

Spring 2013

The Role of Exorcism in the Modern World: Retrieving the Devil and Contending with the Reality of the Demonic Through a Vision and Practice of Human Wholeness

Lauren Miriah Martinez
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THE ROLE OF EXORCISM IN THE MODERN WORLD
RETRIEVING THE DEVIL AND CONTENDING WITH THE REALITY OF
THE DEMONIC THROUGH A VISION AND PRACTICE OF HUMAN
WHOLENESS

A thesis submitted to
Regis College
The Honors Program
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for Graduation with Honors

by

Lauren Miriah Martinez

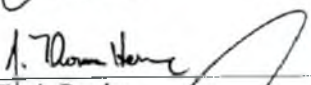
May 2013

Thesis written by
Lauren Miriah Martinez

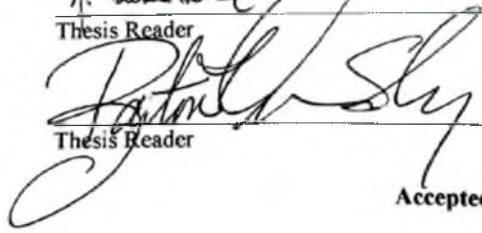
Approved by



Thesis Advisor



Thesis Reader



Thesis Reader

Accepted by

Director, University Honors Program

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Preface

This work embodies two years of interest, passion, and confident belief in the existence of the Devil, the presence of Demonic Possession and the need for Exorcism as a means of adequate treatment in the Modern World. I argue that we need to recover the place of the Rite of Exorcism and reevaluate its ancient and still wide-spread spiritual practice for modern Catholics. Restoring trust in the practice of Exorcism is a powerful antidote to the reductionist (materialist) visions of human beings in the cosmos, and it provides an enhanced context for imagining wholeness and healing for human beings.

Acknowledgements

First and Foremost I want to thank God, our Creator for giving me the courage, strength, and grace that I needed to undergo the topic of Exorcism. Without my Roman Catholic faith I would not have had the ability to feel as confident about the existence of Demonic Possession in the world as I have today.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to my parents, Gloria and Ernest Martinez, my sister Ashley Martinez, and my future husband Santiago Castillo for their continual support for me during the writing process of this Honors Thesis. I cannot thank you enough for always encouraging me and showing me the love that I needed to make this thesis a reality.

I want to thank my advisor, Dr. Julia Brumbaugh for ensuring that I always went a little deeper and pushed a little harder to heighten the quality of this work.

I want to thank my reader, Father Barton Geger, SJ for being the starting point for my research on the topic of Exorcism. Without you, this work would not have even started. Thank you for being one of the greatest personal and educational mentors in my life.

I would like to thank my reader, Dr. Jonathan Howe for being the professor that I could bounce ideas off of. You helped me phrase my ideas eloquently and intellectually.

Chapter One: Introduction

Tension

The intention of this work is to highlight a tension that has arisen in the past century, particularly in the United States, between the Western scientific world that highly values empiricism as a foundation for belief and the Roman Catholic Church's Rite of Exorcism. For centuries the Rite of Exorcism was seemingly without criticism until the rise of psychoanalysis and advancements of modern medicine began to challenge this practice. With advances in modern medicine and psychology, conditions previously viewed as demonic possessions had begun to be treated with psychotropic drugs and talk therapy. Thus, a tension began to manifest and Exorcism began to lose its credence in society.

Exorcism historically has not evolved with the modern world. Moreover, it is viewed by many as medieval, archaic, and something to be left behind. Many purely scientific empiricists believe there is now adequate treatment for these conditions. This presents a form of reduction that neglects the spiritual condition of a person that ignores a holistic model of healing. A human being that is treated medically and psychologically, and not spiritually, could be vulnerable to evil intrusion. Although advocates for the Rite of Exorcism have found ways to make room for medical advancements, there needs to be a deeper reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church, referred to as the Church from here on, and the scientific magisterium. I argue that Exorcism is not only valid, but the time-tested treatment necessary to achieve the goal of holistic healing for an afflicted person.

Additionally, it can be one way to reach the goal of reconciling the tension that exists between the Church and the medical world. Exorcism has historical significance, spiritual and biblical support, cultural and global presence, and a relationship with the modern psychological and medical world. I will argue for the importance for a Catholic to believe in the real presence of the Devil and the implication that comes with that supports the claim that Exorcism is necessary in the modern world.

This thesis presupposes that demons exist and that Exorcism is a real form of treatment to liberate humanity from the shackles those entities attempt to place on the lives of the human being. It is written from the Roman Catholic perspective and therefore will consider specifically Catholic as well as other aspects of the Christian faith. It is important to note that from a Catholic perspective, Catholics have an investment in their faith beyond simply following rituals. The Catholic faith calls believers not only practice its teachings, but to pray to understand and live the Catholic teachings. Catholics believe there is an inherent truth given by God to those practices and to the faith. Exorcism as a practice is a truth revealed to Catholics specifically by Jesus and carried on through the Church by the early Desert Fathers, and many additional cultures. Additionally, the Catholic tradition of basing Truth in Scripture supports the use of Exorcism. Exorcism is a way to obtain holistic healing in a lasting manner that restores the broken relationship between God and the afflicted person. Without it there would be insufficient treatment and this is supported repeatedly in Sacred Scripture.

The Bible will be used as a legitimate source for the arguments made. There will also be various psychological sources used to further support my argument. This thesis is not written with the intent of showing non Christians why belief in Exorcism and the demonic is important. Rather, it is to demonstrate to Christians why those beliefs are crucial to the Catholic identity and how the treatment of Exorcism helps to holistically heal the afflicted individual in a lasting way.

Much medical advancement has necessitated heavy reliance of medication for treatment of psychological conditions and the scientific approach has abandoned the dependence on Spiritual evaluation for the healing of disorders related to demonic possession. These prohibit many people from believing that Exorcism is still a necessary practice in the world today. Those reasons are not sufficient enough to abandon the historically, scripturally, and culturally significant Rite of the Catholic Church. In this paper there will be a specific focus on Roman Catholicism because much of the evidence cited draws on the Papal Encyclicals, councils of the Roman Catholic Church, and Catholic doctrine. These ideas help to support the idea that Exorcism is legitimate and must continue to have a place for healing in the world.

Why is considering Exorcism even relevant in today's world? The subject of demonic possession and Exorcism is important in the modern world, especially in the United States, because it is an issue widely ignored or treated with methods of treatment that in many ways attempt to invalidate the spiritual presence in the

condition. In American society demons are often seen as an archaic supernatural phenomenon, too medieval to have significance present day. Historically, and in many parts of the world today, demons are not only real but they interact with humans in a detrimental way. Because American society has over rationalized and placed a great deal of emphasis on scientific explanation, demonic possession and the Rite of Exorcism seem obsolete. Although Exorcism has made somewhat of a societal boom, with the general interest gaining precedence and with more priests being trained as Exorcists in the United States, we should be inclined to pay attention to this subject. There is a real cosmic battle of good and evil and if we as Catholics want to engage the struggle with a better sense of what is at stake, I suggest Catholics see Exorcism and demonic activity as a serious condition. We must continue to use and realize that Exorcism has true and life-altering benefits.

A Rich Cultural Background

Coming from the rich cultural background of Mexico¹, the personification of evil was affirmed and the practice of Exorcism was widely practiced and

¹ I come from a Mexican-American background that carries with it the beliefs and practices that have a foundation of Christianity that came to Mexico from Europe in the 15th Century. These beliefs and practices accompany that Roman Catholicism that I grew up practicing which enriches my perspective of the teachings Catholic Church. Some of those beliefs include but are not limited to the recognition and treatment of the evil spirits that are prevalent in the world. There is not a separation between the spirit world and human cosmos that I live in, therefore the potential for demons to exist, tempt us, and possess us is completely possible and happens. When it happens you cannot have fear or ignore it, you must actively engage with it to dispel it from your life. If demons exist in

accepted as a rational part of our existence. I continually struggle to reconcile my cultural beliefs the Western emphasis that says we can treat medical conditions solely with medicine, without the empirical evidence of the affects of one's spiritual experiences. In the Western idea of empiricism there seems to be a limited cosmos that offers the thought that evil existing outside of us can affect us in a powerful way, but that an actual Devil or demon existing is unlikely. This view is seriously insufficient to the Catholic understanding of the human condition and how we engage with good and evil. I argue that to adopt his perspective fully is dangerous because we can become too individualistic and lose our interaction with the large cosmos which includes God. Our relationship with God is jeopardized when we exclusively adopt the purely empiricist view and see God in the same way as we see the Devil; as a mere personification of our inner selves' desire to explain things that cannot be rationally explained or measured. Also, with this viewpoint an actual Devil and Demons do not exist. Therefore, there is no need for Exorcism. It -is superfluous in the modern world.

