Job: “The Lord said to Satan, Behold, he (Job) is in your hand; but keep your life” (Job 2,6).

The scriptures present several cases of such diseases of diabolical origin. A classic example is leprosy that covers Job with righteous wounds, from the sole of the foot to the top of the head (Job2,7-8).

Equally victims of diabolical infestation were the hunched woman who had been tormented by the devil for eighteen years, so that it could not be straightened, and that she was healed by Our Lord (Lc13,11); the epileptic boy (Mt 17.14; Mc9.17; Lc9.38); the mute (Mt9,32); and the dumb blind (Mt 12,22).

Mons. Balducci refers to diseases of demonic origin, due to the effect of harm, noting that in these cases the disorders are often physical, being difficult to diagnose by doctors; other times they are inconveniences that attack the psychic life, the very personality of the individual, making him difficult, angry and even incapable of acting in the context of his family and social life (Cf. Mons. C.BALDUCCI, El diablo, p. 184.)

It should be noted that many of the manifestations described above, although characteristic of local or personal infestations, are not unique to them and are not always of demonic origin; various psychic anomalies (delusions, hallucinations, delusions) may be manifested by the same phenomena; Careful examination of the individual and the accompanying circumstances may reveal the pathological or demonic natural origin of the disorders.

### **Favorite victims of the infestation**

Although anyone can fall prey to this kind of devilish torment, Mons. Balducci points out three categories of people who would be most subject to him: the saints, the exorcists and demonologists, and the evildoers (victims of evil).

The saints, because of the devil's hatred of those who especially love God and seek perfection; this, on the side of the devil's intention; on the side of divine permission, this is given as a special trial to very elected souls. Several saints have experienced it.

Among the ancients, just remember St. Anthony; likewise Santa Catarina of Siena (1347-1380); St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552); Saint Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582); Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi (1566-1607); St. John the Baptist Vianney, the Cura d'Ars (1786-1859) St. John Bosco (1815-1888); Saint Gemma Galgani (1878-1903). \*

The exorcists and demonologists: the reason is so obvious that it is hardly necessary to give it; the former, through their ministry, diminish the demon's presence in the world and release their victims; the latter, with their studies, enlighten the faithful about demonic existence and activity.

The evildoers (victims of evil), by God's permission, for their punishment, or trial, or to manifest divine power. (See Mons. C. BALDUCCI, El diablo, p. 179.)

### **The possession**

*"And in the evening there were many possessed of the devil." (Mt8,16)*

Possession is the most spectacular of the diabolical manifestations and the one that most impresses the imagination; to such an extent that it leaves the constant work of the devil in the darkness, which, through temptation, seeks to seduce men to sin.

## Reality of Devilish Possession

Concerning diabolical possession, there are two wrong positions to be avoided: the first is to easily believe that a person is possessed, without further examination, by the impression caused by symptoms that may well correspond to other states, not being of themselves sufficient to characterize possession; the second position is to deny that cases of possession occur today; He even denies that they have ever given up. This extreme position clashes with a truth clearly taught by Holy Scripture, Tradition, and Church practice.

The rationalists claim that the cases of diabolical possession reported in Scripture are but pathological cases - mania, madness, hysteria, and epilepsy.

It is said that Jesus did not intend these unfortunate sick, called the demoniac, to be truly possessed, but treated them according to the convictions of their contemporaries, who believed in demonic action.

Nothing more false, and the Evangelists distinguish well between sickness and possession.

Thus St. Mark writes: "And in the evening, when the sun was already set, they brought to him (Jesus) all that were sick and the demon possessed. And healed many who were oppressed with various diseases. and cast out many demons" (Mk 1,32-34).

And in St. Matthew it is written: "And in the evening they brought unto him many possessed of the devil, and he with his word expelled evil spirits, and healed all the sick" (Mt 8,16).

In the same way St. Luke: "And when it was sun set, all who were sick with various diseases brought them. And he laying his hands on each one healed them. And from many came out devils shouting" (Lk 4,40-41).

It is evident from these passages that the Evangelists refer to healing the sick and casting out demons as two different cases.

Moreover, the Savior Himself claims that He cast out demons from the possessed. For example, to the unbelieving Jews, Jesus said, "If I, but cast out demons by virtue of the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God is come upon you" (Mt 12,28). "If I, by the finger of God, cast out devils, the kingdom of God has come to you" (Lk 11,20).

And He Himself distinguishes well the cases of disease from those of possession, saying, "Behold, I cast out devils, and work healings" (Lk 13: 32).

The liturgy and practice of the Church, with the institution of exorcisms, as well as the teaching of theologians, indicate that she believes in diabolical possession. At the same time, by establishing that the exorcisms of the possessed should not be done until after mature examination and upon special authorization, the Church indicates that one should not lightly believe in possession cases.

In short, that some cases have occurred, at least of true diabolical possession, as reported in the Gospels, is true of faith; which others later gave, is a common doctrine of theologians, which cannot be denied without recklessness.

## **Nature of Possession**

Possession is a domain that the devil exercises directly over a person's body and indirectly over one's soul. It becomes a blind, docile instrument, fatally obedient to the evil and despotic power of the devil.

The individual in such a state is called justly possessed, demonized, as an instrument, a victim of demonic, or energetic, power because it shows an unusual stirring.

## **Features**

Possession is characterized by two elements: a) the presence of the devil in the body of man; b) exercise of a power by the devil over it.

As for the demonic presence, it does not mean a physical presence, as angel (fallen), the demon is pure spirit; its presence is through operative contact, that is, the devil is where he acts in this way, the devil can develop his activity everywhere, both outside and within human bodies. Thus, an individual may be possessed by several demons (who simultaneously operate on him, although in different ways), as a single demon may possess several persons (acting successively on each of them).

The way in which possession operates is explained by St. Thomas Aquinas: "Good and evil angels have the power, by virtue of their nature, to change our bodies like any other material object. And how they are present

in one place as they operate in it, so they penetrate our bodies. Similarly, they impress the faculties connected with our organs: the modifications of the organs respond to the modifications of the faculties. But the impression does not reach to the will, because the will, neither its exercise, nor in its object, depends on a corporal organ; it receives its object of intelligence as it unravels, from what it perceives, the notion of the goodness of being. (In 2dum Sent., Dist. VIII, q. A. 5, sol. Apud L. ROURE, Possession Diabolique, col.)

Elsewhere the Holy Doctor explains that the devil cannot directly penetrate the soul of man, for this only the Holy Trinity can do. (Sum Theological, 3, q. 8, a.8)

This means that in possession, although the devil dominates the body, especially the nervous system, and can prevent the use of the powers of the soul, he cannot penetrate it and compel its victim to commit a sin, or to accept diabolical doctrines.

Possession is not morally responsible for their actions, no matter how bad, since they are not fully aware of them, nor is there collaboration of the will.

## **Effects of demon action on possession**

The operative presence of the demon in the demoniac is not continuous, but is manifested by periods of crisis.

The devil does not lack the power or will to continually torment his victim, such as hatred of man; God does not allow it, because the person would not resist.

The influence of the devil on the possessed is not simply indirect or moral, as, for example, in even the strongest temptations; it is a direct and physical action exercised by the dark spirits upon the bodily organs of the unfortunate subjected to his empire. From which results for the latter a sick, strange state, which comes out of the ordinary laws of morbid affections, though often accompanied by purely natural phenomena, which the devil determines in him, simultaneously with those which go beyond the sphere proper to physical agents. These phenomena are usually a general and profound overexcitation of the entire nervous system.

At other times, on the contrary, the demon communicates to its victim an extraordinary increase in muscular strength. The unfortunate rages to the point of foaming, gnashing his teeth, letting out amazing shouts, rushing into water or fire. He then becomes dangerous to those who approach him; He destroys, like a mere piece of straw, the iron chains with which they want to bind him; and if he cannot reach the others, he comes back to himself with his wrath, scratching himself with his nails, bruising himself with the stones of the path.

This disturbing and harmful action of the devil upon the bodily organs expands upon the mixed faculties, such as imagination, memory, sensitivity.

It extends even farther and higher in humans because it has its repercussions even in intelligence. Intellectual operations sometimes have such an incoherent character that the demonic seems to be stricken with mental alienation. It is not uncommon to see a phenomenon similar to that which occurs in your organs in the realm of the spirit. Just as the devil, instead of paralyzing the demonic's body energies, increases his power, so instead of diminishing his natural lights, he communicates to his intelligence knowledge that far exceeds his power.

### **Possession and infestation: phenomena of the same species**

Personal infestation (or obsession) and possession are phenomena of the same kind, varying only in degree, and are classified by theologians as extraordinary and direct actions of the devil, while temptation is indicated as ordinary and indirect.

Cardinal Lepicier observes that the difference between personal infestation and possession is not a difference in species, but only in degree, as these forms differ more or less as the degree of the demon's power over the body increases or decreases. of the individual whom he resolved to torment. The phenomena of personal infestation are sometimes no less severe than those of possession. In fact, the Roman Ritual makes no difference between them, and the Latin and Italian languages have only one classic word to designate both forms, that is, diabolical obsession (cf. Card. A. LEPICIER, *The Invisible World*, p. 277.)

It is true, "explains Father Roure," that possession does not penetrate to the depths of the soul; consequently it cannot dictate, impose on the possessed a personal act of intelligence or will; but diabolical action even neutralizes, impedes the exercise of intelligence and will, so that the possessed becomes incapable of knowing, judging and wanting everything that is happening and agitated in him. In infestation such does not occur; the victim retains the mastery of his superior faculties (intelligence and will), and may even use them to deal with the assaults of the Evil One. Thus it turns out that diabolical effervescence can leave the depths of the soul alone. (See L. ROURE, *Possession Diabolique*, et al. 2645-2646.)

## Causes of Possession

### **Punishment, ordeal ...**

God's permission for the devil to possess possession of the bodily organs and spiritual faculties of a human creature in possession is sometimes punishment for certain grave sins committed by the possessed, in particular the sins of the flesh. However it is not always so. A demoniac is not necessarily guilty. Sometimes God allows this state to enhance his glory by the overt intervention of his absolute power (cf. Jn 9: 1-8), or to prove the possessed.

Saint Bonaventure explains that God allows possession "either in order to manifest his glory, forcing the demon by the mouth possessed to confess, for example, the divinity of Christ, either for the punishment of sin or for our instruction. But by which of these causes precisely does he let the devil possess a man, is what escapes human sagacity: God's judgments are hidden from men. What is certain is that they are always righteous" (In 2dum Sent. Dist. VIII. Part II. Q 1 art apud L. ROURE, *Possession Diabolique.*, Col. 2644.)

The spectacular character of possession ultimately has a beneficial apologetic and ascetic effect, for it makes the existence of the Spirit of darkness evident and almost visible.

This is one of the reasons God permits diabolical possession, for He obliges the Evil One to act as if uncovered, giving public evidence of his wickedness, his hatred of man and creation.

### **Superstitious Practices, Spiritualism, Macumba**

We must not forget, among the causes of infestations and possession, superstitious practices, the use of wizards, saint-fathers, fortune tellers, fortune tellers, etc.

"The devil, when a man collaborates with him in superstitious practices, easily exerts upon him the most cruel and ruthless tyranny," Cardinal Lepicier notes. He draws attention to the spiritist practices: "There can be no doubt that acting as a medium is the same as exposing oneself to the dangers of diabolical obsession. To resort to a medium is thus equivalent to cooperating in one's obsession." (Card. A. LEPICIER, *The Invisible World*, pp. 222-223.)

One of the very common causes of the devil's extraordinary action upon people is the evil we will talk about later.

Father Gabriele Amorth, an exorcist of the Diocese of Rome, says that the most difficult cases of infestation and diabolical possession he has encountered are those resulting from macumbas performed in Brazil and Africa. (See G. AMORTH, *An Esocista racconta*, pp. 116 and 157.)

There are also cases of voluntary possession, where the person who has resorted to the devil and made a covenant with him can act as an instrument of the Evil One to carry out his designs. The typical figure of Satan's medium was Hitler, according to the Austrian Benedictine theologian and demonologist Mons. Alois Mager. ("There is no other, shorter, more precise definition more suited to Hitler's nature that is so absolutely expressive: *Medium de Satan*" (D. Aloes MAGER OSB, *Satan de nos jours*, p. 639).) Mention could also be made of the sinister figures of Lenin, Stalin, and so many others ...

## **Possession Frequency**

After the establishment of the Church, the number of the demonized greatly decreased in the nations made Christian. For by baptism and other sacraments, the faithful are preserved from these sensible attacks of the devil.

He has lost his empire, even over those who, though baptized, live in a way that is not in keeping with the faith of their baptism. Members of the Church, though dead members, they find in this yet imperfect union with the Mystical Body of Christ, a help generally sufficient so that the devil cannot grasp them, as he would if they were pagans.

“However,” notes Ortolan, “not only in regions that have not received the Gospel, but also in regions where the Church is established, they are still demonic. Their number increases in proportion to the degree of apostasy of nations that were once Catholic, gradually abandoning the Faith, and returning to theoretical and practical paganism ”(T. ORTOLAN, *Demoniaque*, col.410.)

In order to correctly assess the presence and activity of the devil in the present world, we must consider that the state of apostasy referred to by Father Ortolan over forty years ago - has reached an unimaginable degree in our day. And that, even more than the possession cases, the number of the infested is countless.

## **Devilish Possession: The Diagnosis**

“To establish the reality of a possession, one method is valid: to prove the presence of the signs indicated in the Roman Ritual.” (Bishop Louis de Cooman, Missionary Bishop and Exorcist)

Pathological states and diabolical possession

Complex problem

One of the most complex problems posed by extraordinary diabolical action upon man is his diagnosis. The question is whether we are really in the presence of a preternatural action (that is, caused by angels or demons) or mere manifestations of morbidity, or of some other kind, which are certainly unusual, but which do not escape the natural phenomena of the world. medicine and other sciences.

It is not always easy to distinguish between demonic infestations and possessions and certain phenomena of a morbid nature, as it is well known that numerous pathological disorders, especially neuropsychiatric, cause states of extreme agitation, tenfold physical forces, cause phobias about things. sacred, etc. In short, they make the poor sick man seem possessed.

This is what Cardinal Alexis Henri Marie Lépiciér, O.S.M notes: We know that in some people the imagination, being out of the ordinary, can go beyond its natural limits and be the source of strange manifestations that, at first glance, present a certain affinity for preternatural occurrences [ie, produced by angels or demons]. We all know how many disorders a nervous disorder can cause in certain creatures, such as those suffering from hysteria. There are, in fact, in the actions of these individuals many things that cause admiration. ... But it is mainly during periods of

paroxysm that hysteria is most apt to exhibit many curious phenomena, the chief of which is hallucination.

“Everyone therefore sees the imperative need to distinguish between these phenomena and those due to preternatural causes” (Card. A. LEPICIER, *The Invisible World*, p. 201.)

Other times, they are phenomena of nature, insufficiently explained by scientists, or simply out of reach of people without specialized training: luminosities, movements of air masses, thermal variations, etc., which may seem like wonderful phenomena caused by diabolical action.

### **Objectivity and scientific rigor**

Mons. FX Maquart - renowned scholar of matter - compares exorcist diagnosis to medical diagnosis.

The exorcist must proceed with the same objectivity, the same rigor as the doctor's examination, so as not to leave out of the examination any of the manifestations presented by the patient's behavior, thus avoiding being misled by the impression, which can be misleading. This critical examination is intended to eliminate any possible natural explanation observable in the presumed diabolical manifestation.

Mons. Maquart explains that a number of symptoms of possession are common with those of some diseases such as psychastenia, hysteria, some forms of epilepsy, etc. How can one then discern between a simple mentally ill and a demon-possessed?

The other signs of possession, which have no natural explanation, come into play: speaking unfamiliar foreign languages, knowing facts at a distance, revealing science or physical strength very disproportionate to age, and so on. (See FX MAQUART. *L or There is a devant les manifestations diaboliques*, pp. 338-339.)

This position demands both objectivity and common sense, along with much faith. For, of course, one cannot, on the pretext that the extranatural is an exception, deny in principle all demonic action, or proceed in such a way as to always find a natural explanation at all costs.

### **Dangers of a misdiagnosis**

A misdiagnosis is not without its moral and spiritual as well as physical dangers.

Firstly, the practice of exorcisms in simple mentally ill people, obviously not experiencing any improvement, can lead to discredit in relation to the same exorcism and sacred things in general. It may even offer arguments to skeptics, who will take advantage of to make the practice of exorcisms purely superstitious.

Moreover, the practice of solemn exorcisms represents to the exorcist a very great exhaustion, which would be fruitless in case of misdiagnosis.

Finally, exorcising the mentally ill poses the danger of aggravating their ills, either because of the great mental and even physical strain and exorcism it entails, or because of its impressive character.

This is what Mons. Maquart, an experienced French demonologist: “It would not be without serious inconvenience to exorcise, under mere appearances of possession, the mentally ill. Instead

of curing them, exorcism would risk aggravating their illness.” (Mgr FX MAQUART, *L'Exorciste owe les diaboliques manifestations*, p. 328.)

Bishop Gustavo Waffelaert (Bishop of Bruges) assures us: “There is a real inconvenience in exorcising a person who is not possessed. For her, first of all; for exorcism, by its strong impression, can adversely affect an already disturbed nervous system and just ruin it; It is also a powerful means of suggestion and risks developing morbid habits in a weak individual. Moreover, one has no right to use, without serious reason, the sacred prayers of the Ritual: they must have an object. Thus the Church, in order to allow exorcism, requires prudence and a morally certain or at least probable judgment of possession.” (Mgr G. 3. WAFFELAERT, *Possession Diabolique*. Col. 55.)

In many places - as in the dioceses of Rome and Venice - exorcists always work closely with Catholic psychiatrists, who help them distinguish mere sick from eventual possessions; For their part, these professionals often resort to the services of exorcists when they see in their clients signs that go beyond the limits of medicine.

In fact, certain manifestations, at first sight pathological, may hide the action of the Evil One. For this reason the Catholic physician must not exclude without further the possibility of this action, as Mons. Catherinet: “A doctor who wants to remain a complete man, especially if he has the lights of faith, will not a priori exclude the presence of the devil, and may in certain cases suspect the presence and the action of some occult force (whose study he will ask the philosopher or the theologian, who are guided by their own methods). (Mgr FM CATHERINET. *Les Demoniques gifts l'Évangile*, pp. 324-32.)

### **Safe Criteria**

The Church has never denied this difficulty in diagnosing possession; on the contrary, it has always been very cautious to comment on concrete cases, recommending that in the evaluation of each case one should examine very carefully whether the phenomenon may have a natural origin. Only after diligent and accurate examination, and discarding all possibilities of natural explanation, does the Church authorize the solemn exorcisms of the possessed. To ensure such rigor of procedure, the Church has established that such exorcisms can only be practiced by priests duly authorized by the local Ordinary for each particular case; A bishop cannot give this authorization except to a priest of known science, prudence, godliness, and integrity of life. (See Code of Canon Law, canon 1172 §§ 1 and 2.)

Bishop Louis de Cooman, former Apostolic Vicar in Vietnam (himself an exorcist in a famous case of collective possession, which will be described later), gives the only criterion he considers safe to determine whether or not possession: “To establish the reality of a possession, only one method is valid: to prove the presence of the classical signs indicated by the Church in the Roman Ritual” (Mgr Louis de COOMAN, *Le Diable au Couvent*, p. 12.)

The Roman Ritual (dating from the 16th century) established, to guide exorcists, the following indications by the alleged possession:

1. Speak or understand foreign languages without having learned them before;

2. Reveal secret or distant things;
3. manifest physical strength above their age and condition;
4. And other manifestations of the same kind, the more numerous they are, the more they indicate. *Rituale Romanum*, Tit. XI, Chapter 1, no. 3.)

If certain manifestations (such as demonstrating extraordinary strength, animalistic howling, shouting blasphemies or profanity) can be caused by an illness, the revelation of hidden thoughts or the knowledge of things that pass away can no longer have the effect. same explanation.

Today many people (unfortunately even priests) intend to deny, if not doctrinally, at least in practice, every possibility of diabolical possession or infestation, by presenting pseudo-scientific explanations in the name of parapsychology.

In this regard, Mons. Louis Cristiani: Wanting to give a natural explanation to demonic manifestations by parapsychology is to explain the dark by the darkest yet...

#### **IV - THE FIGHT AGAINST THE POWER OF DARKNESS**

After studying the ordinary demonic activity (temptation) and the extraordinary activity (personal and local infestation, possession), having seen the criteria for the diagnosis of these manifestations, it seems indispensable to us to give the means we have to cope here. to diabolical thrusts.

Man is not unarmed before the power of darkness. He has supernatural as well as natural weapons to deal with diabolical attacks.

Firstly, we must see what preventive means we have; that is, how can we avoid the onslaught of the devil as much as is in us? The following are the therapeutic means available to us to heal ourselves if we are hit by such attacks.

These means may be called remedies because demonic action causes in us disturbances that are no less troublesome than the ailments of the body. And just as diseases of the body can lead to physical death, the act of the devil seeks to produce the death of the soul.

##### **General, preventive and liberative remedies**

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (Mt6.13)

In the struggle against ordinary (temptation) and extraordinary (local infestation, personal infestation, session and possession) demonic activity, the authors first recommend the general remedies offered by the Church.

Religious and devotional practices

##### **Prayer and penance; sacraments and sacraments**

First of all comes the great remedy indicated by the Savior Himself as the only one capable of overcoming a certain caste of demons - prayer and fasting, accompanied by that faith that moves the mountains (cf. Mt 17: 14-20).

The prayer par excellence is that Christ Himself taught when His disciples asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray" - the Lord's Prayer (Lk 11: 1-4; Mt 6: 9-13).

In the last two petitions, we pray the heavenly Father to give us the strength to resist the harassment of the flesh, the world, and the devil: "Lead us not into temptation"; and deliver us from evil, from the ultimate evil - sin; and from his instigator - the devil: deliver us from evil "or" deliver us from the evil one. "\* The liturgy in various ceremonies recites the Lord's Prayer, all or only these two petitions. It is recited entirely in solemn exorcisms about the possessed.

\* Experts explain that in the Greek text of the Gospels we can understand this petition both in the sense of being free from evil and from the author of evil, the Evil, the devil. "In fact, the two interpretations are not excluded - comments Fr Jean Carmignac - since the end of the devil is sin and sin has the devil as an instigator. However, according to Christ's directives, we must ask for a departure not only from sin, but above all from the devil "(Abbé Jean CARMIGNAC, *L'Ecoute du Notre Père*, Éditions de Paris, 1971, p. 87; in the same sense, J. by TONQUÉDEC SJ, *Quelques aspects of l'action of Satan en ce monde*, 496, note 5).

Then comes the Hail Mary - praise of the Mother of Jesus, who, by her immaculate Conception, forever crushes the head of the ancient serpent. It is also recited in the exorcisms about the possessed.

Finally, the Creed - I believe in God the Father - solemn profession of Catholic faith, which instills special terror in the devil; It is also recited in the exorcisms about the possessed.

Along with prayer and penance, it is indispensable to attend the sacraments, especially Confession and Communion; as well as the use of sacramentals (such as holy water and Agnus Dei) and holy objects (candles, scapulars, images, crosses, medals - particularly the Miraculous Medal and the exorcistic cross medal of St. Benedict).

We must also remember the power of the Sign of the Cross to chase away the devil: the symbol of our Redemption, which destroyed his kingdom, causes him particular terror; the devil runs away ... like the devil of the cross ... - according to popular saying.

In addition to the four crosses made at the Sign of the Cross, the very words spoken are of a deprecatory exorcistic nature: "By the sign (+) of the Holy Cross, deliver us (+) Our Lord, from our (+) enemies. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen."

That is why we must make the Sign of the Cross on several occasions: getting up and lying down before meals, leaving home, traveling, before making a resolution, etc.

Holy water is made expressly to keep away from the places upon which "all the power of the enemy and the enemy himself with his apostate angels" is sprinkled, as read in the Roman Ritual. (*Rituale Romanum*, tit. VIII, c.2.). In the same Ritual are numerous blessings, prayers, and ceremonies to the same end, applied to different objects and places, which contain the same deprecatory formula against Satan.