My culture does not allow demonic possession and exorcism to be superfluous. My Mexican heritage and the manner in which I was raised made belief in God and the Devil absolute, and Exorcism necessary. There is a clear understanding that God and the Devil exist, and that the Devil is trying to win us

your life there is an unbalance and it attempts to destroy your spirit and relationship with God. The recognition of evil in the cosmos is crucial, not inconsequential.

over. That includes demons attacking us in order to show their dominance over humans.

I will point out why cultures using forms of Exorcisms are important sources of support for maintaining this practice in the modern world. There are cultures in the world that use Exorcism in many ways; sometimes differently than our Western Catholic perspective. The understanding that they also believe in demonic possession demonstrates that there is something very real about the subject.

In some cultures Exorcists are seen as witches practicing frivolous and evil practices that call for them to be discredited and their status in the social structure of where they live to be diminished (Hollenbach 124). In other cultures, many in Africa, Central America, South America, and North America, and the Caribbean Islands, Exorcism is seen as a normal and necessary practice to maintain a balanced life. In these places it is inevitable that one will face the evil spirits in the cosmos and at worst those spirits have the ability to possess humans. In those cases, rare or not depending on the individual culture, there is a need for an Exorcist to cast the evil spirit out and bring that afflicted person back to normalcy.

A Dynamic Cosmos

Humans in a dynamic cosmos with angels and demons are intimately faced with outside influences who are working to win us over and be the greatest

influence in our lives. Evil can enter into our lives in many ways. We can choose to have the evil overcome us by the unholy decisions we make, or we may simply become a victim of demonic possession. We are guided by the Holy Spirit to do good and to follow in Jesus' footsteps, but are also influenced by the evil one² with temptation in attempts to damage our relationship with God. Jesus and his ministry as an Exorcist "brought out into public consciousness and expression what everyone knew about but was afraid to face up to and he explicitly stated that Exorcisms are the central act of God in the world" (Luke 11:20). By sending out his followers on an exorcising mission which also indicates the central importance he attached to Exorcisms (Paul W. Hollenbach). There are scriptural, historical, theological, psychological, and judicious reasons why using Exorcisms is a way to holistically treat the patient in the modern world.

It is important to understand that what makes up the human is more than biochemistry, and we should examine both chemistry and metaphysics more closely. The Western empiricist view argues that seeking behavioral cognitive treatment will make us whole and healthy. We no longer need faith and spirituality to help with restoration of our health. If the goal is to be holistically treated then there must be consideration for the spiritual condition of the individual. To understand the fullness of humanity we must resist what the

² R.A. Guelph (1982) *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding*. Waco, TX: Word, p. 297.

reduction of the cosmos and the understanding of being that this scientific paradigm has provided. That approach limits our scope of healing.

Exorcism provides the means by which we can maintain the cosmos and remain historically similar to our Christian ancestors, which is important to our identity as Catholics. It is dangerous to diminish or lose this part of our identity. Throughout history, Exorcism played a large part in the lives of Christians. It was practiced throughout Jesus' ministry, and -is still being practiced globally. For example, in Mt 12:26, 28 it is stated by Jesus "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." Jesus' *exorcisms* free some individuals from the domination of demons.(Jn12:31). Exorcism cannot be ignored simply because it is seen as irrational to some. Rather, it must be acknowledged and viewed as a means to holistic healing for the afflicted because it offers them spiritual restoration, medical attention beforehand and psychological treatment before and throughout treatment. The Roman Catholic Church must adapt to the secular society and meet the needs of that world, and also continue the practice of the rich and healing tradition that will foster a working relationship between the Western empiricist world and the Church.

The Catholic Church and A Tension Building

It is necessary to pay attention to what the leader of the Church has to say on this subject. The Chief Exorcist at the Vatican in Rome, the home of the Roman Catholic Church, Father Gabriel Amorth cited a statement from Pope Paul

VI [1963-1978] from Nov. 15, 1972. This statement speaks volumes when considering the identity of a Catholic relating to the -importance of belief in the Devil and the potential of evil infiltrating human life. He says:

“Whoever refuses to recognize the existence of [the demonic reality] denies biblical and ecclesiastic teachings. So does anyone who claims that this reality has its own beginning and that it does not originate from God, as every creature does, and anyone who tries to explain it as pseudo-reality, as a conceptual and fantastic personification of all unknown causes of our ills. The chapter on demons, and on influence that they can exert on single individuals, on communities, on entire societies, or on events, is a very important one for Catholic doctrine. We need to revisit it and study it; unfortunately, today it is practically ignored” (Paul VI, cited in Amorth 165).

Pope Paul VI urges the Church to take this teaching of the existence and nature of evil in the world enacted by the Devil and demons seriously, considering it a priority which should be carefully considered in daily life. Demons in the modern world cannot be ignored simply because modern science has made advancements to treat the effects of behavioral conditions perceived. It is necessary to consider what the underlying cause of that behavior, not discounting the spiritual condition of a patient.

It is crucial to point out why the Roman Catholic Church has an obligation

to teach about the Devil and its influence on the world, as well as continuing the proper use of Exorcism as the means of intervention in the most extreme cases. If, as Catholics, we are to truly believe that we are in a populated cosmos then it becomes more than a potential that we can come into some form of contact with other beings unlike us who could affect us negatively or positively. When that does happen the Church does not have just abstract or ritualistic doctrine. They have a meaningful response delineating how to deal with circumstances where humans believe they are being influenced by the evil one so much that they have lost some sort of control of their own life, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. Theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar³ argues that to receive something from another magisterium is not necessarily a weakness or considered an imperfection, but it is rather intrinsic to the nature of what it is to love⁴, love being the central focus of our cosmos. Therefore, it is essential the Catholic Church engage the medical world in dialogue to offer this key point in the Catholic faith.

The relationship between the Church and the science magisterium is an important area that enlightens the struggle for using Exorcism in the modern world. Supporting the Church's viewpoint is not to say that science has no role in matters of demonic influence and humanity. Science has played a crucial role for

³ See “The Mission of Communio”; Balthasar, Hans Urs Von. *The Laity and the Life of the Counsels: The Church's Mission in the World*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2003. Print.

⁴ See Balthasar’s “Love Alone”; Balthasar, Hans Urs Von. *Love Alone*. [New York]: Herder and Herder, 1969. Print.

treating and explaining important disorders that have been improperly diagnosed. These include such disorders as: schizophrenia, hysteria, autism, tourette syndrome, and others. I am advocating that science and religion must work together to properly treat those who are intensely affected with the evil in our dynamically populated cosmos. This perceived battle between these magisteriums is not enough to prohibit them working together to heal the afflicted. Science and religion⁵ do not have to be in conflict of one another. They can each bring a unique perspective and special quality of healing to Exorcism.

Holistic Healing

To argue that holistic healing is the best form of treatment we must examine how Exorcism fits into a holistic model and why holism should be applied. A proper approach to holistic spiritual healing is one that considers all “forms of individual experience, communal ritual, and ethical concerns” (Barbour xiii) in the process of discernment and treatment of that evil in someone’s life. We cannot ignore the Centuries of religious teachings and Church doctrine just as we cannot ignore the expansion and discoveries of science in the modern world. Yes,

Science and religion have typically been seen as opposing magisteriums, having a tension that is too strong to work together. It is advocated here that they can work together to bring a goodness to the world. I cannot solve the tension that has existed between them or that continues to be present. The tension is made apparent in this paper and is seen as an important part of why Exorcism has lost legitimacy. But the complexity of the theological aspect of Exorcism indicate that there is genuine evil, demons and the Devil that exist for the purposes that God intends. It cannot be dismissed that both good and evil exist in the world, or explained adequately, but Exorcism provides a means that lessens the tension between science and religion because its goal is to bring the patient back to wholeness with how they are engaging with the evil and good in their life.

they may conflict at times, but if -we are searching for is a holistic approach to healing we must work with science to rule out any medical and psychological disorders. We must also work with the Roman Catholic Church to spiritually care for the suffering person.

The method of approaching holistic healing includes the simultaneous use of medicine and spirituality. We need to consider what that process looks like in the modern world. The most appropriate and authentic “way to discern if something is demonic in origin or- a psychiatric problem, is through the passage of time. When a person meets with his spiritual director or a theologian to discuss an extraordinary phenomenon he has experienced, it is initially very difficult-if not impossible-to discern what is actually taking place. After some months, the most obscure cases are clarified, and it becomes possible to separate a demonic influence from a mental illness” (Forstea 33). In either case it is apparent that much time and effort must be invested to truly understand what the cause is and what the best remedy for healing in a holistic way⁶ both spiritual and mental for the subject. William James advocates in *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* that the goal of treatment should importantly be holistic because it takes into consideration a wider consideration of the potential causes of the condition, therefore leading to a longer healing⁷.

⁶ James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. New York: Modern Library, 1936. Print.

⁷ James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. New York: Modern Library, 1936. Print.

Chapter Two: Resistance to Reductionism

The reductionism that has accompanied the Western scientific advancements has brought into question such practices as Exorcism because they are deemed a way of the past. There are areas within the Church, really beginning in the 1960s, where these practices have had the opportunity to be left behind, so it is important to point out where those areas are. In order to understand how the Church engages with the modern world, I point to the Pastoral Constitution from the Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*⁸. This document sets up the idea that the Catholic Church has a place in the modern world and within that perspective, it brings into question certain practices and ideas of the Church. It was intended to help the Roman Catholic Church make a critical move towards embracing the social and medical sciences and establishing meaningful engagement with the world.

Gaudium et Spes demonstrates the importance of Exorcism to continually evolve to work alongside the scientific and empirical world because it advocates that those areas have meaningful things to say to the Church and Exorcism. It does not say that Catholic rituals should be eliminated; rather they should grow with the scientific world to enhance their meaning and validate their use. Prior to the 1960s and 1970s there was also a strong emphasis placed on relics; they are

⁸ "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World-Gaudium Et Spes." Vatican: The Holy See. Web. 13 Apr. 2012.

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html>.

helpful to Catholics in a real and meaningful way. Many Catholics become so attached to devotions like relics, sacramental and purely ritualistic traditions like going to first Friday mass can ensure your place in Heaven. This attachment at times takes precedence to the faith that they seemed to forget what was truly important in their faith. There seemed to be an emphasis on going to Mass regularly instead of emphasizing the importance of what happens during the Mass. With the continual wide acceptance of empiricism in the Western world, rituals like Exorcism were being discounted and its validity came into question simply because you cannot quantify the existence of a demon. However, Jesus performed exorcisms and from him the Church received the power and office exorcism and is performed at every catholic Baptism.

The step back from Exorcism on the part of the Church diminished its value to society. To holistically heal someone it must be believed that the Devil exists and that there is evil present in the world that must be contended with in a meaningful way; with Exorcism. One tension that was always at play with the Church was the explanation of evil in the world. Evil in the world and in the lives of humans could traditionally be explained by looking beyond the human self, making Exorcism easier to accept but there was always a question of why God would allow evil. I do not address that question directly in this paper, rather I focus on how to properly contend with the evil that does exist in our lives and the Evil One that attempts to disorient our relationship with God. Evil can also be

understood in a real sense through the interactions with other human beings throughout life.

A Spiritual Paradigm Growing Inadequate

A theology that didn't engage with the scientific world seemed to be growing in a sense, inadequate, for the science magisterium. It evolved into explanation that if there is evil to be found in the lives of humans it can be explained by looking inside of oneself and according to one's own experience. This would explain why they would be exhibiting behavior that is not "normal". Western empiricism created the claim that if you can't show me the evidence of these things then it doesn't exist, therefore rooting itself in a scientific and empirically significant paradigm. It is dangerous to fully accept this perspective provided by modernity. If we believe that science and medicine can offer the only solution to any behavioral disturbance, we risk reducing treatment to purely organic means, and ignoring the existence of demons and the need for Exorcism.

Understanding the root of evil presents a complex issue that cannot be solved here. When evil is manifested in the world through the Devil and demons, Exorcism enters the pictures as a potential way to heal, which presents a troubling view for many Westerners who highly value science as a means of healing. There seems to be a disconnect⁹ with how to deal with the idea of personified evil and belief in the Devil or demonic powers in the world. This disconnect takes place

⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Walter Arnold. Kaufmann. Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None. New York: Modern Library, 1995. Print.

between much of the scientific / medical world and the Roman Catholic Church. Traditionally, the treatment only comes in one way, either spiritual or medical/psychological. However, many Catholics who embrace empiricism and Western scientific thought advocate for the attempt to integrate both forms of adequate and necessary treatment in a meaningful way. This would provide the best and most holistic approach to healing the afflicted. In today's world there is careful consideration of the medical and psychological condition of the afflicted. This has ruled out any misunderstanding and misuse of Exorcisms. Because of the medical advancements of the age, Catholics no longer treat medical conditions with Exorcism when the Church is involved in the process of discerning an Exorcism. The Church has grown with the modern world because it very much is a part of that world. It also has maintained the integrity of its practices including Exorcism. This growth of the Church to adopt scientific theories and practices helps ensure the role of the scriptural stories as foundation for the resistance of the reduction of the belief in demons. Using Exorcism in the modern world necessitates an adequate understanding of the foundation Christian tradition that includes breaking open the word in the Scriptural passages of the Bible.

Chapter Three: Scripture

One of the most crucial aspects in support of the continuing use of Exorcism is found in Scripture. In fact, one crucial "element of Jesus' ministry that impacted his contemporaries, for which he would be remembered by many

succeeding generations, was his ability to heal and cast out evil spirits"¹⁰ (Evans 157). If Jesus personally attempted to holistically heal those who were afflicted by using Exorcism to rid the evil in the lives of his contemporaries, it is imperative that we consider Exorcism when warranted in our present day.

Exorcism in the Bible and Jesus' Ministry as an Exorcist

In support of my argument, I will discuss here the presence of the Devil in the Bible, the role of the Gospels, the depiction of the Geresene Demonic in depth and other biblical stories briefly to demonstrate the importance of Jesus' ministry as a healer in relation to Exorcism.

Jesus makes his role as an Exorcist a foundation. He uses exorcism as a commission to the Apostles, sending them forth and to continue his work after his death and resurrection. It is apparent from the Bible that "with authority he [Jesus] commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (Mark 1:28). Clearly there is something significant in Exorcisms as evidenced with the continuity of Jesus performing exorcisms during his lifetime, the Apostles performing them immediately after his death and the Early Desert Fathers of the Church practicing Exorcisms. Historically and culturally there is significance in this practice and as

¹⁰ See P.G Bold (2003) *Jesus' Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Bold argues that one of the major components of the early Christian apologetic is centered on Jesus' extraordinary power over illness, death, and evil, which were elements that scared people in his time.

Catholics, we must consider the history of the Church as an important part of our Faith and its practices.

Understanding Exorcism means understanding that the Devil is real and that demons are how the Devil interacts with humanity in a damaging way. I will point out here- the Devil's presence in the Bible, which shows the potential for his evil action. According to Craig A. Evans¹¹ the word Satan occurs about thirty six times in the New Testament, almost half of these in the Gospels, "Beelzebub" occurs seven times in the Gospels, all in reference to the accusation leveled against Jesus that his remarkable success in Exorcism is due to the assistance of Beelzebub, the prince of demons (Matt 12:24, 27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15, 18, 19). Devil occurs three dozen times in the New Testament, with just under half appearing in the Gospels. Evil one occurs nine times in the New Testament, three of which appear in the Gospels. It is the evil one who comes and snatches away the gospel of God's rule. Dragon occurs some 13 times in Revelation. Serpent occurs four times in Revelation. By far the most frequent are the references to demons and unclean spirits. Demon occurs more than 60 times in the New Testament, most of these in the Gospels" (Evans 147). This alone necessitates paying strict attention to this subject. The recurrence of these ideas also clearly illuminate humanity's struggle on earth between good and evil.

¹¹ Payment Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Acadia Divinity College and Acadia University in Nova Scotia, Canada.

The Gospels and their role in presenting a picture of Exorcism must be taken into consideration because it demonstrates how the early Christians healed people suffering from affliction. The tension between the Gospel stories and their place in the modern scientific world is heightened with clear explanations for certain medical conditions that would have previously been treated with Exorcism. Nonetheless, advocates for Exorcism claim its treatment is valid and appropriate when determined to be a justifiable approach by spiritual authority. The Gospels provide an important insight into the ministry of Jesus as an Exorcist. The scriptures help give us an understanding for the importance of this practice; they set a basis for why this tradition should be preserved now and in future generations.

As soon as Jesus begins his public life of ministry, following the Miracle at Cana in John, he battles the Devil in the desert for forty days, which is found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Following this battle, Jesus continues to encounter the Devil through demons and unclean spirits. He confronts many demons and unclean spirits throughout the Gospels and uses his ministry to travel throughout Galilee casting out demons and unclean spirits and he authorizes the disciples to cast out demons and unclean spirits (Mark 3:13-15, 6:7, Matt 10:1, Luke 9:1-2). This authorization serves as a fundamental basis for the Roman Catholic Rite of Exorcism in that the disciples “rejoice that the demons are subject to them in the name of Jesus (Luke 10:17). Nevertheless, they find that

some evil spirits are too difficult for them (Mark 9:14-29, Matt 17:14-20; Luke 9:37-43). But they are not too difficult for Jesus (Mark 9:25; Matt 17:18, Luke 9:42)” (Evans 148). This shows that we as Catholics cannot simply perform an Exorcism as it was intended without calling on Jesus for his intervention¹².