## **The Confession: Stronger Than Exorcism**

We must insist on frequent confession - despite today's difficulties in this sacramental practice - by the commitment of theologians and exorcists to its effectiveness.

The exorcist of the archdiocese of Venice, Fr. Pellegrino Emetti of the Order of St. Benedict, emphasizes: "The sacrament of Confession, we know, is the second lifeline after Baptism. Experience teaches that Satan can scarcely penetrate a soul that is often washed with the most precious Blood of Jesus. This blood becomes the true armor against which Satan can force, but cannot open any breach. The assiduous and constant frequency of this sacrament is necessary, whether for the exorcist or for those who need it. I am sure from long experience that the priest should wash his soul in the blood of Jesus even daily if he wants to fight with Jesus against Satan and come out victorious. This is truly the sacrament of which Satan is afraid ... Christ overcame Satan with His own Blood. And Revelation explicitly tells us, "These are the ones who overcame Satan with the Blood of the Lamb." (DP ERNETTI OSB, *La Catechesi di Satana*, p. 251.)

Father Gabriele Amorth, exorcist of the diocese of Rome, is equally compelling: "I have often written that the devil is caused much more anger by confessing, that is, by ripping the soul out of the devil, than by exorcising and thus ripping his body away. . ... Confession is stronger than exorcism. (G. AMORTH, *An Exorcist Racconta*, pp. 63 and 86.)

## **Sovereign contempt of the devil**

To these means the saints and spiritual writers add sovereign contempt to the devil.

Let us hear Saint Teresa: "Very often these cursed spirits torment me; but they inspire me very little fear, because, I see him well, they can't even move without God's permission ... To be sure: every time we despise demons, they lose their strength and the soul acquires more dominion over them ... Being despised by weaker beings is, in fact, a gross humiliation for these proud ones. Now, as we said humbly supported in God, we have the right and the duty to despise them: If God be with us, who will be against us?

They may bark, but they may not bite us, except in the case that - whether by imprudence or pride - we will put ourselves in their power. " (See Ad. TANQUEREY - Jean GAUTIER, *Abrégé de Théologie Ascétique et Mystique*, p. 112.)

Clearly, we should not confuse this contempt for the devil with the vain pretense that we have some power over the fallen angels on our own.

By nature we have no power over them; on the contrary, by their superior nature they can have dominion over us. The basis of this salutary contempt of the infernal enemies must be the most perfect humility and the true and not reckless trust in the Creator, in the Blessed Virgin. Having taken these precautions, it is convenient to do what the great Santa Teresa so aptly indicates.

Above all, we should strive to lead a life of serious and authentic piety, without superstitions or sentimentality. This will keep the demon as far away from us as possible.

## **Strengthening of intelligence and will**

A great preventive means in the fight against the devil is the strengthening of our intelligence and will.

Indeed, the principal defense of the natural order that we have against the onslaughts of evil spirits is the inviolability of these higher powers, which most resemble God. To the extent that we allow its weakening, we are placing ourselves at the mercy of Satan and his followers. For the devil has profited so much from the general madness we are witnessing in our day, that it is a question of asking if he is not provoking it.

Without the consent of the human will, no outward action - either by angels or by demons - can have its effect: no angel can constrain man to a good deed and no demon can make him sin.

God has endowed man with free will, an inappreciable natural gift, which allows him to decide whether or not to accept good inspirations, whether or not to give in to temptations, no matter how they may be presented with great skill and cunning, compromising fantasy, or with vehemence, exacerbating passions and instincts. Man is not merely a passive object of dispute between angels and demons, nor a mere inert bystander, but an eminently active and operative subject.

The authors often point out the dangers of a so-called mystique, which leads to the voluntary abandonment of intelligence and will.

It is true that God can bestow upon us the exceptional grace of the passive contemplation of the mystics; But this is only by an exclusive free election of God, without co-operation on our part, except a humble readiness to merge our will wholly with the divine, unifying mystically with God.

If, however, we guiltily seek to provoke in ourselves this passivity of will (for example, through hypnotism, trance, the use of narcotic drugs and narcotics of various kinds, bodily or spiritual techniques), we may transfer ourselves to the world of the pretentive. as in sleep and mystical contemplation; but this state, instead of elevating us in the luminous pathways of ecstasy, can drag us downward into dark abysses, where we will find no angels but demons, who will treat us like unwilling prey, and may lead us into possession.

Hence the danger of certain schools or currents that present themselves as mere techniques of meditation, spiritual concentration or the like, which, unfortunately, have found acceptance even in Catholic sectors and movements. (Noldin-Schmitt writes: "Modern Gnosis following theosophists and anthroposophers and Hindu meditation and concentration techniques (yoga, Buddhism) which seek to know higher orders are not exempt from demonic influx, especially when directly sought" (H. NOLDIN (A. SCHMITT, Summa Theologiae Moralis, II, nn, 48f, pp 138-155).)

Avoid all superstition, curb vain curiosity. Finally, we must avoid any form of superstition, unhealthy and sometimes morbid curiosity about the world beyond.

What God wanted us to know about this, He, in His goodness and mercy, revealed to men and placed this Revelation under the care and interpretation of the Holy Church. That is where we

should look for it, according to our abilities, and not in the fallacies of soothsayers and mediums, at risk of promiscuity with the infernal spirits.

As for our immediate, earthly future, we must also respect the mystery in which God keeps him wrapped. We can pray that He will enlighten us if this is His will and if it is helpful for our eternal salvation. But to go further is to risk falling into superstition and thus being exposed to the devil, as well as lacking confidence in God, who knows better than we should know. We should rather thank Him for sparing us so much anguish by hiding the evils and worries of tomorrow today. As the Savior said, "Every day your care is sufficient" (Mt 6:34).

### **Exorcism: Historical Aspects**

"But if I cast out demons by virtue of the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God is come upon you." (Mt 12:28)

EXORCISMS constitute the great weapon (or specific remedy) of the Church and the faithful against the extraordinary action of the devil - that is, infestation and possession. To better understand what exorcisms are, it is advisable to study their origin, nature and history.

Exorcistic Power, Sign of the Kingdom of God Jesus characterizes the Kingdom of God that He founded the expulsion of Satan and his demons, and transmits this exorcistic charism to his Apostles, to his Church.

To the unbelieving Jews Jesus said, "If I, but cast out devils by the virtue of the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Mt 12:28). "If I, by the finger of God, cast out devils, the kingdom of God has come unto you" (Lk 11,20).

After the Resurrection, shortly before ascending into Heaven, Our Lord sent the Apostles to preach the Gospel throughout the world and made the following promise: "And here are the miracles that will accompany those who believe: they will cast out demons in my name..." (MCI6,17).

The Savior destroyed the diabolical works, triumphed over Satan, and, with humiliation brought to his own death on the cross, deserved a name superior to any other name, by whose invocation all knees bend, whether of heavenly, earthly or infernal beings: "God exalted him (to Jesus) and gave him a name that is above every name; so that in the name of Jesus every knee may bow in heaven, earth, and hell" (Phil 2: 9-10).

"Holy and terrible is his name!" Exclaims the Psalmist prophetically (Ps 110: 9).

In communicating later the exorcistic power, Jesus expressly recalled that his effectiveness comes in a very special way from the use of his name (cf. Mk 16,17); so to invoke Him upon the demoniac is tantamount to concealing them and liberating the person by the same virtue of Christ.

Holy Fathers repeatedly extol the potency of such a medicine. St. Justin, for example, tells us: "Let us call upon the Lord, by whose simple name demons fear power; and yet today, hidden in the name of Jesus Christ ... submit to us ... Every demon hidden in the name of the Son of God ... remains defeated and bound." (Apud Mons. C. BALDUCCI, Gli Indemoniati, p. 86.)

## **The exorcistic ministry of Jesus and the Apostles**

The liberation of the possessed occupies such a prominent place in the Saviour's public life that the Evangelists, from time to time, sum up their ministry by phrases like the following: "And when evening fell, they brought unto Jesus all the sick and those possessed by the devil. .. and He cast out numerous demons ... He preached in synagogues throughout Galilee, and cast out demons "(Mk 1: 32-34; 39)" They presented to them all who were sick ... and those possessed of the demon, and He healed them "(Mt 4: 23-24). "Jesus healed many people who had diseases and evil spirits" (Lc7,21). The Master accompanied "some women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases, among them Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had come out" (Lk 8,2). Jesus himself synthesizes the various forms of his activity as follows: "Behold, I cast out devils, and perform healing" (Lk 13,32). St. Peter repeats the same idea in summarizing the Master's life for the centurion Cornelius: "He went about doing good and healing all under the devil's empire" (Acts 10:38). \* The imperative tone, the formulas of a absolute authoritarian laconism that admits no reply, with which Jesus addressed the demons, and the readiness with which they obeyed without a shadow of resistance, clearly indicated that He spoke "as one having authority" (Mk 1,22), as God and Lord.

Already in his earthly life the Savior, associating the Apostles and Disciples with his ministry of evangelization, conferred upon them personally the power over demons. Firstly, to the Apostles: "And when his twelve disciples were summoned, he gave him power over unclean spirits to cast them out" (Mt 10: 6,7; Lk 9,1). And soon afterwards to the Seventy Disciples: "And the (disciples) returned joyful, saying, Lord, even the devils submit themselves to you by virtue of your name" (Lk 10:17).

After the Ascension we see the Apostles and Disciples exercising this exorcistic ministry. So St. Paul casts out a woman's demon in Philippi, the city of Macedonia, saying to the unclean spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus to leave her (woman). And he went forth immediately "(Acts 16:18).

Such was the force of exorcism in the name of Jesus that Jewish exorcists wanted to imitate the Apostles and Disciples. As with the sons of Ceva, prince of the priests, in the city of Ephesus. Having called upon a possessed the name "Jesus to whom Paul preaches," the evil spirit said to them through the mouth of the possessed: "I know Jesus, and I know who Paul is; but you are?" And the energetic, throwing himself upon two of them, seized them and " mistreated them in such a way that naked and wounded fled that house "(Acts 19: 13-16).

\* In addition to these general references, the Gospels report seven special cases of Jesus' expulsion from the devil: 1st the demonic of Capernaum (Mk 1,21-28; L and 4. 31-37); 2nd a possessed deaf-mute whose release gave way to the blasphemy of the Pharisees (Mt 12,22-23; Lk 11,14); 3 ° the demoneminated of Gerasa (Mt 8,28-34; Mk 5,1-20; Lc 8,26-39); 4th the mute possession (Mt 9,32-34); 5th the daughter of the Canaanite (Mt 15,21-28; Mc21-20); 6th the young lunatic (Mt 17, 14-20; Mk 9, 13-28; Lc 9, 37-44); 7 ° the paralyzed woman (Lc13, 10-17).

The exorcistic power of the Apostles was manifested not only through their direct action, but also through objects touched upon them: "And God worked miracles not vulgar by the hand of Paul;

so that even being applied to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons that had been touched on his body, not only did the diseases come out, but also the evil spirits withdrew”(Acts 19: 11-12).

This power over the devil, Jesus communicated to all his followers in general and to his Church in particular.

### **In the early church**

In the early centuries of the Church, the charismatic exorcistic power granted by Jesus to the Apostles and Disciples (Mt 10: 1 & 8; Mk 3: 14-15; Mt 6: 7; 10: 17-20), and promised later before the Ascension. , to all Christians (Mk 16,17), was very widespread even among the simple faithful, by a particular purpose of Divine Providence, which thus wished to facilitate the spread of the Christian faith.

All Christians, clerics or simple believers, cast out demons; the fact was so widespread that it was even an argument used by apologists to prove the divinity of Christianity.

The testimonies are numerous in the Holy Fathers and ecclesiastical writers, both Western and Eastern.

As time went by and the Church was established, this charismatic exorcistic power diminished, but it did not entirely disappear from the Church, as witnessed by the lives of the saints and the missionary chronicles. At all times there have been servants of God who, by their mere presence or by contact with any object belonging to them, or even through any relic of their own, often cast out demons, or from the bodies they molested, or from the places they had. infested.

### **The figure of the exorcist**

Exorcist (from the Greek eksorkistés) is one who practices exorcisms about people or places believed to be subjected to some extraordinary influx or action of the devil; in other words, he is the one who, in the name of God, imposes on the devil to cease to exert evil inflows on a place or on certain persons or things. Strictly speaking, the word exorcist, in recent Latin Church practice (until 1972), indicated who had received the minor order from the exorcist, who conferred the power to cast out demons, that is, to perform exorcisms.

Today, he is called the exorcist the priest who receives from the bishop the commission and faculty to do exorcisms about the possessed. He can only use this faculty according to the established norms, which will be seen later. Many dioceses have at least one permanent exorcist; in others, the bishop appoints exorcists as their intervention becomes necessary.

In the early centuries, since the charismatic power of casting out demons was widespread in the Church, even among the simple believers, there was no special discipline for the exorcisms of the demonized, nor a special category of ecclesiastical persons charged with practicing them in the name. Church

Early on, however, a ceremonial was established for baptismal exorcisms - that is, those who proceeded on catechumens in preparation for Baptism; and soon a particular class of people was formed to proceed with them. It was the minor order of the exorcists that emerged in the Latin

Church, with the task, at first, of performing only the baptismal exorcisms, and not those about the possessed, which, as has been said, were done by any faithful without special mandate. .

Over time and with the consolidation and expansion of the Church, the frequency of charismatic exorcistic power was diminished, albeit unevenly by place; the faithful then turned, in cases of demonic infestation or possession, to those clothed with the power of order — that is, deacons, priests, and bishops — and equally, as was natural. catechumen exorcists.

The Church sanctioned this practice with its ordinary power, giving such exorcists also the faculty and the power to exorcise the possessed.

However, because of the difficulty in diagnosing possession, and because of the delicacy and importance of such an office, the Church gradually limited the exercise of this power to a limited number of people. A letter from Pope St. Innocent I to Decentius, Bishop of Gubbio (Italy), from the year 416, supposes that the exorcisms about the possessed were made in Rome only by priests or deacons who had received episcopal authorization.

The exorcistate will henceforth be regarded only as one of the various degrees by which the future priest was preparing for greater orders. Although this lesser order always granted effective power over Satan, the exercise of that power was tied to other requirements.

This discipline, established at least since the 5th century, has prevailed over time throughout the Church of the West until it became a universal norm, and has come to this day with the 1917 Code of Canon Law (Canon 1151) and the new Code of 1983 (canon 1172), which maintained the reservation of exorcisms about possessions only to priests delegated to that respective Ordinary, which must consider in them special gifts of virtue and science.

As for the exorcist's minor order, it was confined to being prepared for priesthood in the Latin Church until it was completely abolished by Paul VI in 1972, along with the other minor orders.

In the Eastern Churches, exorcist office was known since the fourth century, but it was not a minor order and its members were not part of the clergy.

### **Exorcism: what is it?**

“We exorcise you, unclean spirit... in the name and power of Jesus (+) Christ...”

(Exorcism against Satan and the apostate angels)

THE EXORCISES CONSTITUTE insignificant acts of faith, religion and religion, for they suppose the belief in God's sovereign power over demons, even being a practical application of that belief.

In this chapter we will delve a little deeper into the notion of exorcism, what it consists of, what its theological foundation is and how effective it is, how it is divided, and on whom it can be made.

### **Notion and division**

Exorcisms are not simply prayers to God, to the Virgin to angels and saints asking them to deliver us from the attacks of the Evil One, or graces to face them. This is certainly necessary, but it is only one of the ordinary resources available to anyone. Exorcisms are more than that: they are an act by

which the exorcist, by the authority of the Church or by the power of the name of God, imposes upon the demon to obey and cease the evil presence or act he is exerting upon places, things, or persons.

Thus, exorcisms are made about places and things (including the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom, and also the atmospheric elements), with which the devil is forbidden to exert bad influences upon them (local infestation); Exorcisms are also practiced on people tormented or disturbed by evil spirits (personal infestation) or even possessed by them (diabolical possession), which are intended to free these people from the evil influences and power and dominion of Satan.

In the case of irrational creatures, adjuration is more properly directed at the one we want to move; that is, or addressing God by way of supplication to prevent these creatures from serving as the devil's instrument; or he addresses the devil, urging him to cease or cease to use them. And this is the meaning of the Church's adjuration in exorcisms and also in the deprecatory blessings against rats, locusts, worms and other harmful animals.

Exorcisms can be divided according to various criteria. Thus, with regard to their solemnity, exorcisms are classified as solemn and simple.

Solemn exorcisms, also called major exorcisms, are those made upon possessed persons, and are intended to liberate them from the dominion exercised over them by the spirit of evil. They constitute the type exorcism, that is, what retains the strictest meaning of the word and are found in the Roman Ritual. .)

### **Simple exorcisms are of two genres:**

a) that done to prevent or curb the influx of the devil upon people, things and places (personal or local infestation), called Leo XIII's exorcism or small exorcism, contained also in the Ritual; (Rituale Romanum, tit. XI c. 3: Exorcismus in satanam and apostolic angels - Exorcism against Satan and the apostate angels.)

b) various exorcisms, which are performed in the ceremonies of solemn baptism, in the blessing of water and salt, and in the consecration of the holy oils, etc. (found in the Roman Ritual and corresponding liturgical books).

The main criterion, however, for the division of exorcisms is that concerning the authority in whose name and by whose power they are made. According to this criterion, exorcisms are divided into public and private according to whether they are done in the name and authority of the Church in the first case or in the name of the exorciser himself in the second. This distinction is fundamental to the considerations that follow.

### **Origin and theological foundation of exorcistic power**

Man has no natural power over demons since they, though fallen, have not lost their angelic nature. That is why you have to resort to a higher nature than theirs to get rid of the attacks and insidiousness of the evil spirits.

By nature, demons depend exclusively on God, the only nature above the angelic. \* Only God has absolute power over all creatures; therefore only He can absolutely rule over demons. However, He can bestow on those who desire the power to rule over demons by virtue of His Name. Therefore, the coercive force of exorcisms and the guarantee of their effectiveness - as well as their legality - lie in being practiced in the name of God and by those who have received such power from Him.

\* Some angel could have a higher nature than Lucifer's; however, according to common belief, Lucifer would have been the highest angel, naturally speaking, thus being by nature above all other angels. As for the other demons, some are higher, some less than the good angels, being, as far as pure nature is concerned, above or below them. By grace, all good angels are above demons - including Lucifer - even though inferior in nature.

### **To whom has God given such power over demons?**

First, Christ gave to His Church, through the Apostles, a "power over unclean spirits to cast them out" (Mt 10: 1; Mk 6: 7; Lk 9: 1). And what is called the ordinary exorcistic power of the Church.

Moreover, some Christians - priests or even simple believers - receive from God a charism of casting out demons. This is what is called charismatic exorcistic power. \*

\* Charismatic power is called that which derives from a charisma. Charisms are free, extraordinary, and often transitory gifts, bestowed by God to some people, not so much for their own benefit (though they may contribute to their sanctification), but above all for the good of others and the edification of the Church.

The foundation of the doctrine of charisms is found in St. Paul (cf. 1 Cor 12: 7; Eph 4: 12, Rom 12 6-8).

Theologians distinguish three classes of charisms: gifts of government, gifts of teaching and exhortation, and gifts of bodily assistance. Among the latter are healing gifts, one of which is to cast out demons, which is a form of healing.

Finally, theologians explain that there is another exorcistic power, which has its origin and foundation in any appropriation of exorcistic power by any believer, "be motivated by the life that Christ our Lord obtained over Satan, whether by union with him by faith. at least current ". (Mons. C. BALDUCCI, *Gli indemoniati*, pp. 90-91; *El diablo*, p. 256.)

Indeed, every Christian can make use of the exorcistic power that Christ has generically promised to all who believe in him, when he said, "And behold, the miracles that will accompany those who believe: they will cast out devils in my name" (Mk 16:17). Or apply to yourself that other, even broader promise: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and do greater works" (Jn 14:12). Now among the works of Jesus stands out the casting out of demons and the final victory over Satan.

Finally, he can assert to himself that power granted by our Lord to his followers: "Behold, I have given you power to trample serpents and scorpions and all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you" (Lk 10:19).

From which can be indicated a triple title or theological foundation of exorcistic power:

1. an ordinary concession made by Christ to his Church;
2. extraordinary charismatic communication to some of their servants, whether or not they belong to the clergy;
3. an appropriation of such power by any believer.

Of these three ways, the first forms the foundation of public exorcisms, while the last two underlie private exorcisms.

From this one deduces the effectiveness of both, as we shall see below.

Effectiveness of exorcisms

Public exorcisms

There is a relevant difference between public and private exorcisms; In the former case, the exorcism will be a sacramental, \* which does not occur with the latter.

\* Sacramental means certain sensible things (holy water, holy candles, Agnus Dei, medals) or certain actions (blessings, exorcisms, consecrations, etc.) which the Church uses to achieve certain especially spiritual effects. The strength of the sacramentals comes from the intercessory power of the Church.

As sacramentals, public exorcisms have a very particular efficacy, which depends not only on the dispositions of the exorcist and the patient, but also and above all on the prayer of the Church, which has special impetratory value with God.

The effectiveness of public exorcisms, though very great, is not infallible; and this is because the very prayers of the Church, according to the ordinary economy which God follows in answering them, have no infallible effect; and also because the Church's power over demons is not absolute but conditional upon the good pleasure of divine power, which at times may have justifiable reasons for delaying or forbidding them to leave a place or a person.

This conditioned value, however, is not in the least in contradiction with the imperative form of exorcism, since the condition concerns the divine will, not the demonic, which itself is fully subject to the power of the Church.

Private exorcisms

Private exorcisms do not constitute a sacramental as the public, that is, they do not rely on the intercessory power of the Church. Thus, its effectiveness comes from either the strength of the charism based on faith in the promise made by the Savior.

The efficacy of the charismatic exorcistic power is sure, infallible, since God himself, by granting the charism, guarantees by inspiration that the use of this charism is in conformity with His designs, and will therefore obtain the effect which was granted. \*

*\* According to theologians, God bestows the gift of charism very sparingly; so one must proceed very cautiously before concluding that one possesses any charisma; greater prudence is still*

*required of the person who presumes to possess one of them. The authors of ascetic and mystical theology, following the teaching of St. John of the Cross, advise us neither to wish nor to request extraordinary graces and gifts: the normal way should suffice for us; for these gifts are not necessary to attain salvation and Christian perfection, and even, on the contrary, because of our evil inclinations, can be an obstacle to them. On the other hand, the devil often gets involved in such extraordinary ways, so it is not always easy to distinguish what comes from the Spirit of God and what comes from the spirit of darkness.*

In the case of the appropriation of exorcistic power by the believer, on the contrary, efficacy is inferior to that of public exorcism, since it lacks the impetratory power of the Church, since it does not constitute a sacramental.

Consequently, the effectiveness of non-charismatic private exorcism depends very much on the virtue - above all of faith - of its practitioner, always conditioned on the divine good pleasure.

It must be emphasized, as noted above, that exorcisms often have no effect, not because of the exorcising person's lack of faith, or the power of demons, but by God's designs, whether for punishment or for the purgation and sanctification of victim, or for another reason that only He knows.

## **Who to exorcise?**

### **Infinite number of unhappy tormented by the devil**

Roman Ritual reserves solemn exorcisms only to persons who give unmistakable signs of possession. But the exorcists (and not only them, but the other priests) are faced with much more frequent cases of people who, without being properly possessed, are suffering demon vexations.

Father Joseph de Tonquédec SJ, who for more than twenty years was an exorcist of the archdiocese of Paris and a great demonologist, wrote as early as 1948.

“The issue we are going to address is not in the field of psychology or experience in general; it is properly theological.

“What led us to reflect on it was the insistence of an infinite number of unfortunates who, not showing the signs of diabolical possession, not behaving as possessed, resort, however, to the exorcist's ministry to be freed from their miseries: diseases, rebels, bad luck, unhappiness of every kind.

“While the possessed are very rare, the patients I speak of are legion. It would not be legitimate to treat them as possessed, since in all evidence they are not. On the other hand, they are not always and necessarily mentally ill about whom a psychiatric treatment would have a chance of working.

“In any case, we are simply in the presence of unfortunates of every kind whose complaints make us understand the range of human misfortunes.

Taken with pity for them, we wondered what means to turn to to help them.

"Then come to mind certain pages of our Holy Books, certain prayers or liturgical practices that suppose the influence of the devil, present far beyond the regions where we have the custom of confining him."

The author recommends that in these cases the sacramentals (holy water, holy salt), prayers, blessings, the exorcism of Leo XVIII (exorcism against Satan and the apostate angels), etc. should be used. (J. de TONQUEDEC SJ, *Quelques aspects de l'action of Satan I ce monde*, p. 493.)

For his part, the exorcist of the diocese of Rome, Fr. Gabriele Amorth, comments: "Today the Ritual directly considers only the case of diabolical possession, that is, the most serious and rarest case. We exorcists deal in practice with all the cases in which we perceive a satanic intervention: cases of diabolical infestation (which are far more numerous than cases of possession), cases of personal infestation, house infestation and even more. other cases in which we have seen the effectiveness of our prayers. ... For example, the boundaries between possessed and infested are unclear; Nor are the boundaries between infested and victims of other evils clear: physical evils that can be caused by the Evil One; moral evils (habitual states of sin, especially in the most severe forms), in which surely the Evil One has his part. For example, I have sometimes seen the advantage of using brief exorcism to help the sacrament of Confession in people hardened in certain sins, such as homosexuals. St. Alphonsus, the Church's Doctor for Moral Theology, speaking to the confessors, says that first of all the priest must exorcise privately when faced with something that may be demonic infestation "(G. AMORTH, *Un esorcista racconta*, pp. . 199-200.)

### **Frequent use of simple exorcisms and private exorcisms**

In these cases the solution seems to be in the more frequent use of simple (public) exorcisms (which are sacramental and therefore have their own strength, that of the Church), by priests - both exorcists and non-exorcists, since they do not require special delegation - over all these people who, without being possessed, are persecuted or influenced by the devil.

This is what the Moralists recommend; thus the Jesuits Pes. H. Noldin and A. Schmitt: "The ministers of the Church should be greatly persuaded to most often use simple exorcism, remembering the words of the Lord: In my name shall they cast out devils; above all make use of those who are the object of vehement temptation upon penitents in whom they find it difficult to excite the pain and purposes of their sins, or to sincerely manifest their sins. They may use this formula or the like: I command you, in the name of Jesus, unclean spirit, to depart from this creature of God "(H. NOLDIN SJ - A. SCHMITT SJ - G. HEINZEL SJ, *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, p. 43 .)

Nothing will prevent - as we shall see - that in such circumstances the laity also practice private exorcisms, not only about themselves but also about third parties harassed by the devil, observing the precautions that will follow. For the words of Our Lord remembered above - In my name shall they cast out devils - were spoken to all the faithful.

This is also the teaching of St. Thomas, quoting another passage from the Gospels: "We may therefore adjure demons by the power of the name of Jesus, casting them out from ourselves as declared enemies, in order to avoid the spiritual and bodily harm that inflicts us. can come from

them. Power that Christ Himself has given us: 'Behold, I have given you power to trample serpents and scorpions and all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall harm you' (Lk 10:19). (Summa Theological, 2-2, q. 90, a. 2.)

### **Exorcism: Legislation**

"Without peculiar license and expressed Ordinary of the place, no one can legitimately perform exorcisms on the possessed." (Code of Canon Law)

AFTER SEEING the notion, the theological foundation and the effectiveness of exorcisms, it seems appropriate to outline the current legislation on the subject.

## **From the origins to the Code of Canon Law**

### **Church's right to restrict powers**

The Church, which holds the power of the keys, has the right to reserve to priests certain practices which, in themselves, theologically speaking, could also be performed by lay people, as they do not require the power of order.

This was the case with the distribution of the Holy Eucharist, which in the early days was also done by simple believers, later reserved to deacons and priests, and only recently allowed to lay people again, with the permission of the respective bishop.

The same was true of exorcisms about the possessed: In the early days of the Church, when the abundance of charisms was a fact, the faithful cast out demons by virtue of those charisms without the need for recourse to the priests and the bishop.

But from the fifth century onwards, in view of abuses, as well as the reduction of charisms, while decreasing the number of possessions by the expansion of Christianity, began to reserve these exorcisms only to priests, and only when authorized by their bishop . This norm extended over time until, finally, with the canonical Code issued by Saint Pius X and promulgated by Benedict XV in 1917, it became universal law. (Cf. Code of Canon Law (1917), canon 1151 § 1.) The new Code of Canon Law (1983) retained this norm: "Without the peculiar and express license of the Ordinary of the place, no one can legitimately perform exorcisms about the possessed" . (Code of Canon Law, canon 1172 § 1.)

### **Prudence of the Church**

Mons. French demonologist Maquart underscores the Church's prudence in reserving solemn exorcisms over the possessed only to authorized priests: "Several reasons led the Church to reserve the practice of solemn exorcisms very strictly. The exorcist's struggle against the demon is not exempt from the same physical dangers to the exorcist priest; the Church does not want and cannot disregard its ministers. " (Mgr FX MAQUART, *L'exorciste devant les diaboliques manifestations*, p. 328.)

Among the reasons for this reservation of exorcisms about the possessed to priests who meet certain requirements - with the consequent prohibition on the laity - the Authors list the following:

The. Spiritual and even physical dangers to which the exorcist is exposed: temptations against faith, against purity; psychic or even physical aggression by the demon ...

B. Need for great knowledge, godliness, and prudence for the direct confrontation with the devil: preparation to face the fallacies, sophistry, and hoaxes of the father of lies; to know how to conduct exorcism; to make sure that the demon did indeed leave the body of the possessed at his end; and also to discern the true possession of other phenomena, even natural, similar to her, such as morbid states, hallucinations, illusions ...

W. The risk of defiling the Name of God by taking Him in vain in false possession, exorcism being the adjournment of the devil in the name of God to abandon the creature he owns or infests (the obligation to turn to the bishop at a time leads to than the cases studied most carefully, the evidence examined [with greater caution].

d. Possibility of abuse, such as exorcising the mentally ill, with danger of aggravating their ills (due to the great tension and mental to physical effort that exorcism entails, and the impressive character of it); greed (requests for remuneration, acceptance of gifts ...); sinful requests ...

Whether these risks exist for members of the clergy (to the extent that canon law states that they are not allowed to do exorcisms but priests who have knowledge, prudence, and sanctity of life), who have theological training, grace of state, pastoral experience, and so forth. larger will be for lay people who usually have no specialized studies or any other preparation.

## The current legislation

### Solemn Exorcisms of the Possessed

Although any priest (and even, as we shall see, any believer) is theologically capable of exorcism, even of the possessed, yet for many centuries the Church has been able to solemnly exorcise (that is, to do exorcism of the possessed) only to priests distinguished by godliness and prudence, by express permission of the Ordinary and with the obligation to faithfully observe the provisions of the Code of Canon Law and the Roman Ritual.

Exorcisms about possessions (solemn exorcisms;) can only be legitimately made:

**The.** by a peculiar license (for each specific case) and express (cannot be assumed) of the Ordinary of the place. (ICC-83 canon 1172 § 1; ICC-17 canon 1151 § 1.)

**B.** This license should be granted only to priests (not to laymen or religious non-priests) of recognized piety, prudence, knowledge and integrity of life. (CIC-83 canon 1172 § 2; CIC-17 canon 1151 §2.)

**W.** these priests will only proceed after finding, by diligent and prudent inquiry, that this is indeed a case of diabolical possession. (CIC-17 canon 1151 § 2; Roman Ritual, title XI, c. 1.)

**d.** exorcists will carefully observe the rites and formulas approved by the Church. (CIC-83 canon 1167 § 2; cf. CIC-17 canon 1148 § 1; Roman Ritual, title XI, c.2.)

Exorcisms are usually done in the church or some other godly or religious place, except in the case of the sick or the presence of serious reasons to the contrary; but not in front of a large audience. Whenever exorcisms are to be done about a woman, they must be attended by close relatives or women of exemplary honesty; and for the victim to be dressed decoratively.

In exorcising, the minister should ordinarily stick to the formulas of the Roman Ritual, avoiding in each case the use of medicines or superstitious practices.

You should absolutely refrain from asking questions that are not timely or out of scope, or not necessary, or of mere curiosity, as well as those aimed at discovering future events. On the other hand, the exorcist must ask the demon if he is alone or with other evil spirits, what their name is, the time of the onset of possession and the cause of it.

Exorcisms can be performed not only on possessed Catholics, practicing or not, and even excommunicated, but also on people of other religions or all pagans, provided that in each case there is a moral certainty that they are truly demonic. (Code of Canon Law (1917), canon 1152.)

### **Exorcisms in local and personal infestation cases**

In the case of local and personal infestations, the Roman Ritual reserves the recitation of the Exorcism against Satan and the apostate angels, published by order of Leo XIII, to the bishops and priests authorized by the diocesan bishop. (Rituale Romanum, tit. XII, c.3 .) (As a simple prayer, it can be recited by any person, priest or lay person without any special authorization.)

In addition, a recent Holy See document makes this heading of the Ritual a disciplinary norm, thus reiterating the prohibition of priests not authorized by their bishops - as well as lay people - to use the above formula (CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Letter to Ordinaries of Place, Recalling Existing Norms on Exorcisms, September 29, 1985, in Acta Apocalypse Sedis, An. Et Vol. LXXVII, 2 Decembris 1985, N. 12, pp. 1169-1170.

The same document also prohibits the priest not authorized by the Ordinary from presiding over "demon liberation meetings," in which orders are given directly to the demon, even though they are not exactly exorcisms about the possessed, provided there appears to be some diabolical influx. (Letter cit. § 3.)

### **Other exorcisms**

The exorcisms that take place in the ceremonies of solemn baptism, in the blessing of water and salt, and in the consecration of the Holy Oils, presented in the Roman Ritual and other liturgical books, can be legitimately made; conduct the ceremonies in which they take place (for example, catechists and other extraordinary ministers of Baptism, even lay people and even women).

### **“We are all exorcists”**

*“In my name shall they cast out devils.” (Mk 16:17)*

From now on it has become clear that lay people can also exorcise, at least in certain circumstances and under certain conditions. This chapter seeks to clarify the origin and theological foundation of the layman's specific exorcistic power, as well as the conditions under which he can legitimately and effectively make use of it.

## Can lay people exorcise?

### Theological Possibility

Strictly, from the theological point of view, nothing prevents a layman from effectively exorcising even the possessed. The theological explanation has already been hinted at above, but in a fragmentary way, so it seems appropriate to deepen it here.

We have already seen how in the early days believers who had not received priestly character or special charisms proceeded to baptismal exorcisms.

These faithful were incorporated into the clergy, becoming the minor order of the exorcists, and becoming exorcised also possessed; Over time, for a number of historical and disciplinary reasons, his duties were eventually absorbed by the priests, and the exorcist, while continuing to confer effective power over the demon, was reduced to the priesthood until it was abolished. In 1972, along with the other smaller orders. With the liturgical reform of Paul VI this ministry, in relation to baptismal exorcisms, was again entrusted to lay people: the current catechists and other extraordinary ministers of Baptism.

In one case and another - that is, in the early exorcists and in the new extraordinary ministers of Baptism - these are faithful who, as has been said, did not receive priestly ordination (in the second, this ministry is entrusted even to women), This indicates that such ordination is not theologically necessary in order for anyone to be able to carry out exorcisms effectively, even on official grounds, that is, in the name of the Church.

However, it is not these cases of people delegated by the Church that we want to refer to, for one might think that some kind of ecclesiastical endowment is always necessary to acquire the theological capacity to exorcise the devil. What we are investigating here is whether the simple believer, without any official endowment, has the power - theologically speaking - to effectively exorcise.

Power Given by Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist Man has no natural power over Satan and the infernal spirits: if not rescued by God, he would be wholly at the mercy of the Evil One. And indeed, by original sin, we had all become slaves to it. Our Lord in His mercy rescued us from the tyranny of the devil by his death on the Cross. And He wants us to participate in His struggle, just as He associates us with His triumph. This is through Baptism, which incorporates us into Christ and makes us participants in his struggle and his victory. For the body participates in the whole life of the Head. This is the fundamental title that makes us exorcists to all the baptized.

This is why Bishop Pellegrino Ernetti o.SB - exorcist of the patriarchal archdiocese of Venice gives the final chapter of his book the following title: "We are all exorcists".

Bishop Pellegrino writes: "Prayers and pre-emptive exorcism are inherent in the very state of being Christian as baptized, confirmed and living the life of the Eucharist. The baptismal character already gives him the title of true fighter against Satan. And the Lord's Prayer itself gives it the valid title to fight preventively.

The Christian not only has the strict duty of a soldier and follower of Christ, who came to earth to expel and destroy the work of the devil, but he even has the right to participate in this struggle, a right always coming from either baptismal or chrism. and, nourished by Jesus on the eucharistic table, becomes ever stronger to obtain victory, together with his King and Victor, Christ.

“Therefore, we are all exorcists, fighters, and overcomers of Satan! As an exorcist, the believer does nothing but exercise his *jus nativum*, embodied in the common priesthood of the faithful. ” (D. Pellegrino ERNETTI OSB, *La Catechesi di Satana*, pp. 245-246)

Theologically speaking - and abstracting equally from extraordinary charisms - all the faithful are therefore exorcists, without any kind of ecclesiastical endowment to acquire the ability to exorcise the devil. This ability is in *radiceno* Baptism, which makes us children of God, members of the Mystical Body of which Christ is the Head; and is reaffirmed by Confirmation, which makes us soldiers of Christ and gives us, together with the duty to fight for Him, the capacity for such combat; and is nourished by the Eucharist.

But this exorcistic power, for wise reasons of prudence, is limited by the laws of the Church, as will be seen below.

### **Canonical Limitations**

If there are no hindrances of theological nature for a layman to practice exorcisms, then canonical impediments, that is, positive law of the Church, occur.

The first of these is the prohibition of exorcisms on the possessed, which, as explained above, are reserved to priests duly authorized by their bishop.

Another restriction concerns the use of the so-called Leo XIII Exorcism formula reserved for authorized bishops and priests.

The simple believers should also not hold exorcism sessions in which the demon is directly challenged, even if it is not a case of possession itself, provided that a demonic presence is suspected. (CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Letter to Ordinaries of Place, Recalling Existing Norms on Exorcisms, September 29, 1985.)

### **When and how lay people can exorcise**

#### **In local or personal infestations**

So lay people are at the mercy of demon attacks, since they cannot exorcise the possessed?

In no way. Remember that the main defense against the devil is the grace of God, which is received in Baptism and recovered in Confession, being nourished by the sacraments, sacramentals, good works and life of godliness. Therefore, even if a layman can do exorcisms about the possessed, he is not defenseless before the demon.

It should also be remembered that possession itself is not an obstacle to the salvation or sanctification of people, and may even be a useful trial for the spiritual life of the victim, his family, friends and even the exorcist himself.

It should also be considered that possession is not the most frequent extraordinary offensive of the devil. Apart from temptation (which is an ordinary offensive), the Authors say that the most current extraordinary offensive is both local and personal infestation. They say that there are a large number of people who seek exorcists because they are tormented by the devil, but this is not a case of possession. And that they are relieved by simple exorcisms or just blessings and other spiritual remedies.

Now, as regards local and even personal infestation, there is no prohibition in canon law:

the laity may make private exorcisms, provided they do not employ the formula of exorcism against Satan and the apostate angels (the so-called exorcism of Leo XIII), nor do they "directly challenge the devil, and seek to know his identity." And what warns the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in the document cited above. (CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH, Doc, cit.)

Therefore, in the less rare cases of extraordinary demonic action, that is, in local and personal infestations, the faithful are not defenseless, due to the regulation of exorcisms established by the Code of Canon Law and by documents of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In addition to ordinary, general remedies, they may, with the precautions set forth below, make use of the extraordinary remedy of private exorcism.

### **To repel the temptations and disturbances of the devil**

It is not only in some extreme cases or situations that lay people are free to engage in private exorcisms. They can practice them preemptively whenever they are tempted or disturbed by the devil.

This is what the moralists and canonists teach. For example writes Father Felix M. CAPPELLO SJ: "Private exorcism can be performed by all the faithful. Because anyone can, in order to repel the demon's temptations or disturbances, command him, by God or Jesus Christ, not to harm himself or others. The effect of this exorcism does not derive from the authority and prayers of the Church, since it is not done in its name, but only by virtue of the name of God and Jesus Christ." (Felix M. CAPPELLO SJ. Canonico-Moralis Tractatus from SACRAMENTIS. P.84).

In the same vein Fr. Marcellin ZALBA SJ writes: "Exorcisms: ... imperatively deprived (can be done) by anyone, only to restrain the influence of demons ..." (Marcellin ZALBA SJ, Theologiae Moralis Compendium, p. 661.)

This is also what the exorcist of Venice, D. Pellegrino Ernetti says: "For all the other demonic activities listed above [temptations, local and personal infestations], all baptized and confirmed without distinction have the munus and the duty to fight together. with Jesus to counter the infernal enemy." (D. Pellegrino ERNETTI OS, B., La Catechesi di Satana, pp. 247-249.)

In short: the simple faithful can, and even must, perform private exorcisms in temptations or demonic infestations; but not in cases of possession, for exorcisms about possessions are reserved, as stated, to authorized priests.

### **Avoid use of solemn formulas and charisma appearance**

As for how to do exorcisms, lay people should avoid the use of Roman Ritual formulas, which are reserved only for priests who have received the bishop's proper license, as such use would make it possible to believe that exorcisms are intended to be done in the name of the Church, or namely, that one is vested with an ecclesiastical mandate.

Particular caution is advised to avoid all solemnity and formality, including the imperative form, whenever this might make it think that it is an extraordinary charisma, as this could be strange to many, given the rarity of charisms today.

One must also guard against the danger of scandal, especially in possessions. Therefore, if it is a diabolical possession of the body, for which such a danger of scandal and abuse may be greater, the faithful should refrain from practicing exorcisms (incidentally, they are prohibited from doing so by Church law), having to go to a priest; They can, however, say a prayer, asking God - through the intercession of Our Lady, St. Michael, the angels, and the saints - to set that person free from Satan's dominion and to prevent the evil spirit from harming others. Also in cases of serious local or personal infestation, where the devil's action is certain or at least very likely, or there are extraordinary manifestations, it will be more prudent to refrain from the imperative formula when doing private exorcisms. It would be most advisable to also call a priest whenever possible.

Similarly, any procedure that might give the impression of vain presumption on its own merits should be avoided. Fr. Guillaume Arendt (Belgian Jesuit, whose guidance we are following in this section) notes that an order given to the devil by a simple believer, in the name of God, with presumption of success without regard to divine will, may be a temptation to God, since it is almost obliging Him to interfere out of respect for His Name.

But when there is no such presumption and one expects only in God and in the power of Christ's name and cross, then there is no such danger. In this case, what is being said is only a prayer to God, which he will answer according to his august purposes. It is also an act of faith and hope in the Redeemer's promise that believers would have the power to cast out demons.

When it is only a matter of repelling the temptation of the devil to "sin to sin," the devilish pride, with imperative reprobation, should be scorned and trampled underfoot, so that the puzzled enemy may be put to flight by virtue of sin. your own powerlessness. (See 6. ARENDT, *De Sacramentalibus*, no. 311 apud Mons. C. BALDUCCI, *Gli Indemoniati*, pp. 99-100.)

### **“Prayers of Liberation”**

#### **There is a word here about the so-called liberation prayers.**

“Prayers of liberation - defines Msgr. Corrado Balducci - are those with which we ask God, the Virgin, Saint Michael, the Angels and the Saints to be delivered from the evil influences of Satan. They are very different from exorcisms, in which we address the devil, even in the name of God, the Virgin, etc. ; distinct either by the direct recipient, or obviously by the modality, by the tone: deprecating and pleading in the first case, imperative and threatening in the second. ” (Mons. C. BALDUCCI, *El diablo*, p. 261.)

In these prayers, instead of imposing oneself on the devil, in the name of Jesus Christ, to leave that person, that place, or to cease that situation, one implores God who - through the merits of Our Lord, through the intercession of Our Lady, of angels, of saints, of virtuous people - protect us and free us from the yoke of the evil one (without directly challenging the devil or seeking to know his identity).

We must make this supplication with humility and confidence, for God does not despise a contrite and humiliated heart (SI50,19). God will certainly not cease to attend us, especially if we have in view first of all His glory.

“Pray that we will be delivered from the devil, from his temptations, his machinations, deceits and influences,” writes Mgr. Balducci - is commendable and not only commendable, and has always been so, in private and in public; In this petition Jesus included it in the only prayer He taught us, the Lord's Prayer. and it was done, as it was said, at the end of each Mass with the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel. ”

However, the Prelate continues lately in some prayer group meetings and other private initiatives, in which prayers of liberation were offered, sometimes one went beyond the scope of simple prayer and came to the use of true exorcistic formulas, with the questioning. direct from the devil. Such practices determined the intervention of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the Letter of September 29, 1985, referred to several times here.

## **V - SATANISM - MAGIC - WITCH**

Hitherto we have seen the spontaneous interference of the devil in men's lives, whether by his ordinary action — temptation or extraordinary action — local and personal infestation and possession. It is now necessary to study his intervention at the invitation of man himself: magic or witchcraft, satanic pacts, superstitious practices in general.

Admittedly, man, by his nature, has no power over the devil, and therefore cannot compel him to heed his requests, nor to fulfill what was covenant with him.

However, it is no less certain that the devil - always on the lookout for an occasion to hurt men and lose them - would not miss the unique opportunity to act when invited by themselves. Thus, God willing, he can fulfill the requests made to him and obtain, for the men who resort to him, riches, political power, satisfaction of passions and ambitions, and even harm others.

In other words, man cannot be the cause of the devil's interference, but it may well be the occasion of that interference.

So magic, if understood in the sense of art by which man acquires power over the devil, does not exist and is impossible; If understood, however, as the art of working wonders by the devil, magic is not only theoretically possible, but exists and is widely practiced from the earliest ages to the present day.

It is beyond doubt that the harm is theoretically possible. He bears no nonsense in itself, either from man, from the devil, or from God. Indeed, a man excited by a satanic hatred and abusing his freedom can do the most wicked deeds, except invoking and adjourning the infernal spirits, so that

they apply their evil powers to a determined person, The Devil, for example. it can in turn torment men in the strangest and most inexplicable ways, and he will find his own satisfaction there; and nothing prevents him from making his intervention dependent on the use of a symbolic ritualism, which would be a concrete manifestation of demon worship on the part of man, something very pleasing to Satan, always eager to ape God. And God can allow evil in His purposes of righteousness, just as He permits cases of possession.

The sorcerer does not develop his strength in evil. Satan's intervention is evident there, and God permits it, as temptation, infestations, and even possessions permit. The evidence of this demonic intervention is so abundant in Holy Scripture and religious history that it is not legitimate for anyone to doubt it.

When one believes in the devil, in what the Holy Books and history say about him, rejecting this possibility is irrational.

Indeed, in the face of such irrefutable testimonies, one cannot but believe in the existence of wizards and the effectiveness of their spells, by the devil, whenever God permits.

### **From superstition to demon worship**

"Those who cling to deceptive superstitions give up the grace intended for them." (Jon 2, 9)

### **Superstition**

Superstition is a sham unworthy of true worship of God, by relying on formulas and rites employed to force God to fulfill His request, and to unveil the future. Superstition is also called the veneration of religious character ascribed to real or imagined "forces" instead of God.

Superstition seeks to imprison the supernatural by means of formulas or rites to put it at its service. The superstitious wants to use religion for his own benefit and not to worship God unselfishly. Therefore God, through the Prophet Jonah, warns: "Those who cling to deceptive superstitions give up the grace that was intended for them" (Jon 2: 9).

The superstitious puts undue reliance on practices to which neither God, nor the Church (by divine grant), nor nature has conferred the power to effect certain effects.

Whenever certain effects are sought by disproportionate means, which in no way can lead to the desired result, mysterious forces are relied upon, at least implicitly, to obtain that result. Since these forces do not come from God or his angels, they can only come from the spirit of darkness.