There are many stories in the Gospels that highlight Exorcism. One that I will carefully consider is the Geresene Démoniac (Mark 5:1-20 and parallels). The Geresene Démoniac truly does display the message of salvation, redemption, and love that Christ shows the afflicted. It is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels¹³, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. From this story it is apparent that the afflicted man makes the entire town fearful of him. The illustration seems to describe the man as more of a beast, because of the extreme behavior he exhibits. The case is presented as very serious, due to the behavior and the previous unsuccessful attempts to subdue the demon in the man. The man is considered unwell and in need of immediate treatment to holistically heal him. Christ saw this man in need of spiritual liberation, an important recognition for healing someone in a lasting way. Christ is immediately recognized by the demon by showing its agitated submission to his authority over the demon, which sets up the

¹² The difficulty of the demon could have been simply because the nature of the demon such as the cases of the blind, mute, deaf and dumb demons which are cases considered to lose credibility when the conditions for modern medical and psychological treatment are applied to these stories. See Mark 9:17, Matt 9:32, 12:22.

¹³ "Synoptic Gospels (biblical Literature)." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013. Web. 10 Feb. 2013.

importance of having Christ as the center of an Exorcism.

The Geresene Demoniac demonstrates the perception and behavior that demons possess when faced directly with Jesus and the Kingdom of God. The demons beg of Jesus not to torment them and leave them as they are which shows that they know of and fear the power that Jesus has over them through God the Father. Demons have no real lasting dominion over humans when Jesus is present, because as long as he is present the demons are fighting for their place in the world. The Rite of Exorcism attempts to break the dominion that the demon has over the human's physical self with the same power that Jesus used. During the Exorcism the priest calls upon Jesus to exhibit his power to expel the demon. The disciples not only did this in the presence of Jesus, but also after Christ died and ascended into Heaven.

After Jesus' death and Resurrection it is clear that the practice of Exorcism did not cease, the apostles carried it on with the establishment of the Church. The Apostle Paul in Acts 16:16-18 came across a spirit in a woman who was fortune telling and commanded the spirit out of her in the name of Jesus¹⁴, causing the demon to leave.

One point that is important to note when reading these pericopes in the scriptures is that even when the disciples failed to heal the afflicted from the

¹⁴ Graham Twelftree, In the Name of Jesus: *Exorcism among Early Christians*, p. 42 n. 32: 'perhaps in the name of Christ'.

demons within, Jesus was successful, showing that without the help of Christ in today's Exorcisms we might find the same effect, failure. In the Catholic Rite of Exorcism the ceremony includes -prayers that call upon Jesus to be present and to exhort his power to help the afflicted, because we as humans cannot do it alone. That is what makes the Catholic Rite of Exorcism unique and theologically significant. It stays true to the faith and the inherited Christological history. These ceremonies are practiced just as we believe Christ to have practiced them. So was performing Exorcisms important to Jesus Christ? Yes, undoubtedly, in fact it was a significant part of validating his ministry. Jesus proclaimed "but if I cast demons out by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11:20). Since we know that one of the greatest goals of any Catholic is to make the Kingdom of God and its qualities present and thriving in our world, then we note that Exorcisms are a crucial part of that manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

Chapter Four: History

Even Jesus himself was confronted with the Devil's temptation to engage in evil acts. He was tempted to reject God the Father, and follow the Devil. It is evident throughout the entire Bible that "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places" (Ephesians 6:12). This indicates an ongoing battle throughout all of history between good and evil

for the attention of humanity. It is still present today, and because of that we are called to contend with evil through Exorcism. Historically there are reasons why we should believe Exorcism is necessary. The historical supporting evidence presented here is the Early Desert Fathers of the Church, Exorcism through Baptism, the Catechism and Catholic Dogma, the Process of an Exorcism, and the Continuous evolvement of Exorcism throughout history.

The Early Desert Fathers of the Church

Another reason why Exorcism is historically significant is because there were many Catholics who went forth and engaged with demons in a meaningful way, showing the continual need for contending with evil in the lives of humans. Catholics should look to the early Desert Fathers as examples of how to expunge evil from their lives to be holistically healed. The early Desert Fathers of the Church have many prominent things to say on the matter of demonic possession. It is important for us to look to what these Desert Fathers did because as Catholics we can learn something about how to handle evil in our lives. It is not in our best interest to deny the existence of evil just as it is not advantageous to ignore its manifestation. We should go out in our lives and battle it with the tools that God gave us, along with the instruction provided by Jesus. We should do well to use discernment in our lives to see where evil lies, attempt to isolate and eradicate its presence, in an effort to become spiritually whole again.

Some of the Desert Fathers include Father Antony and Evagrius of Pontus, who both documented their practices in the desert in their personal writings. Pontus wrote about his practices in *Talking Back: A Monastic Handbook for Combating Demons*. We should look to their model of how to live one's life in order to avoid temptation from the evil one when possible, and how to fight it in a literal sense when needed. Coming into contact with demons became a true reality for these two desert fathers. Moreover, their works provide a lens to view what it looks like engage in a battle against evil. Many other desert fathers in the Church also went out into the desert to live their lives, away from society, partly to avoid the temptations that came with city life. Doing this comparatively in commemoration with Jesus model, in which Jesus went into the desert and battled the Devil, and partly because they felt that driving demons away from the city to protect others was their duty.

There is something to be said about going off to live one's life alone to face inner spiritual, emotional, and mental battles. Many times evil has everything to do with our inner selves and we must engage with it in meaningful ways. When humans consciously ignore the evil that infiltrates their lives, it has the potential to influence them so much that it becomes a part of them. In today's culture it becomes an easy temptation to rationalize evil because it is so accepted in our Society. It then becomes difficult to separate what we should be doing from what we are called to do by God, for ourselves, and others.

Baptism, the Lord's Prayer, and the Rite of Exorcism

We see Exorcism present in more ways than just the Rite of Exorcism, we see it in Baptism and the Lord's Prayer, two staples of Catholic practice. Its validity goes far beyond simply practicing the Rite itself and to invalidate Exorcism would be to consider the use of its effects in Baptism and the Lord's Prayer. The institution of Exorcism as a legitimate practice and it is partially found in the grand culmination of Jesus' commandments to his people. This was the mandating of the Apostles to "go and make disciples of all, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that He had commanded them" [Mt. 28:19-20]¹⁵. This teaches Catholics the great meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism because it emphasizes the need for it and the practice of it going forward even after his death.

The Sacrament of Baptism is so important that Catholics receive this Sacrament and engage in the renunciation of evil at Baptism (The Sacrament of Baptism). In fact during the celebration of this Sacrament the priest says two prayers of Exorcism, the first is said after the Gospel reading and the second is during the actual Baptism of the subject. During the first prayer of Exorcism the priest commands that any impure spirits or demons that are present with or in the subject depart from them. This is done so that the person is physically purified enough to receive this Sacrament. During the second prayer of Exorcism called

¹⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church #1223.

the Ephpheta (to be opened) the priest touches the subject's ears and mouth while saying a prayer calling the person's ears and mouth to be opened to receive the word of God, speak the faith, and give glory to God (The Sacrament of Baptism).

The widespread practice of the Sacrament Baptism includes renouncing the evil one and all of his works. During this sacramental ceremony, Baptismal vows are made to promise to renounce Satan and his works in attempt to make one's life holy and sanctified, closer to God essentially (The Sacrament of Baptism). This is done intentionally so that Catholics not only understand the severity of this renunciation, but also of what it means to be in the community of the Roman Catholic Church. This renunciation is in a sense a form of Exorcism because of its direct and personal address to the evil one in the life of the person entering into the Church. It is important for Catholics to renew their Baptismal vows at the Catholic Easter celebration at the culmination of the season of Lent every spring season (The Sacrament of Baptism). The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "since Baptism signifies liberation from sin and from its instigator the Devil, one or more Exorcisms are pronounced over the candidate. The celebrant then anoints him with the oil of catechumens, or lays his hands on him, and he explicitly renounces Satan" (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1237).

In the creation story in Genesis Adam and Eve instituted original sin which lead to future generations inheriting it simply with birth. Humans may also experience the absence of the Divine presence of God in their lives through their

actions. This occurs because the Devil is first and foremost a liar¹⁶ and a deceiver who will do whatever it takes to win us over unless we take measure to overcome his conniving ways. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the Devil “has sinned from the beginning; he is a liar and the father of all lies (John 3:8). Jesus calls him a murderer from the beginning” who tried

to divert Jesus from the mission received from his Father” (John 8:44) and that “the power of Satan is, nonetheless, not infinite. He cannot prevent the building up of God’s reign. Although his action may cause grave injuries - of a spiritual nature and, indirectly, even of a physical nature - to each man and to society, the action is permitted by divine providence, which with strength and gentleness guides human and cosmic history. It is a great mystery that providence should permit diabolical activity (Catechism of the Catholic Church 99).