And so, from superstition, one comes easily, though not entirely consciously, to the implicit recourse to the devil. Hence, for explicit invocation, there is but one step.

In short, the desire to subjugate the higher forces and to instrumentalize them for their own gain, and thus to become "as gods" (cf. Gen 3: 5), is the foundation of all superstition, of all magic.

## **Covenant with the devil**

### **Possibility of pact with the devil**

We know from Revelation that men can voluntarily communicate with demons and ask them to do or bestow things that exceed human strength.

There is no doubt that the devil intervenes spontaneously in a sensitive way in the lives of men; Why should he not intervene at the request of a human will? There is nothing in this that is contrary to the order of things, neither from God nor from the devil. From God, He can allow the devil to act as a punishment for man because of his faults, \* or as a trial for the victim, or for some other effect that He knows, in His designs of wisdom and justice. On the devil's side, it is well in accordance with your psychology to respond to a request that so flatters your pride, gratifies your hatred of God and man, and satisfies your desire to do evil.

\* This is what Saint Augustine thought, which states that men who are dedicated to superstition "are delivered, as their evil desires deserve, to the prevaricating angels, to be mocked and deceived."

Man can come into relationship with angels and demons, since both are intelligent and free beings. In this condition, both man and angels and demons can make use of their freedom and unite for a common end. But for this to happen, there must be a point of contact between them; that is, they must have similar provisions. When relationships are established between beings of a different nature, it is evident that the higher being imposes its dispositions on the lower: it is the law of the strongest. If the highest being is a good spirit (that is, an angel) agreement is made for good; If, on the contrary, the highest being is an evil spirit, the agreement can only be made for evil. For the devil, the perverted spirit, seeks but evil.

Like every contract, each party seeks to meet its interests. If, on the one hand, the evil spirit accepts the agreement solely for evil, the other part, man, may demand that this evil bring him at least subjective advantage: money, honors, revenge, pleasure; otherwise there will be no reason for agreement.

By their intelligence and their power, demons are superior to men. They know the secrets of nature and the physical agents far better than the wise will ever know. They are capable of producing astonishing results and even, when it serves their perfidious designs, gain material advantages to those who resort to them.

Of course, man has no power over demons, and they are not obliged to fulfill man's desires, not because he is obliged to do so; be forced to do so by man, but because it satisfies his pride to be solicited by man, and even revered by him, instead of God; On the other hand, in response to these requests, he practices evil both in relation to others, as is often the case, and in relation to the requester himself, whose soul leads to perdition, which is what he has in mind in accepting the law. covenant.

### **Pact Species: Explicit and Implicit**

It is true that there may be, that there were and still are pacts with the devil.

### **1st explicit Pact**

The pact with the devil is an agreement between a person and the devil, whereby that person commits himself to something in relation to the devil, in exchange for his help to achieve that advantage he desires.

Often the covenant is made in writing, and the devil demands that man sign it with his own blood.

To establish the pact it is not necessary for both parties to be present in person: they can act through prosecutors. The devil is almost always represented by the sorcerer, saint-father, medium etc.

And this already leads us to the study of witchcraft, magic, macumba, which will be done next.

Other times the pact is made through initiatic secret societies and with certain established formalities or rites.

Finally, there are times when the covenant is made with the real appearance of the devil. There are cases of sorcerers who have a habitual trade with the Spirit of Darkness, which they see in the most varied forms: human, animal, fantastic.

### **2nd implicit pact**

But next to the explicit pact, there is the implicit pact with the devil.

It is easy, especially for Christians, to understand that a formal covenant, an explicit recourse to the devil, is contrary to God's law. But the implicit recourse through superstitious practices does not always appear clearly as a recourse to the Evil One and less shocks moral sense.

In order to say that there is an implicit covenant with the devil, one must, of course, have a more or less firm hope that the intended effect will indeed be obtained; It is also necessary to practice seriously and not merely as a joke (although it is very dangerous to play in this matter, as the devil can take it seriously). As this effect cannot be expected from the means employed (which are evidently not fit to lead to this result), at least implicitly, if certain mysterious, unnatural forces are present to obtain that result. What forces are these? If they do not come from God (either directly or indirectly through their angels or from the Church), where will they come from?

### **The answer can be no different: they come from the evil one.**

In many cases man realizes this; However, blinded by his unruly passions, he is no longer thinking of ascertaining the origin of the result obtained: what interests him is to achieve it. Thus one is gradually becoming accustomed to seeing the devil not as the evil spirit that he is, but only as a powerful being which he can use to his advantage; as a kind of deity conniving with his passions, whom it is convenient to worship.

Superstition, in whatever form, because it always contains a clear or veiled appeal, explicit or implicit to the devil, is a very serious sin against the virtue of religion, which prescribes us to worship God only, and only to recourse to Him and to Him. never to the power of darkness - "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and serve him only" (Lc4,8).

## **Devil Worship: Human Sacrifices**

### **Idolatrous worship of the dark spirit**

Undisciplined credulity, unleashing the brake on fantasy in the doubly mysterious field of superhuman forces and evil, tampers with the concept of Satan - enemy of God and the righteous but a mere creature - to make him a kind of evil deity, the that one should serve and please in the personal interest.

Whence some rites, such as in macumba, umbanda and candomblé, are made offerings of food and animal sacrifices to placate the devil and make him suitable for those who turn to him.

This stance can, and often does, lead the superstitious to make an authentic substitution of God for the devil and to perform blasphemous parodies of divine worship as in the Black Masses. Then comes full Satanism, which is characterized by the will to do evil, by active hatred, in the name of absolute freedom, which invests against every religious and moral law. This hatred is not explainable by human psychology, participating in the mystery of evil, the "mystery of iniquity" of which St. Paul speaks (cf. 2 Thess 2: 7).

And so it goes from the implicit covenant to the explicit covenant with the devil, and the idolatrous cult of the spirit of darkness, sometimes invoked under barbarian names like orixás, xangô, exús and others, especially in the rites of macumba, umbanda, candomblé, and magic practices in general.

### **The sacrifice: act of worship**

According to Catholic doctrine, sacrifices can only be offered to God because it is an essential act of the worship service by which we recognize the absolute power the Creator has over us. Every sacrifice offered to anyone other than God has an idolatrous character, a very serious sin of divine lese majesty.

Sacrifice consists in the offering and immolation of a victim (sacrifice itself) or in the offering and delivery of a good in honor of divinity (inappropriately said sacrifice), in order to proclaim that God is Lord of all things and that we have nothing of our own, but everything belongs to Him.

Because of sin, we ourselves should be immolated to God; but the Creator does not allow the bloody immolation of man himself, as did the pagan religions (cf. Lev 18: 21; 20: 1-5; Deut 12: 31; 18: 9ff). \* Thus there can be no sacrifice of bloody immolation of humans. Not being able to immolate our lives to God, we immolate our will, which is what the internal sacrifice consists of. The external sacrifice consists in the act of offering a victim or something to God, and should only be a sign of the internal sacrifice, the offering of ourselves.

\* When some Jews in the Old Testament, by imitation of the neighboring pagan peoples, killed their human victims (cf. 1 Kings 16,34), God, through the Prophets, made severe condemnations of these acts (cf. Jos 6:26; Ps 105: 37ff; Miq6). , 7; Jr7, 31; 19.5; 32.35; Ezi6.2Oss; 20.26).

### **Human sacrifices**

The devil, in his demented pride, wants to put himself in the place of God and be worshiped: "All this I will give you if you worship me, prostrate" (Jn 6: 9), he dared to say to the Savior himself,

offering him kingdoms of this world. And this is the invitation he gives to men, especially to those who seek him: "Worship me, I will give you everything!"

"Homicidal from the beginning" as Our Lord characterized him (Jn 8,44), the devil is not satisfied only with the offerings of animals, food, candles, cachaça, etc., as currently practiced in the cults of macumba. Whenever he can, he demands human sacrifice.

This is not something that happened only in antiquity, or among barbarian peoples, but it still occurs today. And between us, as we'll see later.

### **Black magic or witchcraft: historical aspects**

*"Do not turn to the wise men, nor question the soothsayers, lest ye be defiled through them."*  
(Lv19,31)

### **Antiquity of black magic or witchcraft**

"Dark or diabolical magic, or simply witchcraft, consists of a hidden power that allows the magician to achieve effects superior to the efficiency of the means actually employed" - defines Fr. Leonardo Azzolini SJ (Fr. Leonardo AZZOLINI SJ, La Magia Secondo la Morale Theology, col. 1832)

Witchcraft is found in all cultures and in all ages; It is presented in different aspects, but always with a common characteristic that is the use of formulas and magical, kabbalistic rituals, to cure diseases, to predict future things, to ensure the success of enterprises, etc. More particularly, the ability to do evil, to harm others.

The magic was so widespread in antiquity that it was a danger to the Elect People who was tempted to imitate neighboring peoples.

The Bible highlights this practice in Egypt. The book of Exodus (7,11ff) tells how Moses and Aaron had done wonders before Pharaoh (turning a rod into a serpent and the waters of the river into blood) Pharaoh's wise men did the same. The book of Isaiah (47: 12ff) and the book of Daniel (1,20; 2,2ff) show the importance of magic among the Babylonians. Also the Roman Greeks did nothing of importance without first consulting the pythoness and the oracles.

Therefore God established the most severe of punishments for those who resorted to magicians and fortune tellers, or invoked the spirits: the death penalty (Ex 22,18; Lev 20,27; 19,26-31; 20,6; Deut 18, 9-14 ).

Even after the Redemption such practices, unfortunately, did not cease (cf. Ac 13,6-10; 16,16-18). Indeed the Divine Master Himself had predicted that false prophets would rise up, who would do wonders and miracles that would deceive even the good ones (Mt 24,24).

In the early days of Christianity the Church Fathers fought sorcery very much; and in the Middle Ages, the great Doctors - such as John of Salisbury (1120-1180), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and St. Bonaventure (1221-1274), among others, continued the same battle, studying witchcraft in depth. .

The time, however, when the problem became more alive, was the beginning of the Modern Times, because of the enormous religious decay that followed the decline of the Middle Ages, with the explosion of pride and sensuality of the Renaissance, and finally the crisis of revolt against the Church, which occurred in Protestantism.

Indeed, especially in the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, countless popes and provincial councils issued documents warning against the practice of witchcraft.

It is at this time that one of the most authoritative documents on the action of witches and wizards arises, the Bull *Summis desiderantes*, by Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492).

### Papal Documents Against Witchcraft

#### Innocent's Bull VIII

The decider *Summis Bull*, December 6, 1484, describes the wicked action of wizards in certain regions of Germany.

The Pope begins by expressing his strong wish that "all heretical depravity be swept away from all borders and from all corners of the faithful."

Witchcraft is treated there as heretical depravity.

And the reason is because, in general, people who indulge in witchcraft end up with a heretical conception of the devil, ascribing divine qualities to him, or replacing him with God himself.

The package insert then goes on to describe the many practices of witchcraft, as was reported in Germany: "It has recently come to our ears, not until we were overwhelmed by the deepest bitterness that in certain German rules ... many people of both the sexes, neglecting their own salvation and straying from the Catholic Faith, gave themselves over to incubus and succubus demons (Incubus is the male form and succubus the female form taken by the spirit of darkness to maintain relations with wizards of both sexes. ) and their enchantments, their mischiefs and their conjurations, and other cursed charms and spells and other cursed horrible monstrosities and offenses, have murdered children in the womb, as well as bulls, and have ruined the products of the land. , the grapes of the vine, the fruits of the trees, and more: they have destroyed men, women, beasts of burden, herds, animals of other kinds. s, vineyards, orchards, meadows, pastures, wheat and many other cereals; these wretched people still afflict and torment men and women, pack animals, whole herds, and many other animals in terrible and pitiful pain and with atrocious diseases, both internal and external; and they prevent men from performing the sexual act and women from conceiving, so that husbands do not know their wives and wives do not know their husbands; but above all, they blasphemously renounce the Faith that belongs to them through the Sacrament of Baptism, and at the instigation of the Enemy of Humanity, do not excuse themselves from committing and perpetrating the most sordid abominations and the most disgusting excesses for mortal danger. of their own souls, so they outrage the Divine Majesty and are a cause of scandal and danger to many. " (In H. KRAMER-J. 5PRENGER, *The Hammer of Witches*, pp. 43-46.)

The Pope then refers to the two inquisitors he has appointed to this region, theology professors and members of the Order of Dominicans, Fathers Henry Kramer (also known by his Latinised

surname, Institoris) and Jacob Sprenger, whom he calls for full support. lest "the abominations and atrocities in question remain unpunished." If necessary, it recommends seeking the help of the secular arm, that is, the civil authorities.

It has been commented that this leaflet has no doctrinal value, but only fact-finding. But it is significant that both she and the other bulls of other Popes quite naturally take on the existence of witches and the results of their magical arts.

### **Other documents**

In 1500, Pope Alexander VI wrote to the Prior of Klosterneubourg and Inquisitor Kramer to report on the progress of witchcraft in Bohemia and Moravia.

A few years later, Pope Julius II ordered the Inquisitor of Cremona to take action against those who abused the Eucharist in an evil sense or who worshiped the devil.

Pope Leo X, by Bull *Honestis petentium votis* of 1521, raised a protest against the attitude of the Venetian Senate, which opposed the action of the Brescia and Bergamo inquisitors against the wizards. The Pope made threats of excommunication and interdiction.

Shortly afterwards, Hadrian VI adopted a similar attitude toward Bula *Dudum uti nobis*, addressed to the Cremona Inquisitor. His successor Clement VII wrote in the same way to the governor of Bologna.

It is true that Urban VIII (1623-1644) drew the judges' attention so that they would not be led into an inconsiderate repression of witchcraft. (See Emile BROUTTE, *The Civilization of the 16th century*, due to the satanic problem, pp. 365-366.)

The number of documents from provincial councils, especially from Germany, in the 16th and 17th centuries is too many to cite here. In all of them the ecclesiastical authorities insist on the repression of witchcraft practices and on the judgment of the guilty.

### **Civil laws**

Civil laws of the day also prohibited such practices, and lay magistrates instructed the processes of witchcraft: "The jurists opposed the rigidity of the Law to the fanaticism of superstition, the serenity of the legislation to the hatred of the peasants full of prevention. ... Processes are done carefully, with a deep desire to know the truth. Its duration is often only a further sign of the desire to avoid every judicial error ... The sorcerer found guilty is condemned to fire. And the only pity you know the law. But this sentence has numerous smoothings. " (Émile BROUTTE, po. Cit., P. 379.)

That there may have been judicial excesses and errors, there is no doubt. But we are far from the arbitrary picture painted by romantic and anti-clerical historians of the last century of blind fanaticism, the fruit of stupid ignorance.

It should be remembered that the sixteenth and seventeenth-century magistrates were known for their spirit of true universal scholarship, encompassing almost every field of knowledge, and their independence of judgment.

Campaigns unleashed against witchcraft at the beginning of modern times, at a time of great religious tension, which culminated in the Protestant explosion, were not the privilege of the Catholic regions, but they were - and even more intensely - in the countries that passed over the heresy.

But more than the historical problem, which is always difficult to define, what matters here is the question of doctrine: the possibility, according to Catholic theology, of the existence of witches and wizards.

### **Consensus of Catholic Theologians and Moralists**

The aforementioned booklet of Innocent VIII gave occasion to two theologians, appointed inquisitors by the Pope - the already cited Fathers Henry Kramer and Jacob Sprenger - to write a book to analyze, from a theological point of view, the practice of witchcraft: *Malleus Maleficarum* - The Hammer of Witches, continually translated and published in the various languages of the West. (Heinrich KRAMER and James SPRENGER, *The Hammer of Witches Malleus Maleficarum*, translated by Paulo Fróes, Rose of the Times Publisher, Rio de Janeiro, 2nd edition, 1991. Cf. J. Paquier, *Inocent VIII, DTC, VII, 2<sup>ème</sup> partie*, et al 2002-2005.)

In a scholastic argument, they turn to the great Doctors of the Church - especially St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas - to show how God can allow the devil to respond to the requests of perfidious men and women to turn to his help; that the extraordinary facts generally attributed to witches and wizards do not exceed the devil's angelic ability over matter.

The existence of witches and wizards has been peacefully accepted by all Catholic moralists. In addition to all the evidence that can be drawn from the Holy Scriptures and the Magisterium of the Church, the practice of witchcraft is confirmed "by the opinion of all theologians, whose unanimity brings absolute certainty in matters of doctrine. Now there is no manual of moral theology that does not speak of magic and witchcraft as having always existed and still exists. (*"L'Ami du clergé"*, *Le Demonisme*, No. 44 (1902) p. 978.)

### **Magic - Spiritism - Macumba**

"Do not be among you... who is charming. Neither do they consult the pythons or fortune-tellers, or inquire the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhors all these things, and by such wickedness shall he cut off these peoples. (Dt9,10-12)

### **Magic**

Magic is generally defined as the art of operating wonders by occult means. Here we do not refer to the arts of the prestigious, improperly called magic, or to other types of natural magic, which are none other than the art of operating wonders and unusual things by natural means; we are concerned only with magic itself, superstitious magic, or simply witchcraft that is defined as the art of working wonders by the devil.

As long as it is magic itself, that is, prodigies achieved with the help of the devil, this is not so much the case as the so-called white magic (which would gain advantages without harming others), or the so-called black magic, which would do evil against others. For all recourse to the Evil One is reprehensible in itself, no matter what effects one wishes to achieve.

As with other forms of superstition, magic can also be done by explicit or implicit invocation of the devil.

The magic used to harm others is called evil (enchantment, spell), which we can define as the art of harming others through the work of the devil. Authors often distinguish two types of harm: amatorium (filters of love) - if the action of the devil excites in someone a vehement feeling of love or hate towards a particular person; and poisonous (poisoning) - if it causes harm to persons or their property.

It cannot be denied that the devil, either by himself or through evil men - as long as God permits - can in various ways harm the body or property of certain targeted persons. God, in His unfathomable designs, is certain that He sometimes permits, as witnessed by the example of Job (cf. Job 1:12, Ex 22,18). Although one should not easily believe in the existence of harm, it would nevertheless be unwise to always deny it. It should be emphasized, however, that the harmful evil does not eliminate freedom, and demonic action can be resisted with the help of divine grace; but when one gives in to it, the sin committed will be more or less serious because of deliberation and the degree of freedom.

The evil contains double malice, one against religion, another against charity and justice, as it harms others.

It is a most serious sin against the virtue of religion, which prescribes us to worship only God, and only to Him, and never to the power of darkness - 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and serve him only' (Lk 4: 8). ).

Harm (also known in our country as dispatch, labor, spell, etc.) is one of the very common causes of the demon's extraordinary action upon people (infestation and possession).

### **Spiritism**

One of the most widespread forms of superstition today that puts people at risk of being in contact with the devil is spiritist practices.

Heretical Superstition, Contrary to Faith This is superstition, because the souls of those who die are under God's special tutelage and cannot communicate with the living except by special permission granted by Him. \*

\* Theologians discuss whether God allows the soul of a deceased to come into direct contact with the living, or whether, in the case of apparitions, it is an angel (or, as the case may be, a demon) representing that soul.

Now, spiritualists want to use purely natural means - such as the actions of other men, the mediums - to get these souls to appear or manifest.

There is then here a disproportion between the means employed, the natural means, and a supernatural action, as is the appearance or manifestation of the souls of the deceased.

(This effect is supernatural because it is above human nature to make the souls of the dead manifest or not to the living, which is up to God alone.)

Moralists teach that the only relationship that should exist between the souls of the deceased and us is a spiritual relationship based on remembrance and prayer. (Cf. Mons. Antonio LANZA - Mons. Pietro PALAZZINI, Principles of Moral Theology, p. 129 .)

God cannot consent to our whims, morbid curiosities, and fantasies; He cannot, therefore, allow souls, who are subject only to Him, to manifest when evoked to satisfy our desires of reckless presumption to penetrate the mysteries of the Beyond. Therefore, the same moralists say, if it is true that sometimes these evocations to souls of the other world receive an answer, such responses can only be from the Evil One. (Cardinal Lepicier explains how the devil can form a doll, with elements of nature or even other men, and make them appear under the figure of the deceased person, whose spirit is evoked to manifest in the spiritist session.

“Thus he writes, considering that an angel has full knowledge of the features and other qualities of each individual, living or dead, one can easily conceive that he is able, by his own power, to reproduce form, features, height, color, and clothing of a certain individual which we may know, to the extent that those who have most intimate dealings with this individual are deceived into thinking that they are their own.” (Cardinal A. LEPICIER, The Invisible World, pp. 76-77.)

The Church insistently repeated and defined it as a sin of heresy to want to apply purely natural means for unnatural, preternatural effects. Therefore, Spiritism, in its claim to want to call or evoke spirits from the Beyond, is heretical beyond impossible.

This superstition is condemned not only as unlawful or contrary to Christian morality, but also as heretical and contrary to faith.

### **Devil's performance in Spiritism**

“The living here,” says Bishop Bonaventura Kloppenburg, “have no efficient means that can cause manifestations of spirits beyond, that is, the world beyond human nature or beyond death. There, however, are evil spirits who would be very interested in disturbing, upsetting, and perverting those here. They cannot do it at ease, because their freedom is limited by divine permission, and God does not allow it easily.”

Spiritism provides the devil with the most propitious environment for the satanic spirit to manifest: “All objective and subjective dispositions are there.

Nothing, absolutely nothing is needed for the devil to feel comfortable and at home. It would be said that the spiritist center and especially the Umbanda terreiro is the abode of Satan, as the Christian temple is the house of the Lord”, concludes the same prelate. (Friar Bonaventure KLOPPENBUJRG OFM, Devil's Performance in Spiritism, pp. 113-122.)

There is no doubt, then, that spiritist superstitious practices leave man under the influence of Satan and can lead to possession. “The devil,” says Cardinal Alexis Lepiquando, when a man collaborates with the evil in superstitious practices, he exerts the most horrible and relentless influence on this individual. And draws attention to the spiritist practices: “A person cannot bald his limitations, wanting to act as a medium; it is the same as exposing oneself to the dangers of diabolical obsession ... To resort to a medium is thus to cooperate in one's obsession”(Cardinal A. LEPICIER, The Invisible World, pp. 287, 222-223 .)

That is why God Himself in the Old Testament condemned the invocation of the dead: "Let not one among you... who consults fortune tellers, or inquire of the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhors all these things, and by such wickedness he will cut off these peoples at thy entrance" (Deuteronomy 18: 10-12).

All this shows the extreme danger to those who resort to spiritist practices.

### **Macumba, Candomblé, Umbanda ...**

Along with spiritualism, macumba, candomblé, umbanda, are widespread in Brazil; in them the recourse to the devil is often under African names of supposed spiritual entities.

The macumba, candomblé and umbanda are different forms of syncretism of African pagan rites and beliefs with external elements of Christianity (images, invocations), reincarnationist spiritualism and Brazilian indigenous cults. These superstitious forms of religion are based on dualistic principles: they admit the existence of good entities and equally powerful evil entities; They believe that the latter, though enemies of man, must in the meantime be worshiped to prevent them from becoming evil. From this stems the most complete amorality by denying the distinction between good and evil, the foundation of all morality. \*

\* Anthropologist Vagner Gonçalves da Silva, who presented a thesis at the University of São Paulo about Candomblé discussing Afro-Brazilian religions, states: "In these religions there is no concept of good and evil and therefore they are misunderstood" ("Folha de S. Paulo", 29-7-92).

Unfortunately, the number of people - even Catholics - who resort to jobs, dispatches (ie sacrifices offered to the devil by invoking pagan deities) to solve their problems, satisfy their passions or ambitions, and even harm others, is increasing. . And this in all social classes; For example, in recent years, at the time of elections to fill political positions at all levels, a large number of candidates have made public use of holy fathers, psychic mediums, etc., as reported by the press.

Exú, the entity to whom sacrifices are offered in these services, is none other than the devil himself, as Monsignor Boaventura Kloppenburg demonstrates, quoting Umbanda books: "Every meeting of Umbanda begins with a gift offered to the exu 'universal magical agent, by whose the world of the living communicates with the spiritual world, in its various planes' (Doctrine and Ritual of Umbanda, Rio, 1951, p. 117) .... And let it not be said that the worship of Exu is exclusive of Quimbanda, Macumba, Candomblé or Batuque." And describes the book *The Spiritism and the Law of Umbanda*, by A. Fontenelle, Umbanda priest, who states: "In Umbanda the Exus are constantly invoked and no work is begun without that these entities be saved (ie revered)" (p. 12).

The bishop of New Hamburg continues: "Mr. Aluísio Fontenelle ... and other Umbanda indoctrinators, identifies without further exus what we Catholics call demons (p. 93, 103-116) where he describes the history of the Uprising. angels, headed by Lucifer: these angry angels are the exus)". \*

\* Friar Bonaventure KLOPPENBURG, *The Demonolatry in the Terras de Umbanda*, pp. 139-140.

Even a current dictionary of the Portuguese language, the so-called Aurélio Dictionary, thus defines: "Exú (Do Yoruba) Sm 1. Bras. Orisha who represents the powers contrary to man, and

assimilated by the Afro-Africans to the Demon of Catholics, but worshiped by them, because they fear him; 2. Bras. HUH. v. Devil."

People who engage in the practices of macumba, candomblé, and umbanda may be certain that it is the devil himself they are turning to under exotic names. And it could not be otherwise, since the only intelligent beings in the universe are - besides God himself, of course - angels, demons (who are fallen angels) and man. If man resorts to other intelligent beings superior to him and who are neither God nor angels, he can only be resorting to demons.

### **Other superstitious practices**

Other superstitious practices also very common in our homeland are divination, astrology, palmistry, the use of amulets and sympathies.

### **Divination, Astrology, Palmistry**

By divination we seek to know the hidden things, which by natural means could not be known, both present and past or future. The characteristic of divination is the desire to come to know something, not by rational effort, but by the use of an artifice, an extraordinary means not well explained. Ultimately, by the help of extrinsic forces and superior to man. These forces, of course, could only come from God and angels; or, by divine permission, of demons. Since this amounts to wanting to oblige God to satisfy man's curiosity or whim, it is certain that He does not answer such requests, either directly or through angels. Therefore, these superhuman forces can only come from the devil. "The essence of divination is trade with demons," teach Jesuit theologians Noldin and Schmitt. (H. NOLDIN SJ - A. SCHMITT SJ - G. HEINZEL SJ, *Summa Theologiae Moralis*, II, pp. 138-155 (Quest. 3: Sins Against Religion) In this chapter we closely follow these respected moral theologians whose work enjoys deserved prestige among the experts.)

Divination can be accomplished by expressly invoking demons (explicit covenant) or by implicit or tactical invocation (implicit covenant).

The express invocation occurs when the demon is directly invoked or a formal covenant is made with which certain signs will produce certain effects; In order for this divinatory covenant to be established, it is not necessary for the devil to actually respond, but its effects must follow. That is, to come to the knowledge of what you want to guess.

It is understood that implicit invocation to the devil has occurred when someone, in order to know something, uses inept means for this purpose, which - as explained above - neither by nature nor by divine or ecclesiastical institution have the power to produce the desired effects. ('Modern Gnosis that follows theosophists and anthroposophers and the techniques of meditation and concentration in India (Yoga, Buddhism) that seek to know things superior to human nature are not exempt from demonic influx, especially when directly sought after' (NOLDIN-SCHMITT-HEINZEL)., loc. cit.))

Of course, demons have no power to know the future itself - the so-called contingent future or free future, that is, the facts whose occurrence depends on the will of God and the free will of men. These, nor the angels of heaven, know him (cf. Mk 13:32). But, being superior intelligent beings can deduce what will be the outcome of events, causes, once put, will come to an end in a

certain way: it is the so-called necessary future. He foresees this future in the way that a scientist who knows the laws of his science - which are like mysteries to the common man, and even to educated men, but not experts in those matters - and knows what will happen according to these laws. Thus, thrown a seed into the ground, it will fulfill its germination cycle under certain conditions and, if there are no adverse factors, will necessarily produce the corresponding plant at the right time; the same as for the development of certain diseases, etc.

Of course, God can always intervene to thwart the devil's calculations, but usually He allows natural causes to produce their results. Hence the correctness of the demon's predictions.

Not to mention that the Father of lies can announce an extraordinary fact that he himself will produce and therefore foresees with such certainty. But what depends on God's will or the freedom of men is entirely beyond his foresight.

Every form of divination is a superstition and at least implicit invocation of the devil; therefore its use is even illicit; in other words, it constitutes - according to Catholic Moral - a sin of its own seriousness. ”\*

"Those who consult fortunetellers or Gypsies gravely sin if they do so with firm faith or scandal of others, venial if only out of curiosity." (NOLDIN-SCHMITT-HEINZEL, loc. Cit.).

Astrology, through the horoscope, intends to deduce from the conjunction of the stars, at the birth of a certain person, their destiny and their behavior. There is no proportion between the causes invoked (the conjunction of the stars) and the effects one wants to obtain, namely the prediction of facts concerning a person that depend on free will and divine providence.

The same should be thought of palmistry - guesswork by examining the lines of the palm - as of any other kind of divinatory practices: fortune telling, tarot, wheelks, etc.

### **Amulets, pets, sympathies**

Amulets are small objects that someone brings with him or her because they believe in their magical power of luck or protection against dangers: figs, clovers, rabbit's feet, horseshoes, etc .; pets are animals to which the same power is attributed: puppies, kittens, etc .; Sympathies are certain superstitious practices, or objects used superstitiously, to protect man from disease or to cure it.

\* St. Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, says in his Synod Constitutions and Instructions that "there is superstition every time all words are put into effect, however holy they may be, or in any vain and useless circumstance, as believing that , to heal a sick person, we need to say three Our Fathers before the sun rises (cf. L. ROURE, Superstition, cols. 1563-1569).

As in the previous cases, these objects, animals, or practices cannot be seriously and rationally expected to prevent disease, cure disease, or bring luck in life. If one gives real credit to this alleged protective action of amulets and mascots and to the efficacy of the sympathies (not just a joke, a dangerous sign, as the devil may infiltrate it) we will have another case of implicit invocation of the demon.

### **"Closed body"**

Another superstitious practice is the use of sorcerers (or saint-fathers) to obtain what is called a closed body, that is, the invulnerability to assault with bladed weapons or firearms.

These people, even though they are not fully aware of it, are resorting to the devil, at least implicitly, as has already been explained. And the devil can answer them (God permitting them to punish them) by deflecting blows and gunshots or preventing their effect.

By way of illustration, we transcribe the consultation made by a French missionary in the East at the beginning of this century, the "L - Ami du Clergé" - renowned ecclesiastical magazine - and the respective:

"What do you think of the following fact, which I went to witness in the eye?"

"A pagan dealt saber-blows to one of his co-religionists. Blood should flow in abundance; Now the struck heathen had only a few black spots on his body, the saber blade could not penetrate the flesh. "

"The pagans present attributed this to the numerous amulets carried by the one who received the blows."

"Had the devil in some cases been allowed to protect his adherents in this world, on the condition of torturing them in the other?"

The magazine, after saying that it is difficult to pronounce on the concrete case from a distance, however gives the solution in doctrine:

"The fact in question, no matter how extraordinary, does not surprise us, and we would be led to believe that it comes from the devil, because it by no means surpasses its power. History shows us that the devil preserved, no doubt with God's permission, in the still pagan nations the power he once had in the idolatrous world; as a result, he would in certain cases have the power and permission to protect his faithful followers, and also to punish those who gave themselves to him when they disobey his lord. Since man is composed of body and soul, God uses the sacraments and outward signs to give him his grace and to protect him: just as the devil, who by pride and hatred and revenge wants to imitate or at least monkey the outside signs, use of amulets, etc. to reach its ends ". (L'Ami du Clergé, No. 35 (1902), p. 763.)

### **The use of crosses and medals**

A very different case is the use of crosses, medals, scapulars and other holy objects, as well as the practice of godly exercises, such as novenas, etc.

These objects and practices are not ascribed here to an efficacy that they themselves do not have, nor is it intended to attract the divine by merely natural procedure. It is a matter of trust in the prayers of the Church, which blessed these objects and approved of these practices, as well as the protection of Our Lady or the Saint whose medal is worn and whose novena is made, as a sign of devotion.

The use of these objects and practices is not given an infallible and immediate value, but only a reasonable trust is placed in them, which faith in God and in the Church allows, relating everything to eternal salvation, which is what matters most.

### **“Does the harm catch on?”**

The preventive means against evil are the same as those previously indicated in relation to temptation, infestation and possession: sacramental life, life of piety, use of holy objects, etc.

Once the effects of evil have been produced, prayers and sacrifices must be increased, and exorcisms may need to be used in certain cases.

Father Severino Gisder OFM indicates the state of mind we must have in the face of curses and evils:

“Do not be afraid of the unjustified or gratuitous curse. It does not reach its goal! On the contrary, not infrequently such a curse falls on the one who uttered it. Read Psalm 9: 16: “They perished in the pit that they made themselves, and in the trap that they set they seized their own feet. “Or look at Psalm 7: 15-17: “ Behold, the (ungodly) has conceived iniquity and is full of malice and gives birth to fraud. He dug and dug a pit, and fell into the very pit that he made. Upon his own head shall fall his wickedness, and upon his forehead shall his violence return.

“So-called macumba dispatches usually include a curse in terms of wanting to harm someone. Can such dispatches or witchcraft spells do harm or harm? Of these we have said of the free curse: Seek to live in sanctifying grace, that is, in the intimacy of God, and you will suffer nothing. Out of debt, out of danger”. (Br. S.GISDER OFM, Blessing and Curse, pp. 10-11.)

If the general rule is pointed out by the pious Franciscan - that the curse or evil does not strike the person in a state of grace - however, God often allows the virtuous person to be struck by such evil practices for his trial. This is the case for resorting to blessings and exorcisms: “The curse can be neutralized or undone by the blessing!” - explains Friar Severino.

### **Black Sabbaths and Masses**

*“May his blood fall on us and our children.” (Mt27,25)*

### **Sabbat: Descriptions**

By the name of Sabbaths were designated the gatherings of wizards, wizards, witches - as well as those who wished to consecrate themselves to the devil - under the presidency of the prince of hell himself. (We follow here closely Chapter VII (Le demonisme dans les sabbats) from the series of articles on demonism, published by the renowned ecclesiastical magazine France, “L’Ami du Clergé” (no 45 [1902] pp. 993-997).

There is no agreement as to the origin of the name Sabbat: some say it was taken from the Hebrew Shabbath, which designated the resting day of the Jews, because the devil likes to monkey the works of God; others seek etymology in the Greek sabadzios, which in Latin gave Bacchus - Bacchus, the god of wine and orgies. Sabbaths would then be the continuation of the abominable and shameful mysteries of paganism.

There are many dark and mysterious points around the Sabbaths that their participants (and the devil himself) were interested in not being known.

These meetings took place in the middle of the woods, high in the hills, on a deserted plain or beach and other inhospitable wilderness, from Wednesday to Thursday, or from Thursday to Friday, or, more often, from Friday. Friday to Saturday. Watchers were placed to prevent any unholy people from approaching, but sometimes they were interrupted by outsiders, who made the sign of the cross and threw holy water, then produced an indescribable racket and within moments the participants disappeared. just as they had come: flying through the air on a broomstick or riding a goat or some other filthy animal; another on foot, but at breakneck speed no one could keep up.

Descriptions vary somewhat as to the setting in which these meetings were held and the ceremonial observed, but they are broadly agreed: in the center of the site was an altar on which an idol (usually a human-shaped demon) was placed. goat's heads and feet, or a huge frog). All came to pay homage, to worship him, to kiss his feet, his hands, and other less honorable parts of his body; other times it was not an idol, but Satan himself - in visible form - who sat on a throne upon the altar.

Everyone had to bring him an offering. These acts of worship and vassalage were performed in terror and trembling, and those who surrendered themselves to the devil knew that if they wished to escape their tyranny they would be cruelly punished by it.

There were in the Sabbath pleasures designed to satisfy the lowest instincts — especially gluttony and sensuality — through banquets, orgies, dances, and lust.

Disgusting dishes were served at the banquet: horse, dog, cat, and sometimes even human flesh, especially from unbaptized children whose blood was sucked or drunk.

The dances began to the sound of jarring, noisy, agitated tunes ripped from bizarre instruments (a piece of wood, a jaw of a horse, human or animal bones, etc.), which imitated high flutes, deafening drums, shrill guitars. which were joined by the hoarse or piercing voices of demons and witches and witches, all at a frantic, mind-blowing pace. The more the music was discordant, the more the dances became voluptuous, turning the dancers in an uncontrollable whirlwind, as in the sacred spinning dances of the Turkish dervishes.

Many were completely naked and others summarily dressed. In short, it all resembled a modern Rock'n'Roll show, especially Hard Rock.

This was followed by the most disgusting practices of sexual depravity, of witches and witches among themselves, in straight or homosexual connections, and also with animals and with the demons themselves, which took human forms.

This outburst of lust was accompanied by an unprecedented outburst of wickedness, with the most sacrilegious parody of Christian practices and devotions. Instead of the holy water, the assistants were sprayed with urine; \* unbaptized children were given satanic baptism, being given a Luciferian name and godfathers to ensure their education in evil and their allegiance to the devil; if they were already baptized, the devil sought to shave the character of Baptism with its claws and

rename them. They made them swear allegiance to the devil, and renounce God, Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, angels and saints; they promised never to confess, except to do so sacrilegiously, or to commune, but to desecrate the consecrated host or to take it hidden with them for satanic rituals; The initiate was later confirmed, receiving new godparents and promising to bring new adherents to the worship of Satan.

\* The devil, in his despair of reprobate angel, is a clumsy, mocking being who does not retreat even before the greatest prose or obscenities, to demean man whom he despises, and to offend God whom he hates.

The Commandments were thus recited: "Thou shalt worship Lucifer as a true God, and love no one but him. Thou shalt assiduously blaspheme the name of Jesus.

You will easily commit fornication and adultery. You will covet the neighbor's wife and also the things of others ", etc. The angelic greeting (Hail Mary) was addressed to the future mother of Antichrist.

On Sabbaths, the devil taught wizards, witches and wizards the secrets of brewing for the most varied magical effects: to cause death or madness in people, animals; love filters and other harms.

Often the Sabbath ended with a black Mass, which we will deal with later.

### **Doctrinal examination**

There is discussion among the Authors on several of these points.

1 ° If witches were flying and physically participating in these sabbaths.

As to whether the witches actually carried themselves into the air for these assemblies, after applying a magical ointment to their bodies, some argue that this ointment was made up of hallucinogenic herbs, which made them feel like they were flying and practicing. the above has been described; everything would be nothing more than a hallucination caused by these substances.

All the more so, they say, that many witches confessed to being in doubt as to whether they had actually had a physical part in the Sabbath, or just in the imagination.

Many witches, too, were found in their beds by the time they were supposed to be on Saturdays. On the contrary, it was found that others had actually disappeared after anointing their bodies with ointment, and even an inquisitor, promising a witch for forgiveness, obtained her to fly, in his presence and in the presence of several witnesses, out a window. after inducing with the ointment and summoning the demon. She was found lying in a field leagues ahead.

Egon von Petersdorf (who was an occultist prior to his conversion to Catholicism), speaking of the Sabbaths, explains in his book *Demonology* that the purpose for which witches used hallucinogenic ointments and potions was precisely to facilitate through trance hallucinatory, faster contact with the devil. \*

In fact, hallucinogen disturbs the functioning of intelligence and will, powers that guarantee the inner freedom of man and thus offer a barrier to the action of the evil one. Therefore, the use of

hallucinogens is very common in occultic means, to facilitate contact with the devil. And here is a very curious clue about an undisclosed aspect of drug use and trafficking, but one that reveals to what depths lead, namely, its connection with Satanism. (In the next chapter we will see a story linking directly drug trafficking with Satanism regarding ritual crimes in the city of Matamoros, Mexico.) \* Cf. E. von PETERSDORF, *Demonology*, p. 143

From the theological point of view, nothing prevents the demon from transporting witches and witches to the location of the infamous gathering. For as an angel (fallen, it is true, but who has not lost the powers proper to his nature), the devil is capable of this. And the proof is in the Scripture itself, which tells how the prophet Habakkuk was blown up by an angel from Judea to Babylon to feed the prophet Daniel, who had been cast into a den of lions (Dan. 14: 32- 35); and how the Savior Himself was carried by the devil from the wilderness where He fasted to Jerusalem and be deposited upon the pinnacle of the Temple to be tempted (Matt. 4: 1-5).

Moreover, the opinion that witches were flying bodily by the work of the devil has been taken for granted by centuries of serious and cultured men so as not to be doubted. St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), in his *Moral Theology*, writes as follows: "It is warned that it is common opinion that there are witches who with the help of the devil are carried bodily from one place to another: the contrary opinion, who defended Luther, Melancton and some Catholics is very harmful to the Church. " (Saint AFONSO, *Moral Theology*, in D. NEYRAGUET, *Moral Compendium of St. Alfonso Maria de Liguori*, p. 130.)

The two opinions, however, can be reconciled.

Dominican friars H. Kramer and J. Sprenger believe, based on their experience as inquisitors, that sometimes witches and wizards are physically blown to the Sabbath, and sometimes they participate only in spirit, through hallucinations that the devil provokes in his imagination and action upon his senses (Cf. H. KRAMER - J. SPRENGER, *The Hammer of Witches*, pp. 223-231.)

## **2nd fleshly trade with demons**

According to the renowned French ecclesiastical magazine *L'Ami du Clergé*, the possibility of carnal trade between men and demons cannot be denied: "Let us even say that it is impossible to deny this kind of fact, after the numerous, clear and convincing testimony of the saints. Fathers. Suffice it to quote St. Augustine's words: 'The facts of the incubus or succubus demons are so manifold that they could not be denied without recklessness: the authority of so many serious characters, the narrative of facts indisputable both among civilized peoples and among the barbarians, the confessions, finally, of several thousand people must be taken into account '(De Civit. Dei, XV) ". ("L 'Ami du Clergé", *Le Demonisme*, 1902, p. 1065.) Still in the eighteenth century - the so-called Century of Enlightenment ... - such a practice is confirmed by serious and learned authors such as Br. Charles-René Billuart, OP (1685-1757), celebrated French theologian, and St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori (1696-1787), Doctor of the Church. (Cf. FC-R. BILLUART, *Soturno Sancti Tornae*, V, p. 264; Saint AFONSO, *Moral Theology*, in D. NEYRAGUET, op. Cit., P. 248.)

As to how this carnal trade with the devil can be done, it is certain that the devil, being pure spirit, cannot commit acts of lust. However, nothing prevents him from making dolls to which he gives the appearance of life, presenting them sometimes as men (the so-called incubus demon), sometimes as women (sububu). so that they may be the object of satisfaction of the lust of those who give themselves to him. \*

\* A great connoisseur of these matters, the wise Cardinal Alexis Lepicier, explains how an angel (or a demon, who is a fallen angel) proceeds to make such living-looking dolls: "There is in nature such an abundant variety of elements a An angel can, by a skillful combination and condensation of these elements, give them the shape and even color of a human body. Moreover, it is not out of his power to fetch from animals, and even in certain cases in living persons, these elements, even though they are far from the place where such phenomena occur "(Cardinal A. LEPICIER, *The World Invisible*, pp. 76-77).

It was with a doll made by the devil that witches and wizards practiced the carnal act. And one of the reasons for this is that the devil despises human nature and seeks to demean it in every way. \*

\* According to the moralists, the resulting sin, being committed with a being that is not of the same kind as man (for it is a mere doll artificially animated by the devil), is the sin of bestiality, analogous to that committed with animals (cf. Saint AFONSO, *Moral Theology* in NEYRAGUET, op. cit., p. 248; BILLUART, *Summa Sancti Tomae*, t. V, p. 264).

St. Thomas Aquinas asks if the offspring of a woman's union with a demon can be born (Cf. *De Potentia*, q. 6, art 8; *Suma Theológico*, 1, q. 51, a, 3, apud "L'Ami du Clerge," 48 (1902), p. 1065, n. 1.) And he replies that he, having no divine power, cannot create, and being a spirit cannot create, and being a spirit cannot engender But, it concludes that it seems that it can generate, not with its own, of course, but going to get it in some man and infusing it in the woman. Thus, says Doctor Angelic, the child thus conceived is not generated by the devil, but by a man, indirectly and artificially. (Modern experiments on artificial fertilization (obviously unknown to the medieval Holy Doctor) show that his hypothesis is perfectly in line with science.)

### **Black Masses**

During the Sabbaths there was often a parody of Holy Mass, officiated by a demon or his priests or priestesses; or a sacrilegious Mass, celebrated by an unfortunate priest perverted to satanic practices, commonly called Black Mass.

All prayers and rites were inverted or blasphemously misrepresented. In the Creed, for example, it said:

"I believe in Lucifer and his son Beelzebub, conceived by Leviathan the Holy Spirit." At the elevation of the host, when a priest had indeed consecrated, \* a terrible noise was made, and the attendants were sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and all shouted like the Jews in the Passion:

"May his blood fall on us and our children" (Mt 27, 25). Sometimes a dagger was thrust into the chalice and dripped blood; or else a host would be nailed to the cross, and all the participants would come to pierce it, and sometimes blood would flow from it.

Regarding the validity of the consecration of eucharistic species in the context of a black Mass, theologians argue; some claim, others deny that transubstantiation actually operates.

Occasionally, during Holy Week, boys were crucified who were kidnapped, or carried away by their mothers, themselves witches, nailing them to their feet and hands, crowning them with thorns and piercing their sides. They tore at their hearts and other viscera, and often also at their genitals, which were used for harm. \*

\* One of the most famous historical cases of modern times involving witchcraft and black Mass was the so-called Voisin Affair, in which nothing less than the mistress of King Luiz XIV, Madame de Montespan was involved. This favorite contacted the witch Voisin and attended a black Mass, officiated by a deviant priest, Father Guiborg, to secure the adulterous passion of the King. In testimony to the magistrate and chief of police La Reynie, the daughter of the witch said: "Fr. Guiborg presented at the Mass of Madame de Montespan, by order of my mother, a boy who appeared to have been born before the term. He put it in a basin, cut it off, poured the blood into the chalice, consecrated it along with the host, finished the mass and then took the bowels of the boy; the next day my mother took everything to Dumesnit [another witch] to distill her blood and, together with the host, prepare a filter that Madame de Montespan took with her." This terrible fact was very well documented in view of the importance of the people involved and, from 1679, for sixteen months, was analyzed by the French magistrates, resulting in the death sentence of several people and the removal of Madame de Montespan from the Court. . (Bernardette of CASTELBAJAC, *Les Messes Noires au Grand Siècle*, in "History" Hors Series No. 35, 1974, p. 105). Child sacrifice in demonic ceremonies is a constant in witchcraft practices; today, they continue to occur, generally performed in the context of macumba, umbanda, etc., as we will see later, when narrating the events in Guaratuba (Paraná) in 1992.

So far, referring to Sabbaths, we have always used the past tense. One question, however, inevitably arises: since witches and wizards continue to exist (though hardly with these names), will not Sabbaths still exist today?

There are reports that yes: in various places in Europe and the United States there have been meetings of wizards, who present themselves as such, and called themselves by the name of sabbat. If all of the above happens at these meetings, there is no data to answer. However, many of these practices are undeniable in the context of witchcraft, macumba, and other satanic rites. And even outside these contexts, similar things happen, as will be seen later.

Thus, it seems that one can answer without hesitation in the affirmative: Sabbaths continue to occur, with all or almost all of their horror.

### **Crop Destruction, Impediment to Generation, Disease**

Among the powers attributed to witches is to cause material and physical damage to men and animals, or to unleash the elements of nature through magical and demonic arts.