The Sacrament of Baptism changes this through essentially erasing sins that were committed by the person prior to receiving the Sacrament¹⁷ because the Sacrament of Baptism gives the person a new life through Jesus in the Roman Catholic Church. This Sacrament of Baptism renews the faith of that person and

¹⁶ John 8:44 ; Lewis, C. S. The Screwtape Letters. New York: Macmillan, 1943. Print.

“Readers are advised to remember that the Devil is a liar.”

¹⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church #1263.

heals them so deeply that it brings the person back to God and repairs any broken relationship or helps form a new one. Since this Sacrament cannot change that the human being will experience a physical death from the temporal world, it cannot change how humans will engage with, combat against, or succumb to the temptations of the evil one and his demons present in the world.

Another place we see Exorcism in ordinary Catholic life is in the Lord's Prayer. The use of the phrase "but deliver us from evil" in the Our Father prayer is the last petition to God asking that we be protected from the Devil and the Devil's works. Because "victory over the prince of the world was won once for all at the Hour when Jesus freely gave himself up to death to give us his life" (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2850 ; John 14:30) we must always protect ourselves from that evil because the Devil continues to be present in the world. This petition helps us to "ask to be delivered from the Evil One, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past, and future, of which he is the author or instigator" (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2853-2854). This prayer is used as a powerful measure during an Exorcism to remind us of God's power and the need to rely on Jesus. Through this prayer "the Spirit and the Church pray: 'Come, Lord Jesus' since his coming will deliver us from the Evil One" (Catechism of the Catholic Church 686 ; Revelation 22:17,20).

In addition to the Sacrament of Baptism and the Lord's prayer being used as a means of renouncing the Devil there is need for an official Rite of Exorcism in the Church. After Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council, he

mandated the revision of the Rites in the Church. Thus, it became necessary that the Rite of Exorcism found in the Roman Missal would be addressed. The Rite of Exorcism was the last of these texts to be revised in 1999. The revised Rite of Exorcism is an important part of the Catholic faith in the modern world, and it is crucial that it remain a practice used when called on when the condition is deemed possession and not a medical or psychological illness needing medical treatment.

The Process of an Exorcism

Here it is pointed out what happens during an actual Exorcism according to Father Gabriele Amorth, Chief Exorcist of the Vatican in Rome, Italy. Contrary to the belief of many, Exorcism is not a quick fix or the freak show that has been depicted by Hollywood over the past few decades. It is taken very seriously by the Church and those who engage with it. Evil is serious business and the Exorcist ensures that they take the proper measures to begin and conduct an Exorcism. They engage with doctors and receive the “ok” from the Bishop in their diocese before beginning an Exorcism.

This process of Exorcism is not simple, clear cut, or quick. The process of expunging evil and demons from a person could take hours, days, weeks, months, and in the worst and most critical of cases, it could take years. Because of the severity of the condition that the afflicted has faced it is important that the priest, doctor, and psychologist not abandon the subject after they are seemingly well. They have to continue to be seen and treated professionally to ensure a lasting

healing. This can also contribute to the ongoing preservation of their spiritual and mental health, making them less vulnerable to succumbing to the temptations of the world which led them to be a place where the demon manifests.

An Exorcism “follows four steps: prior to discovery, during Exorcisms, at the beginning of liberation, and after liberation” (Amorth 91). The first step, prior to the discovery in the demon the subject begins to display physical or mental distresses. At the beginning of the Exorcism¹⁸ the demon attempts to remain hidden so that its presence in the subject is unknown. Its response to prayers or attempts of the Exorcist can vary and at times can be vulgar and violent.

Perhaps the most difficult of the entire process is the discernment of whether or not someone is demonically possessed. The priest has to take careful consideration of this step and engage with psychiatric and medical professionals to ensure no pre-existing condition exists.

The second step during the Exorcism can look differently for various patients. A demonically possessed person can be in “a trance state or a demonic personality can appear. There are cases however, in which other extraordinary phenomena are manifested. The most frequent phenomena are that the person suddenly develops an understanding of foreign or even dead languages that are previously unfamiliar and have not been studied. The possessed displays abnormal physical strength, the person demonstrates a knowledge of hidden

¹⁸ "Exorcism, Introduction and General Rules Rite for Exorcism." The Roman Ritual. Web. 13 Apr.

things” and “perhaps the most extraordinary phenomenon of all-and the most infrequent-is levitation. Some cases of possession, however, manifest no extraordinary phenomena at all” (Fortea 87). These phenomena are not easily and sometimes rationally and empirically explainable by the sciences of modern times¹⁹.

The third step, at the beginning of liberation the state of the afflicted can worsen and this can typically be a very difficult step because the demon can be violent or difficult to address. It is here that many of the prayers found in the book of blessings are used and an intercession of Jesus Christ is requested.

The fourth step, nearing the expulsion of the demon during liberation process, the demon slowly begins to realize its eminent fate and admits that it is dying and will be condemned to Hell to meet its death away from humans. After the demon does leave the human’s body and the human has been effectively liberated, it is intensely suggested by the Exorcist and Church that the subject remains living a Christian life where prayer and God is central to their life so they remain in the holy state that they are in after the liberation.

¹⁹ Baglio, Matt. *The Rite: The Making of a Modern Exorcist*. New York: Doubleday, 2009. Print.

The Catechism and Catholic Dogma

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that “when the Church asks publicly and authoritatively in the name of Jesus Christ that a person or object be protected against the power of the Evil One and withdrawn from his dominion, it is called Exorcism. Jesus performed Exorcisms and from him the Church has received the power and office of exorcizing. In a simple form, Exorcism is performed at the celebration of Baptism. The solemn Exorcism, called ‘a major Exorcism’ can be performed only by a priest and with the permission of the bishop. The priest must proceed with prudence, strictly observing the rules established by the Church. Exorcism is directed at the expulsion of demons or to the liberation from demonic possession through the spiritual authority which Jesus entrusted to his Church. Illness, especially psychological illness, is a very different matter; treating this is the concern of medical science. Therefore, before an Exorcism is performed, it is important to ascertain that one is dealing with the presence of the Evil One, and not an illness” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1673). This perspective is intriguing because this Catechism was published after the Second Vatican Council in 1965, it takes into major concern the potential for medical conditions causing the behavioral characteristics exhibited by the patient and call for the medical field to directly and appropriately treat the patient. This is to rule out any medical condition before an Exorcism is performed. This however does not give right to the medical field to solely treat every patient exhibiting

primarily different behavior with the use of medication. The Roman Catholic Church still must have a role in the treatment of patients if there is no medical condition present like schizophrenia or epilepsy.

The belief in the Devil is absolutely crucial to Catholic dogma²⁰ in that it is considered in theology as *de fide*. Jesus spent much of his ministry discussing the Devil and the legions of demons present in the world and the absolute necessity to confront the evil in the world. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, depending on when it was published, depicts slightly varied perspectives on Exorcisms and the role of the Devil in the world, but all of them validate its practice within the bounds of the Church. In Catechisms published before the Second Vatican Council, Exorcism was presented as something of complete authority in cases when deemed necessary; and it does not appear to meaningfully engage with the role of the continually advancing medical field (Summary of Changes). Whereas, the Catechisms published after Vatican II mention the use of Exorcism as absolutely applicable when the Catholic Church engages with the medical field to rule out any potential medical condition, and advocates that many conditions must be treated medically and not by the use of an Exorcism. While this exemplifies the growth of the Roman Catholic Church in the modern world, it also shows that Exorcism is still seen as a strong and legitimate means of treatment.

²⁰ "Dogma." Catholic Encyclopedia. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Feb. 2013.
"Revealed truths become formally dogmas when defined or proposed by the Church."

It is crucial for Catholics to believe that the evil one physically exists among us and “those Christians who deny the existence of demons and say that they are merely symbols of evil are heretics. Demons are personal spiritual beings, as is the chief demon, the Devil” (Fortea 13). To deny the existence of the Devil would be to go against the concrete teachings of the Bible, question the teachings of Jesus, and of Catholic Dogma, the formal teachings of the Church²¹ (Fortea 13). To deny the evil one’s existence is to deny the existence of demons. It is necessary to understand the evil one and demons as tempters of our world. This belief does not prove necessary the use of Exorcism based on authoritative measures alone. There is only a need for Exorcism after a process and the Church comes to the conclusion that all the evidence for its use is legitimate. There are many cultures around the world, not Catholic, who use Exorcism to expel evil from the human person. Since evil inevitably affects humanity, the need for Exorcism as one way to treat someone under these behavioral symptoms is crucial.