In dealing with magic and evil, we have already said that if God permits (which He does sparingly) nothing prevents the devil, acting upon the physical and atmospheric or physiological and psychological elements of man, to bring about effects such as the destruction of crops, generation impediment, unknown diseases, and others. This he works to provoke impatience in man and

make him revolt against divine Providence. Job's case is very illustrative in this regard. Other times, however, it provokes these extraordinary phenomena to meet the request it receives from wizards, through the ills (also called dispatches, works, arrangements, spells).

Historians record at various times personal cases of all conditions - kings and nobles, simple bourgeois or peasants - who found themselves unable to maintain marital relations, due to ill effects. In many of these cases it can be assumed to be purely natural phenomena (unknown diseases, anomalous psychological states, etc.); a number of times there may have been demonic action.

### **Werewolf and other fantastic beings**

A related theme to what we have just outlined is that of reality or fantasy about the alleged power of witches to turn people into animals.

From ancient times it is spoken of the possibility of men being turned into animals by magical arts. So in the *Odyssey*. Homer (9th century BC) tells that the companions of Ulysses were turned into pigs by the witch Circe. Already in Christian times there are cases of men who, as a result of pact with the devil or by the effect of a spell, become or are transformed into animals. In reports of European missionaries in Africa in the last century and even in this century, as well as in the Amazon jungle, mention is made of pagan wizards who turned into animals to terrorize priests and neo-converts.

This issue is studied by St. Thomas and other Doctors, who deny the possibility of man being transformed into an animal. This is for a fundamental reason of a philosophical nature: the human soul cannot unite with a body like that of an animal that is not suited to it.

The testimonies, however, are numerous and credible to doubt the reality of the facts.

How can we explain them in the light of Catholic philosophy and theology?

The same St. Thomas asserts that the devil can distort the features and limbs of a man to the maximum, giving him a fantastic appearance. No more than that. However, he can also act on the fantasy and the senses, both of himself and those who see him, so that, by illusion, he feels both transformed into an animal, and the others have the impression of seeing a person. animal, or a fantastic being, half man half animal: a werewolf, for example. (See *Summa Theologica*, I, q.91; 105, a. Ad 1; 114, a.4 ad 2.)

Inquisitors Henry Kramer and Jacob Sprenger look into the matter and recount the case of a man who thought he was becoming a wolf: in fact he fell into deep sleep, and because of the demon's action on his fantasy and sensibility, he thought he was running with the wolves. wolves, attacked and devoured children, satisfied their instincts with wolves, and so on. In fact, the demon would get into a wolf that would do all this damage so as to leave traces of those hallucinations.

They report yet another case of a young woman who, having been bewitched by a witch, was seen by all as a filly, and she herself looked that way. Taken in the presence of St. Macarius, he suffered the illusion of others and saw her as she was: a beautiful girl. Praying over her, the Saint made the spell cease and the young woman feel and be seen normally again. (H. KRAMER - J. SPRENGER, *Witches Management*, pp. 153-154.)

Sometimes the devil can own an animal (a wolf for example), and make him do fantastic things. He can also, to obtain his wicked designs, form an animal doll or be fantastic, just as, as we have seen, he can make a man's doll. (This could be an explanation for certain fantastic beings such as dragons, headless mules, peris-sacs, rednecks, and so on, as well as ghosts and haunts that, even leaving aside the exaggerations and fantasies of exalted popular imagination, there is no doubt that from time to time actually manifest themselves.)

There are innumerable historical cases of mysterious animals that plague certain regions, decimating the flock and terrorizing the populations, without being able to capture them by means of traps, nor kill them with cutting or firearms: the blades did not penetrate their bodies and large-caliber bullets did not cause them any harm.

One of the most famous cases was the ferocious beast of Gévaudan (region of France) in the reign of Louis XV (18th century), which to this day intrigues historians; some suppose it was a demon-possessed wolf.

**Modern Satanism** "Tremble, tremble, witches are back." (Slogan of a feminist parade)

"Ten million Americans practice black magic." (B. Wenisch, Satanism)

### **Emptiness and frustration lead to Satanism**

It seems unbelievable that modern man can make pacts with the devil. It would be said that he regards all these as stories of dark ages, in which ignorance and backwardness would have led some to the illusion of having established trade with beings supposedly superior to men and seeking from them what the science of time did not allow them to reach by other means. Likewise, as others turned to God, to the Virgin, the angels, and the saints in heaven. Both would suggest themselves and believe they had gotten what they wanted by granting supernatural beings or forces.

But the present man, almost a man from the third millennium, would have no need for one thing or the other: science and technique would suffice, which, added to his work, would guarantee him the elements to complete happiness on this earth: machines and devices to reduce her efforts; medicines and treatments to conserve health for work, and disposition for pleasure.

This materialistic (and naively optimistic) conception contrasts with the facts that happen daily under the eyes of even the least observant observer: there are on the pages of newspapers and on television news, the news of heinous crimes, committed in order to get rid of it. Extra-natural forces are an advantage for yourself or others, or an evil for some enemy.

In fact, at the same time as science and technology are unraveling the secrets of nature and awakening forces that man can hardly control (genetic engineering, with the planned laboratory production of humans intended perfect and afraid to be monstrous). At the same time as this, an immense sense of spiritual emptiness makes this whole process meaningless, and turns man back to something more than prosaic concrete reality.

At the same time that science and technology seem to have no limit to progress, the manifestations of resorting to extra-natural forces seem larger than in any other preceding epoch.

## Neo-satanism

### Literary Satanism

Already in the last century and the beginning of this the literary movement had a satanist or at least demonophile lode, in which the French poets Victor Hugo (1802-1885), Paul Valéry (1871-1945) and Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) stood out, the latter of which even wrote satanic litany. \* In Italy, the literate Giosué Carducci (1835-1907) composed an Ode to Satan that became well known. The writer Joris Karl Huysmans (1848-1907), in his book *Là-bas* describes an occult-satanist environment that existed in the literary and artistic circles of Paris, including the celebration of black Masses.

\* “Romanticism loves unhappiness, celebrates the illustrious victims of fatality... it wants to be convinced that evil and unhappiness will be overcome. Satan, in this fallacious and anguished literature, becomes a symbolic figure, a figure in which the splendor of evil is reflected, but a figure that one day must be reinstated in a black light.

Vigny has long fed the project of a forgiven Satan, which will be written much later by Victor Hugo in the poem *The End of Satan* ”(Albert BEGLIN, *Balzac et la fin de Satan*, p. 540).

Today, more than literature (which has lost much of its attractiveness), Satanism is widespread in music, cinema and television.

### Witches on TV

Bernhard Wenisch, German demonologist, brings interesting data about the role of television in the spread of Satanism, especially, but not exclusively, about youth: “For the spread of Satanism that by no means only reaches youth and not even preponderantly, the electronic media have collaborated lately. ”

“So, for example, appeared on German TV in 1984 and Austrian TV in 1985, Satanist Ulla von Bernus who claimed to be able to kill people through magical rituals. The ritual he showed consisted of burning a doll with the victim's appearance, summoning Satan and repeatedly pronouncing the hideout: 'You must burn! You need to die slowly!' In the discussion of Austrian TV, the woman was also committed to the practice of Black Mass. Some time later, Austrian TV introduced Ela Hard, who declared herself a witch and claimed that she also mastered the ability to kill by magic. In his books he described in detail his initiation into black magic by an Australian aborigine and his successfully crowned rituals. She Hard died in early 1988. ”

The same author goes on: “It is possible to observe the Satanist wave everywhere in the western world. In many German cities black masses are celebrated. German TV showed in 1984 how a young woman was consecrated to Satan as a witch - she was even naked subjected to ritual flogging. It has happened that in these ceremonies people were sacrificed to the devil. In 1986, one of these murder rituals, planned against two young women from Dortmund, could be stopped by police. There are Satanists who feel inspired by the devil to simply eliminate people they think are dangerous. ”

He goes on to deal with the phenomenon in other Western countries: "In other countries too, Satanism is gaining ground. In 1985, French TV not only reported on the belief in witches, which continues to persist among the people, but also featured a wizard who, with the help of demonic forces, produced spells. A Norwegian specialist in religious sciences, who attended as an observer for various black masses in the city of Bergen, said that these masses were mainly about sex and murder. And that Satanists themselves are convinced that in their meetings supernatural forces are present, of which they are afraid. They took no responsibility for their actions because they no longer had control over themselves.

Black Masses ended with ritual group sex. From Sweden there are reports of corpse theft and grave violation in connection with Satanism. Satan also flourishes in England." (Bernhard WENISCH, Satanism, pp. 29-30.)

### **Satanist Churches in the United States**

According to Wenisch, where Satanism has spread the most is the United States, where there are several known Satanic Churches. He states: "Thousands of children are victims annually of the worship of Satan; ten million Americans practice black magic; about one hundred million succumbed to occult practices - these shocking numbers were just published in the US." (B. WENISCH, Satanism, p. 31.)

One of the most active of these Satanic Churches is that of High Priest Anton Szandor LaVey, with over 8,000 members.

LaVey was the technical advisor to film producer Roman Polansky for the production of his Satanist movie *Rosemary's Baby* (story of a child who would be the Devil's daughter). In August 1969, a few months after the release of this film, Polansky's wife, actress Sharon Tate (given herself to witchcraft practices), was horribly murdered, along with three other friends, in a crime that had all the characteristics of Satanic ritual. The killers were adept at a Satanist sect headed by Charles Manson, a LaVey admirer whose bedside book was the latter's Satanic Bible. (See Jean-Claude FRÉRE, *Criminal Reform to Cielo Drive*, pp. 130-135.)

In 1986, US Treasury Secretary James Baker informed Senator Jesse Helms of the existence of various Satanist organizations and the practice of witchcraft, which are officially recognized as a religion by the US government, enjoying tax exemption. There was controversy about this, and several leaders of these Satanist organizations sent letters to the US Congress. From one of them, signed by a Reverend Doctor Sidney Gavin Frost of October 11, 1985, we draw some significant: "We are witches, and we practice a minority religion, but well attested and documented. ... We are recognized as a religion by the federal government in its Chaplains Manual; In this publication, chaplains receive instructions on the services to be given to wizards in the military and on the battlefield. ...

We have been an officially recognized Church in the United States since 1968." (MA COSTA, *When Jesus Christ is expelled ...* p. 15.)

In the city of Matamoros, Mexico, police, who were looking for a missing college student, found 14 dead men on a rural property. These showed signs of being the victims of a satanic ritual, (everyone's genital had been amputated, which is a hallmark of a certain kind of ritual). Police

were able to identify the criminals: they were a group of marijuana smugglers who confessed to crime and claimed to be voodoo (a type of Haitian macumba very similar to candomblé). The reason for the ritual crime was the desire to obtain protection for their criminal trade. (Pericles CAPANEMA, Satanism, Drugs, and Fashion, in "Catholicism," 471, March 19 90, p. 22.)

### **Feminism, Ecology and Satanism**

"Magic and occultism are spreading more and more in feminist movements," comments B. Wenish. (B. WENISCH, Satanism, p. 38.)

"Tremble, tremble, the witches are back"

It was in Italy in 1977 that the word witch was first used in the feminist movement.

One young woman had died as a result of violent rape. Young culprits were sentenced to relatively light sentences. This brought about a colossal feminist demonstration of protest. Approximately 100,000 women gathered at night in the streets of a major Italian city making a loud noise and shouting in chorus: "Tremble, tremble, witches are back!". (Ibid., P. 35.)

Certain feminist movement activists regard witches as an appropriate symbol of their yearnings.

For them the witches would have been persecuted because they were skilled in medicines, midwives who knew abortion and pregnancy prevention methods; women trying to break free from male dominance by breaking with the dominant religious and social order. According to feminists, it is the memory of these women (the witches) that inspires their own struggle against the patriarchal structures of today's society.

In addition, some feminists engage in magical-occult practices as a means of achieving their supposed emancipation.

### **The Wicca Movement**

This is the case with the powerful feminist movement - in fact a true Satanist sect - which presents itself as a continuation of medieval witches and wizards. It is the Wicca movement, an arcane English word from which the modern word witch derives. The Wicca sect definitely defines itself as pagan and consciously pits itself against Christianity. Venerate the Great Goddess from whence all life comes, and whence all return. Beside, or rather below, this Great Goddess is the mighty horned god, derived from the feminine principle, which they say, at the time of the persecution of witches, was identified as a biblical demon. It is a feminine pantheism, and it is no wonder that the sect seeks links with the feminist movement and considers itself an integral and militant part of it for religious-philosophical reasons.

Fans of this new witchcraft gather in groups of up to 13 people to practice magic.

They insist that there is no black magic and therefore harmful witchcraft, but that magical force is only used for positive purposes. In any case, who created rituals for Wicca groups was nothing short of the notorious English Satanist Aleister Crowley. Another British occultist, Alex Sanders, head of a branch of this sect, declared himself, in Crowley's best style, The Devil Incarnate (the Incarnate Demon); he describes a ritual for the conjuring of a demon, which consisted in the practice of a magical-sexual act of incest with one's sister (cf. B. WENISCH, Satanism. pp. 32-34).

In a French publication we find other data on Wicca witches: “Wicca rites are now known, celebrated on the Isle of Man (England) or in the Fontainebleau Forest (France). The great priestess Monique Maria Mauricette Wilson, who is called Lady Olwen, officiates naked, as in the ancient Sabbaths. ...

“On the altar are placed vessels for salt and water, herbs, a censer, candles, a chalice, and other objects. The chief witch, while all kneel in a circle around her, kneels in turn, blesses the salt and water, and mixes them with a black-fisted dagger, a symbol of the Luciferian power that every witch possesses.

“The black Mass, which is difficult to distinguish from the Sabbath, involves a liturgical ritual analogous to that of ordinary (Catholic) masses except for certain prayers, recited in reverse by a spirit of profanity. Elevation is the expected time for supreme desecration. The host is now a slice of black bread, now a slice of horseradish. \*

The officiant usually raises her over the body of a naked young woman on an altar, giving offenses; he then throws the host at the witches and wizards, who rush to put it on their feet. The Mass ends with a ritual phrase: Go to the devil ”(Claude PETIT-CASTELLI, *Les Sectes enfer or paradis*, p. 154.)

\* Here is a sacrilegious parody of Holy Mass.

However, whenever they succeed, Satanists prefer that a Catholic priest who is in a degree of apostasy sufficient to indulge in such an abomination celebrate a Mass during such a ceremony in which true consecration takes place; or else they seek to obtain truly consecrated hosts in valid Masses, to be profaned in these satanic rituals. As to the validity of the consecration of eucharistic species in the context of a black Mass, theologians argue; some claim, others deny such validity.

### **Ecology and Occultism**

B. Wensich continues in her analysis of the occultist feminist movement: “The esoteric wave also appears in alternative-ecological groups.” And refers to a feminist-ecologist author who “practices magical rituals, feels in contact with spiritual beings, and based on supposed experiences of previous earthly life, believes in reincarnation. It is considered the reincarnation of a witch executed in the early modern age ”. (B. WENISCH, *Satanism*, p. 38.)

### **“Witchcraft Offensive - Alert to Brazilians”**

In Brazil, due to the astonishing religious decay we have witnessed and the decolonization that operates in all social classes, the path is open to all forms of satanism from the loud and blasphemous aberrations of Rock Heavy Metal, to the occultism spread by authors such as Paulo Coelho, disciple of the English Satanist Aleister Crowley. (See “St. Paul's Sheet,” 2-8-92, *More*, p. 6, *Glossary*.)

In a special way, the use of the devil grows through macumba, which is now accepted with normality; more than that, to receive the support of the authorities. For example, in the city of São Paulo, during the administration of Mayor Luiza Erundina (PT), “macumbódromos” - spaces for the practice of macumba rituals - were created in various cemeteries in São Paulo. (Under the title Erundina creates 4 'macumbodromes', the newspaper “Folha de S. Paulo,” July 19, 1992,

reports that these are “homeless spaces with high, locked walls. Inside there will be a cruise, a cross simulating crossroads and statues of the orixás and Iansã ”.)

Called the cover for this topic, the monthly “Catholicism” brought a report about the overwhelming progress of witchcraft in Brazil, which we highlight - as a sample - some quotes from the daily press: (Gregório LOPEZ, Witchcraft: the dens open, in “Catholicism,” no. 491, November 1991. pp. 6-9.)

- “No broom, hat, nose or wart ....

Modern wizards are coming to pieces. ... dress in absolutely ordinary clothes ”(“Jornal da Tarde”, São Paulo, 22-5-91).

- “The wizard Erik assures that ‘a new consciousness will spring up’, and that we will then move on to a new era” (“Jornal da Afternoon”, 22-5-91).

- A Magic Festival was held in Florianópolis, with candles, smokers, orixás banners and people dressed in demons. The festival opened with a speech by the Mayor of the city, in the presence of “mystics, mediums, dracula, ufologists and fortune tellers” (“Tribuna da Bahia”, 21-7-91; “Estado”, Florianópolis, 13-8-91 ).

- In São Paulo the 4th International Metaphysical Conference takes place in the halls of Anhembi where “witches from all over the world come together” (“Jornal da Tarde”, 22-5-91).

- In the same city was founded a School of Initiation to High Magic, for “white magic” and “black magic”. According to one evening, “the schools of witchcraft in the past ceased to exist by persecution of Christianity” (“Jornal da Tarde”, 8-7-91).

- In Rio de Janeiro was announced to the Gávea Planetarium the 1st Meeting of Magi, with 11 days duration and the presence of witches, spiritists and knights of Lucifer (“Jornal Janeiro”, 18 and 21-9-90; “Jornal Afternoon”, 27-9-90).

With all this we see to what extent the de-Christianization is taking our Brazil, throwing it into the arms of Satan; Far from being phenomena of the past, Satanism and witchcraft resurface in our de-Christianized country, in the form of occultism, esotericism, certain ecologism, cults of African origin (macumba, voodoo, etc.) and others.

The Satanic Rock

“Singing for Inca sweet satan.

I want to go to hell. ”

(Song of Led Zeppelin ensemble)

“Nice to meet you.

Just call me Lucifer. ”

(From the song Rock Sympathy for the devil)

Rock 'n' Roll is not just a type of popular music; more than that, it is a culture, with its own way of dressing, speaking, behaving; It is an attitude towards life, full of anarchism, a religious stance characterized by revolt against God and religion. Ultimately, it is a kind of counter-religion, a Satanist religion.

### **Rock, one of the most powerful means for the spread of Satanism**

Many experts have seen rock culture as one of the most powerful means of spreading Satanism.

(Cf. Bernhard Wenisch, Satanism, p 29; WS days, after Rock in Rio.: Satanismo the presence pp 4-6 CA .; Medeiros, rock and roll and satanismo, pp 1-7?...) )

### **Influence of Crowley, "Britain's most filthy and filthy character"**

To better understand this statement, we must remember, albeit briefly, one of the confessed inspirers of this Rock movement, especially Hard Rock, where Satanist characteristics are most striking. It is the English satanist Sir Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) considered by English justice to be "the filthiest and most wicked character in Britain", who died cursing his doctor for denying him another dose of morphine. Upon his tomb, after the burial, satanist ceremonies were performed with Carducci's Ode to Satan chant, which provoked the protest of the Brighton City Council.

He was the founder or participant of several initiatic occult orders, including Astrum Argentium (AA), which in 1920 moved to Cefalu in Sicily.

As a result of a suspicious death in the community (ritual death), the police intervened and the AA was expelled from the country.

"In the end, says one author about Crowley, the magician elicited many devotions, but - corollary or counterpart - numerous disciples, especially women, committed suicide, became demented or were reduced to mere ruin" (Serge HUTIN, On 1 'appelait' la Grande Bête ', page 121, note 1.)

Crowley's doctrine, more intimately than explicitly, was popularized by the Beatles and spread through the hippie and rock movements from the 1960s on. This doctrine was summarized as follows:

"Do what you will, this is the whole law" (cf. B. Wenisch, op. Cit., P. 27.)

Crowley himself regarded this anarchic program as satanic. In reference to Chapter 13 of Revelation, he called himself "the great beast - 666". (This Apocalypse issue probably contains an allusion to Nero as an instrument of the devil and is often used to designate the anti-Christ.)

Crowley considered himself an incarnation of Satan, and his religion could be described as a satanic pantheism.

The cult proposed by Crowley is all permeated with sexual orgy, which for him is the "ultimate, divine and absolute goal, highest form of satanic-divine life." (B. WENISCH, Satanism, p. 27.)

### **Rolling Stones: "Devil Sympathy"**

Bernhard Wenisch writes in his book Satanism:

“One source that sheds some light on the spread of Satanist ideas among youth is Hard Rock.

The wave began in the late 1960s, when it was released, for example, the Rolling Stones song Sympathy for the Devil. Since 1970, the Black Sabbath Black Sabbath ensemble has continually presented satanic themes. In 1980, AC / DC's Hell's Bells was a worldwide hit.

Another success in 1982 was Iron Maiden's The Number of the Beast. Almost all Hard Rock / Heavy Metal-Band groups now feature the satanic theme. That Crowley's thought is patronizing these songs is not only historically demonstrable, but it can be clearly seen in the content of the lyrics. ”(B.WENI5CH, Satanism, p. 29.)

This connection is confirmed, for example, by an American former rocker, Charles Gugel, who, having left the Rock movement, he said: "Jimmy Page, author of music and leader of Led Zeppelin, openly admitted several times , his fascination with black magic and witchcraft. He owns an occult bookstore in London called The Equinox and lives in a demon-infested castle that once belonged to Aleister Crowley. ” (WS DIAS, Behind Rock in Rio: Presence of Satanism ?, p. 5.)

### **Satanic Songs**

As for the influence Satanist in the lyrics of rock songs, just take some of them to make the statement: the most explicit, such as those we will cite below, come to evoke directly the devil and execrate our Lord Jesus Christ and his Church, as they would songs composed by the devil himself. Another attention-grabbing feature, which is well in keeping with Satan's psychology, is the despair that dominates these songs, the note of an unremitting condemnation of hell.

### **hell's Bells**

Let's look first at the song Hell's Bells - Hell's Bells, from the Australian set **AC / DC** (acronyms that some say means Anti-Christ / Companions of the Devil):

You are still very young.

but it will die.

I will take you to hell.

Satan will catch you!

Hell's Bells,

hell's Bells. (WS DIAS, Behind Rock in Rio: Presence of Satanism ?, p. 4.)

### **Inland Freeway**

Another song in this ensemble has the same note of satanic despair. It is significantly titled Hell Highway:

I am going down.

It's party time.

My friends will be there too.

I'm on the highway to hell  
There are no stop signs or limited speed.  
No one will stop me ...  
Hey Satan, I'm paying my debt  
playing in a rock band...  
I'm on my way to the promised land.  
I am on the highway to hell (Ibid., P. 4.)  
Sing for my sweet satan

I want to go intern.

The note of blasphemous despair and luciferism is even more pronounced in the letter below the **Led Zeppelin** ensemble:

God has forsaken me,  
There is no escape.  
I sing to my sweet satan.  
All power is from my satan,  
that will give us 666 [the Anti-Christ].  
I want to go to hell. (WS DIAS. Op cit., P. 6.)

### **My name is Lucifer**

The **Black Sabbath** ensemble - whose name is already a profession of Satanic faith, resembling witches' sabbaths - sings as if it were the devil himself:

Now you are with me in my thoughts.  
Our love in each moment becomes stronger.  
Look into my eyes.  
You will see who I am.  
My name is Lucifer.

Take my hand please. (CA MEDEIROS Rock and Roll and Satanism, p. 4.)

### **Sympathy for the devil**

The **Rolling Stones**, one of the most famous rock ensembles, do not hesitate to sing the song with the entirely explicit title of Sympathy for the Devil, in which Satan himself is speaking, in superb dementia:

Excuse me to introduce myself ...

I was around when Jesus Christ  
had his moment of doubt and pain.

I cursedly made sure that  
Pilate would wash his hands and decide his fate.  
Nice to meet you.

I hope you guess my name ...

Just call me Lucifer (CA MEDEIROS, Rock and Roll and Satanism, p. 6.)

### **The God of Thunder**

Perhaps the most explicit song Satanist is God of Thunder - God of Thunder, **KISS** set, which introduced her to an audience of thousands of young people at the Morumbi Stadium, I São Paulo in June 1983. According to some interpretations, the name of together, Kiss, which means kiss), would in fact be an acronym formed by the initials of Knights In Satan Service. Here's your translation:

I was raised by demons.