Continuous Evolvement of Exorcism

The Church must continue to consider how they exercise the Rite of Exorcism in light of the thinking of the popular philosophies and psychoanalysis in tandem with modern science²². As diseases and conditions present themselves

²¹ See Catechism of the Catholic Church pp. 391-395.

²² Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *The Antichrist*. New York: Arno, 1972. Print.

in the world, the Church should consider these as possible ways to first use medicine and science to treat subjects before an Exorcism is performed. To be Catholic is to understand that demonic forces are prevalent in the world and that there is the potential for harm to the human; essentially blocking the fullness of our relationship with God. This belief ensures that the Rite of Exorcism will be followed and practiced, but only under the proper circumstances, retaining as Christ did the call for direct divine intervention to deliver the demons from the afflicted subject. The Church must continue to take the proper steps, working alongside modern science, psychology and medicine to bring a lasting and whole restoration of spiritual and medical health and well-being to the whole person..

The Exorcist cannot wholly rule out any scientifically proven diseases and medical professionals cannot solely approach demons in the modern world with psychoanalysis²³ or organic knowledge. There should also be adequate integration of theology and doctrine through Exorcism of the Roman Catholic Church and proper medical diagnosis and psychological treatment.

Chapter Five: Current Models of Psychology

For centuries the science magisterium and the Catholic Church have occupied the same world and yet have not meaningfully engaged with one another. While there have been many attempts to reach similar if not the same

²³ Freud, God, the Devil and the theory of object representation. Rizzuto, Ana-Maria The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, Vol 3(2), 1976, 165-180. 2012. <<http://www.ewtn.com/library/prayer/roman2.txt>>.

goals, there has been tension and challenges in working together to achieve them. It was only since Vatican II that the Church has actively attempted to move forward with their teachings alongside the science magisterium. These two areas have had an apparent tension that should not exist because they indeed can be happily co-existing magisteriums who work to help people on their journey towards wholeness.

It is important to analyze and discuss the differences between Exorcism and psychological and psychiatric treatment, the danger of reductionism in treatment, the different roles that medical professionals play in their discernment of Exorcism as a form of treatment, the unfriendly and friendly models of psychology as they relate to the use of exorcism, and ultimately the end goal of treatment and its inclusion of Exorcism.

In this section I will discuss the emergence of psychology and psychiatry in the Western scientific world and the implications that it had on the Catholic Church, in particular with Exorcism. I will also discuss the different viewpoints that medical professionals have on Exorcism and the implications they have on achieving a holistic treatment for afflicted patients. What happens to Exorcism if the majority of people prescribe to the scientific reductionism through empiricism and where does that leave using Exorcism to achieve holistic healing?

Psychology and Psychiatry emerged and gained precedence in the 19th Century as primary means to treat mental illness, which definitely questioned the authority of Exorcism because the practice of psychology and psychiatry have

been able to explain, and in many cases treat abnormal behavior previously ascribed to demonic activity with various therapies. M.G. Barker, a current consultant at Barrow Hospital, teacher at the Bristol Health District and Clinical Lecturer in the Department of Mental Health, University of Bristol, United Kingdom, has much to say about this topic of demon possession and the mental condition of the afflicted based on his study and experience.

A common view from some psychiatrists, psychologists and other medical professionals regarding the biblical stories of possession is that there is not adequate differentiation between demoniacs, paralytics, and those who suffer from mental illness²⁴. Yes there is mention of different diseases in the scripture, but there is no clear method of different types of treatment from Jesus. All cases seem to be handled as if there is a demon inside possessing a person and an Exorcism solved the issue. Regardless of that view however, they recognize that whatever the afflicted were suffering from, they experienced meaningful healing. That in itself is reason to look into this subject of Exorcism as healing a little deeper.

²⁴ Browning, Don S., and Terry D. Cooper. *Religious Thought and the Modern Psychologies*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004. Print.

The Emergence of Psychological and Psychiatric Treatment and Consequences for Exorcism

Despite the validity of psychology and psychiatry, they have the potential to present a far too reductionist view of the cosmos that humans operate in, ultimately questioning the theology of the Rite of Exorcism too much. In 1844 the American Psychiatric Association was founded by a group of thirteen doctors who wanted to find new ways to treat mental illness, their intentions similar to those of the Church. Both intend to treat ill people while upholding their dignity as a human being, but their methods of how to treat can be vastly different.

Some psychologists like Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig²⁵ in 1879 founded the first psychology laboratory to conduct research and treat subjects suffering from mental illness. It is important to understand that from both of their beginnings; both psychology and psychiatry have worked together in diagnosing and treating mental illness. Since this is true, it is important that the Church work with both of these disciplines to find a proper treatment to provide more holistic healing for afflicted patients. Psychologists and Psychiatrists have historically and continue to be consulted during diabolical possession cases. However, it can be difficult to find doctors and experts that are willing to consult in cases such as these.

²⁵ Rieber, R. W., and David Kent Robinson. *Wilhelm Wundt in History: The Making of a Scientific Psychology*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2001. Print.

The Dangers of Reductionism in Treatment

It cannot be expected that all medical professionals are found in support or against the practice of Exorcism, because each person has their own understanding of the cosmos and spiritual context in which they believe, each rich and dynamic. When doctors use careful investigation to the root cause of the illness with openness to spiritual explanation, a priest could be consulted earlier, making for optimal treatment. This integration has not been recently discovered. It has actually been occurring since the 15th and 16th centuries. However, the modern world has seen a shift that emphasizes scientific diagnoses instead of using purely spiritual treatments such as having an Exorcism, representing a certain reductionism.

This reductionism is dangerous because it leaves little to no room for belief in demons and their potential to afflict and cause behavioral changes that are treated with medicine. Since both the Church and the scientific magisterium understand that the primary purpose of treatment is to provide the afflicted with legitimate and accurate diagnosis and treatment, both must realize that they are not mutually exclusive of one another.

It is a careful balancing act to treat the afflicted; requiring medical professionals who believe that an Exorcism is a legitimate means to address the root and manifestation of the afflicted's condition. Both sides need to be considered to holistically heal the afflicted's physical, mental, and spiritual state in a lasting manner.

Reaching the Goal of Treatment

The goal cannot be to have an immediate result by placing the person in a catatonic state, sedating them so that the symptoms simply go away. The goal must be to achieve long lasting treatment and healing. It is imperative to find the deep root of the issue, delving into psychological, medical, and spiritual aspects of their lives. To be open to this goal we must maintain the use of Exorcism as a potential treatment. After an Exorcism is done it is best to continue treatment with a spiritual director or another spiritual advisor, to ensure that their spiritual condition is healthy and medication is not the sole means of treatment. It is difficult to know when a demon has been cast out and even if they are seemingly gone. There is the potential for them to lie dormant in the afflicted, only to rise again in times of spiritual weakness or times of vulnerability. The afflicted need adequate medical and psychological treatment accompanying the Exorcism and spiritual treatment when undergoing a serious condition of demon affliction (Sterling).

In the last century medical and psychology professionals have become more open to engaging in these questions of Demonology and the possibility that Exorcism has validity in treatment of the afflicted. This is moving forward in the right manner because working together the ability for professionals to diagnose and treat the afflicted is the optimal way to provide quality and lasting healing. Stories of Exorcism healing in the present world is prominent for spirituality and

cannot be dismissed, so how do these magisteriums engage with the spirituality of Exorcism and not fight against it?

Medical Professionals and the use of Exorcism as Treatment

The result of the integration of psychology and Catholic theology is an emphasis that gets at the heart of the question. Must we choose between engaging modern science and having a robust understanding of personified evil, or is there a middle ground? Traditionally the way to approach the Rite of Exorcism was to de-emphasize psychology and modern science from the ritual. However there has been a necessary movement in the last Century to integrate the use of science to rule out any discrepancies as to whether a demon is actually present in the human exhibiting demonically possessed behavior. We must deal with that demon and treat someone within the spiritual context of their Catholic lives with Exorcism.

Most medical professionals find themselves in one of three groups regarding Exorcism as a form of treatment. These three groups that medical professionals fall into regarding using Exorcism include those who are fully against it and see it as dangerous, those who see it only useful as a placebo effect, and those who see the potential for holistic healing.

Medical Professionals Against Exorcism

The first group are medical professionals who wholly reject the use of Exorcism because of its medieval approach to healing. In, fact many in this group

believe Exorcism to be a hoax. This group is filled with professionals that consider Exorcism to be detrimental to a person's healing process because it presents no necessary organic explanation to the illness. For psychiatrists, someone who believes they are being afflicted with a demon is often diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder, formerly Multiple Personality Disorder. The treatment of this diagnosis usually consists in taking heavy doses of psychotropic medications to basically quell the believed to be demonic entity within the body. The problem with this is that the treatment puts a person into a catatonic state without any consideration of the spiritual life. Unfortunately, the real problem is ignored. People in this group may believe that blaming the person's behavior and condition on a demon possession would be stripping them of personal responsibility of their condition. In this model, the treating professional attempts to have the patient take responsibility for the affliction and its effects on others and they view this as a crucial part of treatment and recovery. Sadly, if there is need for an Exorcism, the individual taking responsibility for the demon's actions would not only be counterproductive but harmful and dangerous. Sigmund Freud would likely find companionship in this first group. He believed that "the Devil was nothing but the incarnation of psychological repressions" (Barker). An individual's behavior in a suspected demon possession case was more likely rationally explained as their behavior being projected on the self or societal created demons, instead of taking consideration of the full potential and condition

of that person's psychological state because of some fear stemming within the subconscious.

Medical Professionals Using Exorcism as a Placebo

The second group are those who believe that Exorcism does not have any intrinsic value in the scientific realm in which it operates. They do think that it could have a potential simple solution to the afflicted because the afflicted believes it will work. Almost treated as a placebo and Exorcism is allowed to be administered not because they believe it will actually remedy the problem but because it will make the afflicted believe they are healed. This is to be carefully considered because it is dangerous to reduce an Exorcism to this level. An Exorcism cannot and should not be used for this purpose. Rather, it should be gravely considered and used in serious cases, where the subject is of the faithful because demons are a reality in the world and Exorcism provides a fulfilling way to contend with them. William Sargant a modern psychiatrist says in his book "The Mind Possessed" that "all so-called spiritual phenomena as merely due to suggestion; this is a view of some very respected and otherwise open-minded psychiatrists" (Barker).

Medical Professionals Who Accept Exorcism

The third group are those professionals who are more than willing to work alongside the Exorcist to diagnose and treat the afflicted subject. They believe

that the condition is complex, and for holistically healing to occur, medical professionals must accompany the priest to rid the demonic entity and provide quality psychological and psychiatric care. This cooperative approach means that all disciplines must be equally considered, one not necessarily more important than the other. The doctor has to rule out any medical condition, and then the psychologist or psychiatrist has to determine if a mental illness might be the culprit rather than a demonic possession. Finally if there is no organic understanding for the illness, the priest would proceed with the Exorcism at the approval of the Bishop in those dioceses. Some of the prominent leaders in this group are Jacques Jean Lhermitte, Sydney H. T. Page, author of *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons*, and George Saxenmeyer. Lhermitte was a French psychologist and neuropsychiatrist as well as a devoutly Orthodox Roman Catholic man who prominently studied the common attributes between the medical field and theology of the Roman Catholic Church. His study in this area lead him to study demonic possession and the mental state of the afflicted. He is the author of *Diabolic Possession, True and False*. Lhermitte said in the 1960s that “whether we like it or not, the introduction of Freudian psycho-analysis into contemporary thought has spread, in the last few decades, to all sectors in which the mind is specially concerned. And if one can no longer imagine any literary or artistic criticism, biography or hagiography, without references to the doctrine of the sage of Vienna, one need not be surprised to learn that not even the Devil has

escaped the clutches of the psycho- analyst” (Barker²⁶). Those in this group, like Lhermitte may believe that there is probably personal responsibility and a demon possession involved, and that it can be a tricky and difficult treatment process to get at the root issue.

Lhermitte also is documented saying that

our knowledge of mental disorders began greatly to improve from the time when spiritual disturbance ceased to be regarded purely as an expression of supernatural influence and was seen as evidence of modifications in the development of the adjustment of psycho-physiological functions. There is no psychiatrist today who could not with the greatest ease discover under the mask of witchcraft in the past the most significant symptoms of psychoses such as come up for treatment every day (Barker).

In Lhermitte’s cases, the afflicted who claimed to be or exhibited signs of demonic possession or mental illness were just as likely to be men as women, of high intelligence, suffering from moral dilemmas, and claimed to be possessed with the evil one and his workers. His study was interesting in that when showing the personal background of his afflicted, those who claimed to be demonically possessed were the same as those who claimed to be suffering solely from mental illness. This demonstrates that despite what may have caused the behavior and

²⁶ Jean Lhermitte, *Diabolic Possession, True and False* (Bums and Oates : London 1963).

condition; both groups were exhibiting similar symptoms, therefore showing how difficult the process of treatment can be for a medical or spiritual professional to distinguish between possession and mental illness. There was no special treatment given to either group based on what their own personal diagnosis was, and what they thought the root cause was, because Lhermitte continued with the treatment process normally.

Bringing Together Theology and Psychoanalysis

My examination of James Jones comes from Transformation and Terror, which sheds light on how to examine someone's religious experience as it relates to their psychological state. Are Exorcisms seen through the lens of a religious experience, considered to be a fruitful positive thing, or are they the foundation for fanaticism and terror?

We must distinguish between "an explanation of emotion, event, or mental state, and a judgment concerning its spiritual value or significance and a neurological explanation of a religious experience tells us nothing about its religious value. The only way to identify genuine religious affections is by their consequences, not their origins; by their fruits, not their roots" (37 William James-Proudfect). The consequence of an Exorcism for a Catholic person is the belief that it helps and leads them to being healed, or on the journey of healing and wholeness. Therefore, if something is considered to be a valuable and useful religious experience, we must continue to make it available to those who are

suffering from demonic possession deemed by the collective authorities of the Church and the various medical disciplines..

There are certainly plenty of medical and psychological explanations for people historically having been considered possessed or manifested by a demon. Some of these circumstances include what has been mentioned earlier such as; an epileptic disorder, hysteria, schizophrenia, autism, or other deemed medical or unstable mental conditions. However, no matter what the condition or disorder being diagnosed and treated, there seems to be no explanation of the meaning or spiritual value of these phenomena.

William James makes clear that "memory associations are insufficient to explain the phenomena, the alternatives are either a physiological hypothesis or a theological one" and "doesn't see how a naturalistic explanation could account for both force and meaning, both the added zest and energy a convert experiences and the reorientation of consciousness, or direction" (39- James-Proudfect). So, some present form must exist that works diligently to provide meaning behind this religious experience. Exorcists and medical professionals working together maintain the spiritual foundation of the Catholic involved, providing a valuable religious experience as well as prescribe medication that can help any organic cause for the behavior they are exhibiting.

If the religious aspect fails to be properly associated with the mental, medical and psychological realms of the ill person illness, then it becomes just a event in the life of the victim that must be externally and non-meaningfully

treated. Using Exorcism alone to treat all cases of seemingly demonic behavior is also dangerous because it does not allow for the consideration of organic causes. Conversely, using medication alone ignores whether there really is a demon possessing the afflicted. Regardless of treatment to the victim, if they do have a strong or somewhat religious life, they must be treated with the intent of providing some religious and spiritual care.

It is possible that if only treated medically and psychologically without the spiritual healing provided by some religious figure like a Roman Catholic priest, the condition will re-manifest itself in the victim once discharged from the hospital or treatment facility. This can also happen once the medications cease to work or be used. However, awareness of the victim or the treating professional that there is a spiritual cause, it becomes more of a holistic approach. This approach includes all aspects of the person allowing understanding of why that person came to be under the influence or control of a demonic being. Understanding a victim's spiritual life enables caregivers to spiritually handle the situation and ultimately determine the need for a spiritual deliverance of the demon.

The question arises of whether or not we must be able to see these metaphysical beings to believe in them. William James "was more aware than most of his contemporaries that the world is shaped by the thoughts and actions of men and women. He holds open the possibility that the object of religious belief and practice, the unseen order or 'more' that is continuous with the higher part of

the self, and with which a person can get in touch, is not a product of those thoughts and actions" (James-Proudfect 43). There are many things that we cannot see that exist, and if the theology of the Catholic Church is believed, then the teachings have to be upheld with dignity. We cannot see the resurrection of Jesus, or witness the miracles he performed, we cannot see the Holy Spirit, but as Catholics we believe firmly in these and countless other ineffable foundations of our faith. Demons exist according to the catechism and teachings of the Church. Therefore, Catholics are called to believe that they exist and not doubt simply because the demon cannot be seen in the afflicted.

William James discusses the case of an ongoing undiagnosed psychological state where the demon lies dormant and arises at times when the multiple personality surfaces. In this case the demon is always there, but originates inside or outside of the person and perpetuates from the inside of the victim's subconscious (James 58-60). This supports the claim that the afflicted came to be possessed through a state of vulnerability because they are susceptible from their sub-conscious for evil. Although this viewpoint may not validate the belief that a demon is causing the undiagnosed psychological state of the afflicted, it remains open to a person's subconscious spiritual beliefs having a direct effect on their outer behavior and condition. To heal that person, there must be proper treatment of their sub-conscious spiritual state, and that can be achieved through a priest and Exorcism, gaining deeper insight into that person's spiritual state. It does not negate the possibility that a demon lies within the person, nor does it

validate it. Rather, it works to take a deeper look inside to accurately determine what steps should be taken for healing. Not cutting an Exorcist and Exorcism off completely from the beginning of the treatment process because of a pre-existing rationalistic scientific notion is helpful, and provides a well rounded and balanced healing technique for the person.