And I came to reign as the Lord because I am  
the God of Thunder and Rock n 'Roll ...

I was raised by a demon.

I was trained to reign as one of them.

I am the Lord of the desolate earth. (Ibid., P. 2.)

I do not like Christ ... I do not like the Church

Already the Brazilian set **Titans** makes a profession of anarchist-religious faith, explodes in a satanic revolt against God:

I do not like priest.

I do not like mother.

I do not like friar.

I don't like bishop,

I do not like Christ ...

I don't like the rosary,

I don't like the crib

of Jesus of Bethlehem.

I do not like the Pope,

I don't believe in grace  
of the miracle of God.

I don't like the church,

I do not enter the church.

I do not have religion. (CA MEDEIROS, Rock and Roll and Satanism, p. 7.)

### **We will destroy the high altar. ..**

Another Brazilian ensemble, **Sepultura** , in the song entitled Crucifixão, also makes an anarchist-religious profession and directly denies the deity of Our Lord:

We deny the gods and their laws.

We challenge your supreme power,  
crucified by the power of darkness ...

He left the churches to torment us.

We will destroy the high altar ...

We will show the world our hatred.

The priests will have their final torment.

We will break the churches, we have an ideal ...

Humankind heads for suicide

They have faith in the false God

They are called Christ.

that preaches good and beauty. (Ibid., P. 7)

Faced with this explicit Satanism of the Rock 'n' Roll movement, which brings together tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of young people in monster shows - authentic anti-Christian orgies - what proportions do the sabbaths of centuries past, which the Church fought so hard against? ?

Why the silence about these modern sabbatics?

## **VI - CASES OF INFESTATION AND POSSESSION - EXORCISM SCENES - IDOLATRIC CULT FOR DEMON**

We present some cases of infestation or possession and some scenes of exorcism, which illustrate how much was said about the extraordinary action of the devil.

The first case, of a young woman from the interior of São Paulo, who was subjected to personal infestation as a result of harm, reveals how we should not fear the devil but rather face him with courage and, above all, with great faith.

Another reported case in Italy of the possession of an eleven-year-old boy is very illustrative of the value of fervent prayer and other ordinary means of releasing a possession even without recourse to extraordinary means such as solemn exorcisms. .

The story of Magdalene is not unlike the story of countless people in our sad times: well married and with raised children, with no financial worries, she seemed a happy person. In fact she was frustrated by an empty and seemingly meaningless life.

This frustration led her to look for something different that would fill the void of her life. So she was enveloped in an occult environment, where drugs and initiations led her to the devil's pact, and even greater frustration and despair. Moved by grace, she underwent a serious religious therapy, constant of exorcisms, prayers and catechesis, managing to get out of her sad situation.

Anneliese Michel's moving story is a striking example of penitential or oblativ possession. By mysterious plans of God the young victim suffered this ordeal as atoning victim of other people's sins and for spiritual graces of sanctification and revival of the faith, for themselves and others.

This case is very revealing about the demon's inability to penetrate to the depths of the soul. For even though she obtained permission from God to possess the body of the young German woman, and to work in her inferior faculties, the devil could never make her sin, nor prevent her from remaining united with God, from advancing in virtue and sanctifying herself.

No less impressive is the story of the young Vietnamese novice Maria Catarina Dien, persecuted by the demon to give up religious life at the request of a pagan who wanted to marry her. Despite all the physical and moral torments to which the demon was subjected, the young woman not only persevered in her vocation, but also used this suffering to sanctify herself.

All these cases lead us to remember what the saints say: one should fear sin rather than the devil.

We end this section by reporting impressive cases of recent human sacrifices in honor of the devil in Brazil that show the degree of apostasy and surrender to the Evil that has come to our homeland. They lead us to the question of whether this is not the root cause of the serious crisis that shakes it on all planes.

### **The infested girl and the possessed boy**

*"Bastard! Blessed Mary has already crushed your head!" (Sister Maria Teresa addressing the devil)*

### **Glory: Evil Infestation by Harm**

The vigilance and purposeful action of a nun freed a girl from the effects of an evil.

Strange Symptoms The events took place years ago in Marilia, a friendly and thriving city in the interior of São Paulo. (Released by Father Gabriele AMORTH, Nuovi racconti, pp. 105-108.

The names of the protagonists are fictitious, but the case is real.)

Gloria was an internal student at the Normal School run by nuns. From the countryside, she was a fatherless child; her maternal grandfather funded her studies so that, once a primary teacher, she would help in the education of her younger siblings.

Back home at the end of the vacation, the girl began to manifest strange symptoms. So far the young woman had been the best student in her class, always respectful, obedient, and of exemplary conduct.

Sister Maria Teresa, of Italian nationality, noted that the girl was changed; other teachers complained about her, especially about the lack of attention to classes.

### **The mysterious handkerchief**

The jealous sister called her to talk, on any pretext. During the conference, Gloria opened mechanically one of their lesson books and, to the amazement of the nun, a very brightly colored handkerchief fluttered inside him and although both tried to grab it, has completely disappeared. Terrified, the girl exclaimed: "Poor me! I can't lose it. " As the bell sounded, Sister Maria Teresa quickly sent the student to class, suspicious of what it was all about. Then she went to the girls' dormitory and began to examine Gloria's books and notebooks. After much searching, found the handkerchief in a notebook!

### **How would it have gotten there?**

Full of faith, Sister addressed the handkerchief as if she were the devil herself, exclaiming: "You bastard! Most Holy Mary has already crushed your head! ". And grabbing him tightly, she ran into the kitchen and threw him into the fire.

The Evil's reaction was not waited: Gloria began to feel ill and unable to retain any food. It was clearly a case of evil.

### **Spell of a neighbor**

Sister Maria Teresa called the girl for further conversation and got her to tell her everything that had happened to her when she had been home on her last vacation. Gloria said a neighbor had come to her one day when she was alone in the house and told her, "As soon as you get your diploma, you're getting married, my son!" He then gave her the colored handkerchief, adding:

"You must keep this handkerchief and you cannot lose it under any circumstances; otherwise you will no longer be able to study and you will die!

The poor girl had been so terrified by the threats of the neighboring (to all appearances, a witch) who, instead of asking advice to Religious sought obey him, for fear of not being able to finish the course and thus harm their brothers younger, who depended on her so they could study too.

Sister Teresa, an experienced religious who had great faith, said to the girl: "Have confidence in Our Lady that everything will be resolved." As a first step, he led Gloria to make a good Confession — an ideal remedy in cases of diabolical persecution, for the soul in grace is much more likely to resist the devil's vexations. Then he went with the girl to examine his bedroom; She took the pillow and asked her to open it to see if there was anything abnormal inside it. Glory trembled with fear as she unpacked the pillow and threw the feathers on the bed; Then a strange

object appeared, an acorn wrapped in cloth. When she opened the package, the girl exclaimed in terror: "My hair!"

In fact, the neighbor, while addressing threats to the young woman, had cut her a piece of hair, taking it with her. This is one of the most common spells or harms: to offer the devil one's own hair or nails to be harmed; or a photograph of her, pieces of her clothing, etc.

How would this object end up in that place?

The devil - whenever God permits - can move objects from place to place as, in this case, first the handkerchief, which ended up in the middle of a notebook; then the hair acorn, found inside the pillow.

### **Harm undone**

Continuing their search, they discovered another handkerchief just like the first. Sister took the objects with caution - without touching them directly with her hands, which is dangerous - and threw gasoline over them and set it on fire; Despite the intensity of the flames, the small handkerchief did not burn. The nun then began to pray fervently and cry out: "The feet of Mary Most Holy continue to crush your head, cursed spirit!", Until finally the witches were consumed by the flames.

After the witches were burned, Gloria returned to her normal life and applied to her studies.

Such cases, when well taken advantage of, serve to religiously support people, and this is one of the reasons God allows them to succeed.

### **In Italy: value of prayer and sacramentals**

Father Gabriel Amorth, exorcist of the diocese of Rome, reports the following case in Italy.

In 1987 a couple came to their parson asking him to give a blessing to their son, who behaved strangely. It was an eleven-year-old boy who was calm and lovely.

The parish priest asked a confrere to help him; only the priests began to pray, the boy began to foam, to blaspheme, and utter threats.

The priests (perhaps because they were not licensed by their bishop or because they were not sure that it was a case of diabolical possession) did not perform solemn exorcisms about the possessed, but kept in prayer, giving the boy repeated blessings, while resorting to the use of sacramentals such as candles, holy water, incense, etc.

For a fortnight in a row the boy was brought before the priests, who continued in the same prayers, blessings, and use of the sacramentals. On the fifteenth day, precisely, the devil began to impotent rage signals and exhaust until - to be asked the aid of the Mother of God and be invoked the Holy Spirit - began to shout at the mouth of the little victim: "Not Our Lady!" - "Not the White Dove!" After this last cry, the boy fell to the ground and complete silence fell in the church. Everything indicated that the demon had been cast out.

In fact, in the following days the boy no longer presented the symptoms of possession. However, he has begun to show signs of personal infestation, having terrifying visions. (Fr. Amorth, with his

exorcist experience, states that this often happens after possessions, which is very dangerous, requiring the exorcist's assistance even for sometime after the demon's expulsion.) By the prudent and zealous work of the two priests, this state of infestation was also overcome, and the boy began to enjoy excellent health and a good life of piety. (See J. AMORTH, Nuovi racconti, pp. 108-109.)

### **Magdalene: from frustration to pact with the devil**

"Refuse obedience to God and say yes to Satan, Lucifer," Beelzebub. " (From the pact with the Devil)

The following case took place in France over the past decade and is reported by Dr. Marie-Dominique Fouqueray, a psychiatrist on the team that assists the diocesan exorcist. (Report transcribed by Father Gabriele AMORTH, Nuovi racconti di un esorcista, pp. 151-155.)

### **Organist in the parish and ... Priestess of the Devil!**

"One of the first cases we had to face was a lady in her forties, married and a mother of four, who worked as a specialist educator. The cause of their ills was that for over ten years he had attended a satanic sect. When he addressed us, it was the third time he had tried to leave that sect. "

"Contrary to all that could be supposed, this lady was very close to priests; and it was one of them that led her to us. In fact, she led a double life: she knew many priests, and every Sunday she played the organ at Mass, although she never approached the sacraments; but at the same time it was great priestess of a cult called Wicca, (This is a Satanist sect of feminist character, which already we are concerned just above (see Part V, Ch. 5).), whose head is Lucifer himself. She had been progressively initiated, and those who entered the sect could only leave her for the effect of a violent death to which she was destined: suicide. She was very afraid and wanted to leave, but she knew the risks that this entailed.

"When we first met her, she showed signs of a depressed, tormented, thin person; slept poorly, but had no psychiatric history. The exorcist, having thoroughly examined the case, decided to proceed with the exorcisms: first every fortnight, then every week.

Next to Dr. Fouqueray, she tells how Magdalene (fictitious name she uses to designate the unfortunate woman) approached and entered the sect.

### **Covenant with the devil and satanic "baptism"!**

There would be nothing to suppose that Magdalene would ever make a pact with the demon and become a priestess of a Satanist sect.

Educated in a nuns' college, married, and mother of a family, with no financial worries, she seemed a happy person. However, her Catholicism was superficial and she was led by some disenchantment, boredom with family life and a void she could not fill.

"In a mundane newspaper she read an invitation for a leisure day."

"He frequented this environment, although he realized that it was a very private environment, increasing the consumption of alcohol and drugs, and the invitations for initiation into a cult. But at the same time, he found helpful people whose attentions compensated for the shortcomings he

felt at home. And she became increasingly involved: she denied baptism and accepted a new 'baptism' of the sect, in which she was given a new name. Receive a secret mark on your thigh and sign a covenant with Satan with your blood after you have burnt your Christian baptismal certificate. ”

### **Black Masses and mockery of the Passion**

“It began at black masses and at celebrations of satanic triumph for the death of Christ every Friday at three o'clock in the afternoon. He saw clearly that our rites and our prayers were transformed, diabolized. The black Mass was a parody of the Eucharist and, at the moment of communion, became an orgy.

It is important to know the various points of the satanic covenant because, during exorcisms, one must invite oneself to renounce it with full renunciation of Satan:

I renounce you, demon X, I don't want to know about you anymore, and I renounce the practices you inspired me. ”

The twelve points of the accursed covenant “Here are the twelve points of the satanic covenant:”

1. Abjure baptism.
2. Abjure faith in the Eucharist.
3. Refuse obedience to God and say yes to Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebub.
4. Repudiate Our Lady.
5. Reneging the sacraments.
6. Trample the cross.
7. Trampling images of Our Lady and the Saints.
8. To swear everlasting faithfulness to the prince of darkness; take an oath over the diabolical scriptures.
9. Be baptized in the name of the devil by choosing a new name appropriate for you.
10. To receive the mark of the devil on the thigh, as a sign of sect affiliation.
11. Choose a sponsor and godmother in the sect.
12. Desecrate hosts (not violating the Tabernacle, but going to commune and preserving the sacred particle and then to desecrate it in the black Mass).

### **Beast look and revulsion of crucifix**

“I discovered these points little by little during the exorcisms.

“The possessed, during the exorcisms, had the look of a beast and strongly rejected the crucifix we held before her; at the end it vomited (sometimes only water) and its temperature reached 410 and dropped only with the use of St. Sigismund water (known in our region for curing unexplained fevers).

“Magdalene we gave him this name - he had attended a large number of Black Masses ...”

### **Magdalene was not confirmed ...**

“I allow myself to underline a fact. In a case like this, not just only the action of Exorcist: twice already two exorcists had failed, for not having taken into account the saying the unfortunate own, and have minimized the pressures and threats from members of the sect. The third time Magdalene was released thanks to the help the team gave to the exorcist. For example, a reeducation in the Christian faith was needed and sustained care was provided when the possession was assaulted by suicidal impulses and unexplained fevers. We never left her alone, and always kept close to her.

“All this lasted three years ... The exorcisms were suspended when Magdalene was able to conduct the spiritual struggle on her own, to pray, to confess, to commune; that is, when it could use the ordinary means of struggle. I add one important fact: Magdalene had never been confirmed; after proper preparation, she herself requested this sacrament, which was given to her by the Vicar General, in the presence of her exorcist's husband, children, and staff members. ”

### **Anneliese: Penitential Possession**

“The devil abhors holy water and consecrated objects. He is afraid of the name of Jesus and of prayer. ”

(From Anneliese Michel's Exorcism)

The CASE RELATED CASE below is a striking example of penitential or oblivious possession, in which the victim suffers this harsh ordeal to, according to God's unfathomable designs, atone for others' sins and obtain for himself or others spiritual graces of sanctification and revival of faith.

### **A very well documented case**

The reason for the choice of this case is due to the events unfolded almost in our day (1974 to 1976), and achieved great repercussion in the press, and is well documented, since the exorcisms were recorded on magnetic tape and case ended up in the German courts.

We follow here the book of Dr. Felicitas D. Goodman, a non-Catholic American anthropologist, who studied the case for academic interest, applying scientific rigor to its examination. She gathered all the documentation about it, including the magnetic tapes with the exorcism tapes. (Congratulations D. GOODMAN, *The Exorcism of Anneliese Michel*, Doubleday, New York, 1981, 255pp. Dr. Goodman used 42 cassettes with the recording of the exorcisms, provided by Father Ernst Alt, one of the exorcists, and a dossier of more than 800 pages of documents, provided by the Michel family lawyer, Dr. Marianne Thora (testimonials, letters, expert reports, etc.).

Intelligent, cheerful and pious girl Anneliese Michel was born on September 21, 1952 in Leiblfing, Bavaria, being the oldest of the four daughters of the practicing couple Josef and Ana Michel. As a child, the family moved to the nearby small town of Klingenberg.

Anneliese was intelligent and godly, though her childhood was marked by continual illness, which worried her mother, who had already lost a young child. She made First Communion with all her

fervor. After finishing primary school in his small town, he began traveling by train with other girls to attend junior high in a neighboring city.

She was a cheerful girl, playing accordion and learning the piano.

By the time he was sixteen, however, the symptoms of a neuropsychiatric illness that doctors diagnosed as epilepsy began to manifest, prescribing the appropriate treatment.

### **Uncontrollable revulsion for sacred things**

At the same time there were other, more disturbing signs: a strange and uncontrollable revulsion for sacred things, hardly to enter churches.

The young woman made efforts to overcome this strange disgust, these vehement impulses, but was not always successful. Once, when trying to enter a chapel dedicated to Our Lady in Italy, where she had gone on pilgrimage, she could not go a step further, as the ground burned her feet, as if in embers. On several occasions, when she intended to get up from the place to go to communion, her limbs seemed heavy as lead and she could not move.

One day her mother surprised her by grimacing in hate and baring her teeth at a crucifix.

Despite these abnormal manifestations, which were becoming increasingly intense, the girl became more religious and connected with other equally pious girls; At the same time, he had a chaste, well-meaning relationship with a classmate.

### **Careful examination reveals possession**

From 1974, Anneliese, because of the abovementioned disturbances, began to look for Father Ernst Alt, her parish priest, who gave her a simple blessing, with which she was relieved.

The lack of improvement with medical treatment, unlike the relief she experienced with the blessings, and the presence of strange signs that were increasing day by day, led Anneliese, her relatives, friends, and also the attending priest, Fr Alt, the conviction that it was some diabolical influence. Several learned priests examined the girl, including Fr. Adolph Rodewyk SJ, a well-known expert in demonology and possession, with important published works on the subject.

The parish priest then made several requests to the bishop of Würzburg, Archbishop Joseph Stangl, to obtain the proper license to perform solemn exorcisms. After much hesitation, the bishop finally gave his permission in September 1975 to do so, appointing exorcists for that case to be Fr Arnold Renz, Salvatorian, former missionary in China and religious superior, and the parish priest himself. of the girl, Fr Ernst Alt.

### **Expiatory Victim**

From late 1975 to June 1976 numerous exorcism sessions were held, during which it became clear that the demons were not allowed to abandon their victim, for it was an oblativ possession in which the girl suffered as an atoning victim.

At the same time, medical treatment continued, but proved ineffective, as doctors clung to the diagnosis of epilepsy without the electroencephalography tests being conclusive.

Eventually, the demons were cast out, but when those in attendance were singing songs of thanksgiving, they spoke again, saying that they had been allowed to return. The exorcisms resumed, but the demons said they had no license from God to leave, and this situation would last for some time.

Finally, in the midst of the June 30 exorcism, suddenly Anneliese, in her normal voice, shouted, "Please, acquittal." The priest immediately heeded the appeal and ended the exorcisms.

The next morning the girl was found dead in her bed.

### **Demon's Revenge**

Despite all the efforts of her family and herself, the girl had spent long periods unable to feed herself, falling into a state of malnutrition and general weakness. As a result, the doctor refused to give the death certificate and a lawsuit was filed against parents and exorcists for omission of medical help. On April 21, 1978 they were sentenced to six months in prison, news that was widely reported in the press around the world.

All that painful and humiliating trial was very helpful for the spiritual improvement of Anneliese and her family, as well as the exorcist priests themselves.

After the girl's death, her grave in the Klingenberg cemetery became a place of pilgrimage, to which people flock not only from Germany but from abroad to pray and ask for thanks.

### **Hoarse screams, shrieks and furious grunts: the voice of Hell**

The transcripts of excerpts from the exorcism recordings that Dr. Goodman makes in her book allow us to form a pale idea of the exorcists' struggle with the power of darkness.

It is not fitting to transcribe them all here, so we give some excerpts as a sample, terrible sample of the demon's own voice. Thus says Dr. Goodman: "In the original tape we feel like the surrounding Anneliese, something that autonomous and alien presence that, in the sense of Catholic dogma, established his residence in the body of the girl, using for their purposes Demonic.

"There are the hoarse, hoarse screams and the furious squeals and grunts that characterize the demon - according to Church teachings - alien from the depths, emissary of darkness, of all that is frightening and polluted. The infernal sounds boil and collide, sometimes forming a few words or phrases. And when that happens, when the devil speaks, the force of evil becomes a person. But not just any person, because he speaks in the Bavarian Forest dialect, in market parlance, he the medieval demon in the obscenities of his verbal assaults on the priest."

### **Harm done by envy**

"He takes the Latin words of the priest, and answers them with revolt: Immaculata (Immaculate) ... 'You with your dirty words ... neither do you believe it.'

Saecula saeculorum (For ever and ever) ... 'It is not true, nor should it be said here.' Educto (Retirate) ... 'You can talk all day, I'm not leaving'. Ut discurs ab hac famula dei Anneliese (So that

you abandon this servant of God Anneliese) ... 'No, no, she belongs to me, get out of here old carcass'.

"It is the village that lives and breathes in the answer to the question of why Anneliese was possessed: 'She was not born yet when she was cursed' - reveals one of the demons. One woman did the evil of envy. Who was she? 'A neighbor of your mother in Leiblfling - answers the demon. "

The girl is possessed by various demons. At one point one of them lets out his infernal lament, into which no regrets enter, despite the intensity of the suffering:

"Damned for eternity, o-oooh!"

### **Demons abhor holy water, afraid of the name of Jesus**

From another exorcism session: "The priest may also force the devil to say what is harmful to him and to corner him as a lord would do against his rebel subjects."

"The exorcism assistants discover that the devil abhors holy water and consecrated objects. They are afraid of the name of Jesus, of someone imitating Jesus' life, of prayer. 'Pray, says one of the demons, and nothing can really happen to you, you filthy pig! ... But fortunately not many believe this anymore. ' They do not tolerate supplications to St. Michael, whose mission is to expel spirits wandering the world and tempting souls to hell.

"They fear the Guardian Angel and scream in horror when the Litany of the Five Wounds of Jesus is chanted:

'I salute and adore the sacred wound of your right hand, oh Jesus.' They get carried away by a real rage when the Fifth Wound invocation comes: 'I greet and adore the wound of your Sacred Heart, and in that wound I hide my soul.' Then these prayers are repeated over and over, like a potent threat, an invincible weapon to drive out the infernal horde.

"I am condemned because I did not want to serve God!"

"The most effective weapon priests have against the devil is interrogation, to subject him to questions. Here the demons are at a disadvantage, as they cannot do the same and interrogate the priest. The priest makes aggressive use of interrogation throughout the exorcism. His questions hammer the demon incessantly, always returning to the same point: Why are they in that body? How many and what are the demons present? When will they leave? What messages from the Mother of God do they have? Why did they fall into Hell? "

In one of the exorcisms, thank you for the priest, one of the demons explains the cause of your damnation: "I am damned because I did not want ... I did not want to serve .., God !. I wanted to be the rule to myself, even though I was a mere creature. "

From another exorcism: "I ... I'll say something," says one demon. Then comes a series of shouts and blasphemies, and he goes on: "She (Our Lady) is happy with you all" and more shouts follow. "Because you continue to pray. You must continue as long as you can "- new screams and blasphemies.

"I went to hell because I despaired"

The priest imposed as a sign that the demons would go out that they, when they left, said: Hail Mary! Full of free. They were reluctant anyway, but by force of exorcistic power they were forced to accept. When the time came to leave the demon who called himself Judas, the following dialogue took place:

"Judas Iscariot, are you there?" Shouts. Father Renz repeats the exorcistic formula of command, there are shouts of the devil. And then the confession: "I went to hell because I despaired." (The devil speaks as if he were the traitor Apostle himself.)

"Why did you betray the Savior?"

"Yes ... but I'm not leaving?" He continues to resist until Fr. Henz repeats the exorcistic formula three times and reminds the devil of Our Lady's command to leave: 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in the name of the Holy Mother God's...".

Judas remains defiant: 'No ... no ... no ... no!'

"In the name of..."

"Judas tries to negotiate: 'Where should I go?'

"To hell."

"Not"

"That's where your place is!"

"Not!"

"You must stay there! You did not want to serve the Lord! "

"Judas can no longer resist. Her moans and screams are scarier than before. Once again Father Renz repeats the order, and then says boredly, 'Come on, Saia.' Judas greets the Virgin and leaves. Renz stretches a bit.

"Many souls are being saved by this suffering"

The penitential character of this possession emerges from the whole history and attitude of the girl, and was emphasized by one of the exorcists, the parish priest Fr Alt, in a letter of June 24, 1976 to the bishop of Würzburg:

"We can't force the demon to speak again. This, it seems to me, is due to the fact that we are dealing with a typical case of penitent possession. In several conversations I've had with the girl recently, she let me understand that things will get worse for her. I was very scared sad about it. But you said you should go through that too.

In the case of a penitent possession, things get very difficult for the exorcist because it is very difficult to understand the meaning of penance. That is what Fr. Rodewyk SJ from Frankfurt told me. The only consolation we have is that many souls are being saved by this suffering. "

This case illustrates how exorcism, despite its power over infernal spirits, is conditioned on God's will, which can often slow the devil out according to his own purpose, such as the person's ordeal and sanctification.

It is equally revealing as to what has been said earlier about the demon's inability to penetrate the depths of the soul. For even when the devil has permission from God to possess one's body, and to work in his inferior faculties, he never has the power to make him sin, to keep him from remaining united with God, to progress in virtue and sanctify themselves, as was the case with Anneliese Michel. So it is well to remember here what the saints say: one should fear sin more than the devil.

### The Devil in the Convent

"I won't leave you alone until you leave the convent." (Devil's Threat to Maria Dien)

The Devil in the Convent: This is not the title of any soap opera. It is the actual account of an impressive case of collective infestation and possession, narrated by the exorcist himself who made the exorcisms and cast out the demons:

Bishop Louis de Cooman MEP, former bishop in Vietnam. He published a book with this title, in which he objectively reports the demon's extraordinary action in a convent in that country, where he was a missionary for many years. ' (Mgr Louis of COOMAN, *Le Diable au Couvent and Mère Marie-Catherine Dien*, Nouvelles Éditions Latines, Paris, 1962.)

### **Pagan summons demons to take girl out of convent**

The events took place from 1924 to 1926 in Phat-Diem, in the then French Protectorate of Tonkin (today Vietnam), in the convent and novitiate of the Lovers of the Cross.

By God's permission, the devil began to act in this convent for the following cause: Minh, a pagan boy, had fallen in love with a young Catholic, Maria Dien; The young woman, however, wanted to be a nun and joined the Congregation of the Lovers of the Cross. Disagreeing, Minh went to Den Song's famous Buddhist pagoda and there he summoned the geniuses (in fact demons) to make her abandon her religious vocation and marry him. The demon, to serve him, began to infest the convent, trying to make life impossible in it, to force Maria Dien to abandon it or be expelled by her companions, who realized that the young woman was at the center of this diabolical action. .

### **Beaten by the devil**

Despite all the physical and moral torments to which the demon underwent, the young novice not only persevered in her vocation, but also used this suffering to sanctify herself.

The first extraordinary manifestations of the demon were of local and personal infestation; night and gravelly voices that prevented the novices from sleeping. Maria Dien was sometimes beaten by an invisible hand all night long. This was in mid-September 1924.

The then Father Louis de Cooman, a young missionary to whom the convent was subordinate, was called by the nuns who informed him of what was happening.

At first the priest did not give much credit to those stories. He did, however, take some precautionary measures: he forbade the nuns to talk to mysterious voices and to talk to each other about these extraordinary facts. He hoped that soon the phenomena would cease, if they were merely of natural origin, by collective suggestion or some nervous disturbance of the novices.

On the contrary, things only got worse. On the night of September 21-22, as the demon tormented Maria Dien - which all the novices witnessed - one of them carried a crucifix and introduced him to the young nun to startle, surprisingly, the image of Christ disappeared and only found the following day. .

### **Stones on the roof, amazing noises, ghosts**

Almost every night it continued to fall on the convent of the mysterious and terrifying rain of shells - stones, bricks, sticks, potatoes, empty bottles, etc.

Most striking were the noise, which lasted for two years: bird jokes, horse whinnings, car horns, boat sirens, ripping cries, sardonic laughter, creaking knocks, door slamming, drumming, and so on. This made the nights terrible and subjected the nuns' nerves to tremendous testing. Without the help of divine grace, they would not have resisted: either they would have left the convent or gone mad.

The demon had said to Sister Maria Dien: "I have come four times to my (Den Song) pagoda to ask me to return her to the world; I will not leave you alone until you leave the convent. "

Then began the apparitions of ghosts: fantastic beings of extraordinary size and frightening aspect. Other times, the demon would take on the appearance of the confessor and give advice that confused the young novices. The only thing that saved them was to faithfully comply with the obedience of reporting everything to the superiors, who undid the demon's plots.

### **Possession Infects Other Nuns**

One night Maria Dien was raised in the air by the demon, who told her he was going to take her to her lover's house. After being carried for about 17 meters, to the end of the novices' dormitory, the nun managed to oscillate a relic of Santa Terezinha do Menino Jesus, which she was carrying, and the Evil released her. She fell from a height of ten feet without injury.

Gradually, several of the novices were showing strange signs of strong demonic infestation and even possession. Demonstrating unusual agility for girls without any physical training, they jumped over tree branches and climbed to the most inaccessible summits. Or they would lie on very thin branches that should bend and break with their weight and nothing would happen. To make them come down, they had to pray a lot, throw them in holy water.

Once, one of the novices, in the presence of then Fr. Louis de Cooman, jumped up without any momentum, clinging to the ceiling beam almost three meters from the floor. Then, rising in his arms, he lifted his body upward and lay down on the beam, where he remained for a long time, then dropped to the ground. The noise of the fall was loud, but the novice rose laughing and having suffered nothing.

### **Demon sows discord in the community**

Another ordeal - perhaps more terrible than all - was the discord that the demon was able to bring into the community: all the nuns were deeply disliked by Maria Dien, who was not expelled from the convent alone thanks to the prudence of her superiors, who realized it was a diabolic infestation. In fact, after a while this dislike ceased completely and the nuns acknowledged that they had been unjust to her.

After a period of study of the situation, the superiors commissioned Fr. Louis de Cooman himself to carry out exorcisms about the sisters stricken by infestation or diabolical possession.

### **Exorcisms, novenas, penances**

In all, nine novices went through countless exorcism sessions. They had to be dragged by force to the location of the exorcisms, requiring several nuns to take each one.

Little by little, thanks to the exorcisms, novenas, penances, etc., the possessions ceased, and in 1926 ended completely. Local and personal infestations lasted for a few years, until they ceased entirely.

### **Pious Life and Holy Death of Mary Catherine Dien**

Despite all the demonic effort, no postulant or novice left the convent; later three of them left religious life, but for other reasons.

As for Sister Maria Catarina Dien, she not only persevered in religious life, but was also blessed by God with mystical graces: talks with the Divine Savior and special and visible assistance from her patron saint, Santa Catarina of Siena. In the last years of her life she was Master of Novices and guided the footsteps of countless nuns in religious life. He died holy on August 16, 1944.

## **Human sacrifices in honor of the devil**

### **"This boy was the victim of a satanic crime." (Manchete Magazine)**

SOME NEWS, published in the national press in the years 1992-1993 \* show to what extent homicidal Satanism is expanding in Brazil without our realizing it. And murderous Satanism is just the most brutal aspect of a demon cult that spreads like an oil slick in our poor homeland.

\* No exhaustive research was done, nor was all the material collected taken advantage of, as this would make this chapter too lengthy.

### **Boy offered in sacrifice to Exu April 1992: strange ritual by the sea**

On the evening of April 3, 1992, at about 11:45 pm, Mr. AB was strolling on the beach in Guaratuba, a seaside town in Parana, when an Escort car with its flashlights on caught his eye. Nearby, very near the sea, four people were making a macumba dispatch. Mr. AB stopped and peered at them a short distance. They were two women and two men. One looked fifty and the other about thirty.

One of the men was bearded, tall, dark, thin; the other wore goatee, medium height and was lighter.

There were candles burning, and these people were dancing in a very strange way: the four of them held each other's arms, and together they took seven steps back, seven forward, seven left, and seven right. They repeated the sequence of steps seven times.

They said many strange and nonsense things; sometimes one word could not be understood; other times they spoke clearly. Mr. AB, from where he was, listened to what they said: "Your order is being arranged. Soon your gift will arrive. Have confidence, we will not fail! You have to help us find it! It will be a very beautiful gift! Can believe! We are also in a hurry! It is a matter of days. Be patient!"

The older woman shook her head strongly, spun her around, humped like an angry horse, threw herself to the ground, looked like she was possessed.

He would kneel and raise his arms up and shout, "My dear, I'll give you what you want. Be patient! I love you, I love you so much! You will be surprised at my gift, my dear, life of my life, my eternal love! We are already providing. It is a matter of days. I am sure you will, my beloved!" He said many other things that Mr. AB did not understand.

The four sometimes hugged and twirled in circles, falling to their knees. It was scary what they did.

After about twenty minutes they drove off in that Escort car with its flashlights on.

Mr. AB approached that place and was very frightened by what he saw: there were seven red and seven black candles; a drawing in the sand represented a little house, and inside it were two small hands, perhaps wax or plastic; there were also seven red and black horned dolls, perhaps representing Satan. A little farther down was a drawing of a heart with a red, black, and yellow wooden dagger in its midst. Below it was written in the sand: "It is our oath. It will be day 6".

Inexplicably, a huge wave came, almost knocking over Mr. AB, and carried everything into the sea. What scared him the most was that the sea was calm and there was no explanation of how that huge wave came so suddenly. (Witness Testimony in Police Inquiry, in G. PONTÓGLIO, *Satanic Ritual Evandro's Sacrifice*, pp. 69-71. (The deponent is named "Mr. AB" in Delegate Pontoggio's book because he did not authorize to disclose his name.)

#### **April 7, 1992: Child sacrifice in honor of the devil**

On the night of April 7, 1992, in the seaside town of Guaratuba - Paraná, the boy Evandro Ramos Caetano, from six to seven years old, was ritually sacrificed to Exu. Seven \* people participated in the satanic ritual: two fathers of saints - Vicente de Paula Ferreira and Osvaldo Marceneiro; three other men, also linked to macumba practices - Davi dos Santos Soares, Francisco Sérgio Cristofolini and Airton Bardelli dos Santos; plus the wife and daughter of the mayor of the city - Celina Cordeiro Abage and Beatriz Cordeiro Abage.

\* According to one of the witnesses, there were seven participants in the macabre ritual, as this is the number of the Exú, according to the cabalistic beliefs of the macumba.

Therefore, the number 7 appears repeated many times in this story.

The boy was kidnapped the day before by Celina and her daughter Beatrice, in the car Escort latter, and taken to a shed of sawmill owned by the mayor Aldo Abage, which would be held the ritual macabre.

After strangling the child, they were cut in the neck so that the blood flowed into a bowl; the chest was opened and the heart removed; They also opened their wombs and extracted their viscera. then they severed the boy's genital organ; then they remove the scalp with a razor and cut off the ears; Finally they amputated her little hands and little toes. It was all collected in clay bowls.

"The sacrifice of the child would be offered to 'Exu' which is a spirit that does both good and evil," said one of the killer killers. Osvaldo Joiner. (G. PONTÓGLIO, op. Cit., P. 90.)

"The place where the act was performed was dark, lit only by seven white candles, seven black candles and seven red candles. During the ritual, Osvaldo sang Umbanda hymns in praise of 'Exú'. (Statement by Saint Vincent de Paula Ferreira, in G. PONTÓGLIO. Op.cit., P. 81.)

"As the child's organs were being removed, Celina was making requests for protection and victory, that is, protection in trade and 'opening up' the financial side and 'force' in politics. Celina acted normally, feeling no revulsion throughout the ritual. "

(Testimony of Saint-father Osvaldo Marceneiro, in G. PONTÓGLIO. Op. Cit., P. 91.)

At the end of the bowls or earthenware bowls containing the organs and the boy's blood sacrificed they were placed in a house the size of a dog house, built in the backyard for this purpose (it is a kind of small temple dedicated to Exu, existing in all the umbanda terreiros).

In the police interrogation, the questions - "Why was this done? Why was the child sacrificed? "- the mayor's daughter replied: " And more fortune, justice... for my family ". ("The State of St. Paul," 10-7-92; G. PONTÓGLIO, op. Cit., P. 135.)

Vicente de Paula said the work was done to save the sawmill belonging to Celina's family from bankruptcy. (G. PONTÓGLIO, op. Cit., Pp. 80-82.)

The magazine "Headline ." (Editing 07.18.92) published comprehensive report on this satanic crime, under the title: **"This boy was the victim of a satanic crime - Black Magic: the rituals that threaten children."**

There appears a commentary on one of the crime perpetrators - the mayor's wife - very illustrative of apostasy situation which will generalizing more and more in relation to the Catholic Church, "Celina was Catholic, but his faith in Christ, it seems , since her husband became mayor, began to fail. Gradually he moved away from the Church ... in return, he could often be seen in macumba yards. Obsessed with magical outlets, Celina decided to take Guaratuba to saint-father Osvaldo Marceneiro, aka Witch, when she felt that the family's financial and political situation threatened to degrade. She already knew him from Curitiba, because she had resorted to her work when her husband was on campaign (election) in 1988 ”.

The whole family of the mayor, incidentally, often participated in macumba rituals. One of the wizards, Osvaldo, stated that “Beatriz (the mayor's daughter) told him that he was with his father in a candomblé yard... where he took something like blood during a 'work' being done there. ” (G. PONTÓGLIO. Op. Cit., P. 93.)

#### **Other cases**

##### **“Young man kills boy in Magé - following Exú's orders”**

“In compliance with orders he said he received from Exu Tranca-Rua - an Umbanda entity that he would have incorporated before committing the crime - Roberto Silva Teixeira, 18, killed Carlos Eduardo dos Santos, 2, and shot him. like her sister, Vanessa dos Santos, 4, in a well ”. (“The Globe.” 31-12-92.)

##### **“Boy is killed in black magic”**

“An unidentified black boy, about 13 years old, was found dead yesterday among clay and agate containers with offerings for orishas on a wasteland in the West Zone (Rio de Janeiro).

... At least 21 children and adolescents have died and others have been severely injured in the past 14 years in cases of major repercussion by practitioners of black magic or people who claimed to have received messages from beyond.” (“ The Globe ”. 8- 2-93.)

##### **“Black magic: suspect not found by police”**

“Camboriú resort. ”The police had not yet succeeded in arresting the prime suspect in the murder of fisherman Romy Smillaanitch, 60. The prime suspect is a saint-father who lived in a shack near the fisherman.” ... The suspect worked with animal sacrifice, made macumba, used a lot of cachaça, candle, cigarette and often [neighbors] saw dogs bleeding and chickens with knives crossed in the body. They also said that there was a great movement of cars at night towards the father-of-saint's shack. According to them, they were new pipes of 'big shots' ”. (“Santa Catarina Newspaper”, 27-3-93.)

### **“In a black magic ritual, boy kidnaps, rapes, burns and kills little girl”**

“Unemployed worker Jorge Paulo da Silva Teixeira, 22, kidnapped, raped and killed, in a ritual of black magic, Luana da Conceição da Silva, 6. The crime occurred in Campos, state of Rio.

... At Teixeira's house, the police seized a book about occultism, bloodstained clothes and cartridges of gunpowder used to burn the girl. (“The State of St. Paul,” 2-4-93.)

### **“Mother and daughter killed in Exu ritual”**

“Salette Fátima de Azevedo, 32, and her daughter, Daniela Batista de Azevedo, 3, were killed in a black magic ritual, performed last Tuesday afternoon, in Criúva, Caxias do Sul district. Those responsible for the murder, a 17-year-old minor and his 15-year-old wife ... stated that the black magic session was conducted through the 19-year-old saint-father João Claudionir Anastacio.

“According to the minor, she is three months pregnant, and the saint-father had stated that the fetus would only survive if she killed a child and an adult. ...

“The saint-father denies being the mastermind of the murder: 'It's not my fault, it was the Exu entity that had the woman and the child killed. This is not common, but eventually the entity determines this kind of ritual,' said Anastácio. (“People's Mail”, Porto Alegre, 17-6-93)

### **“PF investigates national network of black magic.”**

In Altamira, Pará, three people - 2 doctors and a farmer - are accused of killing five boys and cutting their genitals. According to the Federal Police Superintendent “there is a suspicion that the accused are part of a national network of black magic that would promote the sacrifice of children.” (“St. Paul's Leaf,” 16-7-93.)

### **“The devil is loose in Rio”**

Journalist Ellenice Bottari, in Rio de Janeiro's “O Globo”, writes about the spread of Satanism in the former Federal Capital and Baixada Fluminense: “Satanic rituals and black magic ceremonies grow and scare the carioca ... Judge Antonio Meirelles, from the 3rd Criminal Court of Duque de Caxias, in the Baixada Fluminense, decreed the preventive arrest of saint-father Carlos Alberto Justino Pessoa, who a month ago raped an 11-year-old girl in a ritual of black magic. Also in Caxias, Lucy Magalhães da Conceição, sentenced to 25 years in prison for killing her 6-year-old daughter during such a ritual, will be put on trial again. ...

“Saint-father Marcos Fabian Vieira is not afraid of the devil. He says it is on a full moon night that he invades the cemeteries to steal skulls for his black magic rituals, for good or for bad, depends only on the taste of the customer. ... Introduces himself as Mark Devil and incorporates Exú Tiriri - for the laity, the devil himself” (“The Globe”, 23-8-92.)

### **“Homemade tries to strangle his daughter for a satanic ritual”**

“Homemaker Marconi Fraga Magalhães, 29, was arrested after trying to strangle his one-year-old daughter. According to police, Marconi wanted to offer the demon's blood to the child.” (“The Globe,” 11-9-92.) “Marconi Fraga Magalhães said yesterday that a year ago he would have made a pact with the devil and since then he cannot live in peace ... From then on he decided to open his

own temple and perform black magic rituals twice a week. Every 15 days, always on Fridays, the rituals attracted dozens of people, many important personalities. ... During the rituals ... I used to sacrifice goats, cats, black roosters, as required by the entities ”. (The Globe, 12-9-92.)

## CONCLUSION

### **THE QUEEN OF ANGELS, TERROR OF DEMONS**

Here we close the study that led us from the wonderful reality of the angels of light to the dark of fallen angels; from faithfulness and rapt love to God of the former to the desperate revolt of the latter; from the solicitude of angels for us men to the relentless hatred of demons.

We have seen the precautions we should take with regard to every form of superstition, which is a gateway to the evil one, and to what degree of subjection to the angel of evil man can come from an implicit covenant, from mere superstition, to the covenant. explicit, to a real contract with the devil. And there opens the terrible abyss of voluntary possession, witchcraft, evil, black Masses, sacrilegious rites, human sacrifices ...

We have also seen the rebirth of Satanism, a consequence of the tremendous process of de-Christianization and moral decay that Humanity is going through.

One must fear sin more than the devil. We should not, however, have a panic-filled fear of the devil. nor superstitiously exaggerate his powers (which are of no avail to him unless God permits him to use them); but keep it at a distance, avoiding any form of superstition; above all avoiding sin: it is sin that makes us vulnerable to the action of the Evil One.

As the saints say, more than the devil and his arts, we should fear sin.

The great Saint Theresa of Jesus remembers this truth with such fire and logic that it is convenient to transcribe her own words: “If this Lord (Jesus Christ) is so powerful, as I know and see; if demons are but their slaves, as faith cannot doubt, what harm can they do to me, if I am the servant of this King and Lord? Rather, why not feel so strong that I can face the whole hell?

“Taking the cross in my hands seemed to me that God gave me courage. In a short time I was so transformed that I would not have feared going out in battle with all the demons, that it seemed to me that with that cross I could easily overcome all; and shouted to them, 'Go now! As I am the handmaid of the Lord, I want to see what they can do to me!'

“And it seemed to me that they feared me, for I was quiet and without fear of them all, and all the fears that I had until now were gone; Truly, therefore, they made me quiet. Because although I did see them sometimes, I was no longer almost afraid of them, on the contrary, it seemed that they were afraid of me.

Such a landlord has become against me, given to me by the Lord of all, that I am no more afraid of them than of a fly. They seem so cowardly that, seeing that I despise them, they lose their strength.

”

“These enemies do not know how to attack except those who give them their own weapons, or when God permits it for the greater good of his servants, to torment them. Let His Majesty be pleased that we feared whom we should fear and understood that greater harm may come to us from a venial sin than from all hell together; demons only disturb us because we disturb ourselves with what should bother us, such as matters of honor, business, and treats. Because then they fight us with our own weapons that we put in their hands instead of using them to defend us. ...”

“I don't understand these fears: people scream 'demon! demon! 'while they might shout,' God! God!' and make him shiver. Yes, for we know that they cannot move if the Lord will not allow it.”  
(Saint Theresa, Book of Life, Chapter 25, no. 20-22 in Complete Works, pp. 115-116.)

### **The weapons of the fight**

We have at our disposal the means of defending ourselves, either from ordinary or extraordinary action of the devil: prayer, confession and the other sacraments, the sacramentals, the holy medals, holy water; but above all a life of authentic godliness and sincere faith.

When God allows a more intense action of the Tempter, an infestation, or even, in extreme cases, possession, we have exorcisms, performed with faith and devotion by the rightful, a sure form of deliverance.

We should especially turn to our Guardian Angel, the three glorious Archangels, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael.

To Saint Joseph, Patriarch of the Holy Family, whom God refuses nothing.

We must above all have a sincere and rapt devotion to the Queen of Angels, Terror of Demons.

An effective fight against demonic action cannot be accomplished without the special help and patronage of the Blessed Virgin. For her dignity as Mother of the Redeemer, her degree of union with God, her active participation in the Savior's Passion, as true Co-Redeemer and Mediatrix of all graces, she is our decisive support against the cursed angels who revolted against their Creator. .

## **Mary, the most terrible enemy God has armed against the devil**

The great apostle of Marial devotion, St. Louis Grignion de Montfort, in his celebrated Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, admirably epitomizes Mary's unique role in the fight against Satan: “Mary must be terrible to the devil and his followers, like an army in battle, especially in recent times, for the devil, knowing full well that he has little time left to lose souls, redoubles his efforts and attacks every day. He will soon arouse cruel and terrible persecutions in ambush of the faithful servants and the true children of Mary, who will work harder to overcome.

“It is chiefly to these last and cruelest persecutions of the devil, which will multiply every day to the kingdom of Antichrist, which refers to that first and famous prediction and curse which God

cast upon the serpent in the earthly paradise. The purpose here is to explain it here, to the glory of the Blessed Virgin, the salvation of her children, and the confusion of the devil.

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your posterity and her posterity. She shall tread on your head, and you shall betray her at his heel ”(Gen 3:15).

“One Enmity God has promoted and established, irreconcilable enmity, which will not only last, but will increase to the end: the enmity between Mary, her worthy Mother, and the devil; between the son and servants of the Blessed Virgin and the sons and followers of Lucifer; so Mary is the most terrible enemy God has made against the devil.

The heel that crushes the serpent's head “He has given you, from heaven, so much hatred for this cursed enemy of God, so much clairvoyance to discover the malice of this old serpent, so much strength to overcome, crush and annihilate this proud wicked, that Mary's fear of the devil is greater than that of all angels and men, and in a sense God himself. Not that God's anger, hatred, power is infinitely greater than that of the Blessed Virgin, for Mary's perfections are limited, but first of all, Satan, because he is proud, suffers incomparably more from being overcome and overcome. punished by the little and humble slave of God, whose humility humiliates him more than divine power; second, because God has given Mary such great power over demons that, as they have often been compelled to confess, by the mouth of the possessed, they give one more fear of their soul-longing than the prayers of all. saints; and one of their threats than all other torments. ”

“What Lucifer lost out of pride, Mary gained out of humility. What Eve condemned and lost through disobedience, Mary saved him by obedience ”(Saint Louis GRIGNION DE MONTFORT, Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Nn. 50-54.)

Let us call upon Mary Most Holy, the Queen of Angels and the Terror of Demons. May she assist us in a special way so that, clothed with the armor of God, we can resist the pitfalls of the devil (Eph 6: 11-17).

“And he shall send his angels with trumpets and with a loud voice, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Mt24,31)