Theology asks what is the meaning of this event, why is it happening, and what can it do for us while science/psychology only asks what is the structure of this, what makes it up and leads to it (Browning 13). Don Browning, a theologian, studied the intersection between religion and psychology, exemplifies that even if the doctor does not believe a demon to be present, it is important to maintain the spiritual treatment of the afflicted with an Exorcism by a priest. This allows for a deeper spiritual meaning for the afflicted. It is important to remain true to our beliefs and meaningfully integrate spirituality into treatment.

Paul Johnson, a well known psychological professional works to trace the history of Church's relationship with medicine as legitimate treatment. It has been a valid view for Centuries, and he advocates that psychoanalysis, has a place with the Church, in our case in Western Roman Catholicism, and vice versa. An experienced and well balanced psychoanalyst or medical professional will work to identify potential reasons to help explain why people experience evil, darkness, and even spiritually see Satan. This will help to identify the causes of mental illness, medical conditions, and emotional instability. There is more than simply an organic explanation for conditions, and only by making all treatment resources

available could a balanced, nourishing, and lasting healing effect can be attained. Using spiritual healing and medical, and psychological healing treatment processes exclusive of each other results in inefficiency.

Carl Jung argues that for a person to be healed sufficiently they need to be treated in their “wholeness” to be holistically healthy again. It is necessary with religion, in our case Western Roman Catholicism, to play an integral part in that holistic healing process. With this in mind, treatment involving spirituality is a focal part with the integration of a priest and Exorcism. It is absolutely crucial for lasting restoration for those who find themselves demonically afflicted.

Conclusion

My Holistic Vision

In our modern world the Catholic Church should work with psychology, psychiatry, and other areas of modern medicine to achieve the goal of holistic healing for afflicted patients. Both science and the Rite of Exorcism must work together to achieve the shared goal of restoring the patient to wholeness. Consequently, they can complement one another. The professionals involved in each case should reach a diagnosis and find meaning in that diagnosis with the patient, working to find lasting wholeness. I began writing this thesis with the idea that there was an interesting reason why the original Rite of Exorcism was

revised into the second Rite of Exorcism in 1999²⁷. I resisted the idea that the Roman Catholic Church had to respond as they did to the modern world with *Gaudium et Spes*, the revision of documents and rites²⁸, as well as in other ways during the Second Vatican Council. I fought the urge to think that the Church had anything to prove to the world or to the modern magisteriums of psychiatry, psychology, and medicine. I believed that the Church operates with a theological foundation and there is not much to be said about finding a common ground. What I found after much research, delving into texts about the Western modern world, psychiatry, psychology, advances of modern medicine, and Roman Catholic Theology, there is in fact much to be said.

Beginning my thesis with the understanding that the Devil existed and that demons could possess people, I found it easy to criticize anyone that held an opposite belief of challenged mine. This was the wrong way to begin, and I eventually opened up my questioning to a much richer and meaningful question about the larger cosmos in which modern North Americans operate. That alone says much about the placement and understanding of Exorcism and demonic possession. Stemming from a rational, organic, and scientific background there are those who believe that we can explain our existence through our own doing

²⁷ "The New Rite of Exorcism The Influence of the Evil One." *The Latin Mass Magazine: The Journal of Catholic Culture and Tradition*. Web. 13 Apr. 2012. <http://www.latinmassmagazine.com/articles/articles_2002_SU_Father_X.html>.

²⁸ "Foundational Documents." *Foundational Documents*. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013. Web. 10 Feb. 2013.

and with science. Those people tend to adopt modern psychology as the basis for morality and beliefs. They also tend to lean towards having a much smaller populated cosmos. They learn to explain things about the human condition within themselves and through humanity, finding no need to look beyond themselves. Something great is lost with this understanding, because it leaves no meaningful place for the belief in supernatural powers like the Devil or demons to exist. Yet, throughout Christian history beginning with Jesus, belief in the Devil is assumed, and exorcism is common. For centuries Exorcism has been used and it remains globally significant. The risk of not paying attention to the Devil's existence and the potential of demonic possession is not being able to potentially recognize or adequately combat evil in our lives. Exorcism enables us to meaningfully contend with that evil and be restored to wholeness with God.

The Best form of Treatment

The idea of possession is not new, nor is it wholly explainable for the behavior of seemingly or actually possessed people. It is important to see that to provide holistic healing to afflicted, the treatment process must include adequate spiritual healing, mental and psychological analysis, and medical treatment. If the afflicted claims that they are possessed, are Catholic, and are exhibiting signs of potential demonic possession as described in the Roman Rite of Exorcism and through the passing down of experience and tradition in the Church, then possession needs to be seriously considered. Doctors must pay proper attention to

the patient's spiritual condition, working together with a priest. The priest can therefore conduct a proper analysis of the condition of the afflicted to determine what form of spiritual healing that person may need, whether it is an Exorcism or some other form of treatment. The priest must work with the doctors and mental professionals to determine the root issue and work to provide lasting treatment beyond improvement of the afflicted.

The priest must be careful not to assume that the afflicted are possessed and therefore treat them with an Exorcism to solve the problem. Also, doctors must also not deny the potential of possession in all cases simply because they might have a different inherited cosmos than the afflicted. One explanation for why modern medical professionals deny the use of Exorcism as having value is because, they believe that the advancements of medicine and understanding of the human mind and condition trumps the medieval practice of demon casting. It is also believed that the bible does nothing to distinguish between possession and mental illness. They may also believe that the Bible gives no explanation of how Jesus came to know and recognize that someone had a demon inside them, or even how to treat them. There is no validity in that. Also to be considered is the necessity to analyze the social character of the demon and the afflicted, because the actual and personified identity can tell the Exorcist and medical professional great deal²⁹. Those who have this viewpoint are doing Exorcisms and Roman

²⁹ See Hollenbach Help for Interpreting Jesus' Exorcisms. How is a demoniac identified, singled out, in the N.T.? A radically divided selfhood and the identity

Catholicism a big disservice by not acknowledging that the foundation of Roman Catholicism is not only Sacred Scripture, but also in Tradition and experience.

Many of the practices of the Church and of Catholics have a root in experience and tradition of their faith. Catholic beliefs have a basis in scripture, but there is meaning found in how practices are passed down from generation to generation. There is meaning in sacramentals for Catholics because of the meaning they held for ancestors and their connection with the faith. There is meaning to be found in an ancient practice of exorcising demons, stemming not only from the Roman Catholic tradition and Jesus' ministry, but in a practice dated much further back even with Jewish forms of Exorcism and of indigenous spiritual healing throughout the world.

If a practice can be revered by many cultures throughout the world then there has to be something to say that is meaningful about that practice, and we should be willing to consider it as a legitimate means of healing for the afflicted. Inherited by the Second Vatican Council is a duty of the Roman Catholic Church to find meaning in the modern world and what it can say about our faith. However, we must also bring what the Church has to bring to the modern world.

of the demon itself considered against the potential for dual identities of the afflicted within themselves. Are they two separate entities or one merely with an identity issue. This takes into consideration the study of anthropology, the cultural dimension of human life, and the ethnography of demoniacs. "The fundamental social character of demon possession leads to another basis of identity. The strange behaviors of the Geresene demoniac apparently defined him for his community as not normal or sane. Any even mildly different behavior can indicate the presence of demons" p 121.

Modern medicine and mental treatment has changed and adapted the way in which the Church may engage in an Exorcism and rightly so, but the rite has meaningful theology that should not be stripped away simply because Western rationality thinks it can organically explain every case of behavioral abnormality. Taking into consideration and working with medical professionals can help the case of legitimate use of Exorcism greatly because it helps the process for the priest in distinguishing true cases of possession.

The Finale- Establishing the Legitimacy of Exorcism in The Modern World

Regardless of the personal and spiritual belief of the medical professional the foremost goal should be to provide the best and most lasting treatment, and I argue that the treatment must include spiritual healing for that person's condition. Without proper spiritual guidance that person can become vulnerable to the Devil and his works. This would make them susceptible to evil, allowing suffering to enter into their lives. Perhaps said better than I could, Barker suggests that

“we cannot refuse to treat them merely because they have brought their ills upon themselves in certain instances. When a conflict situation is highlighted, then special counseling or psychotherapy may be necessary to expose these difficulties and help the individual. In the case of the individual who has been dabbling in the occult, we may use psychological treatment to bring him back into a way of functioning again, and to enable him to re-harness his own resources, defenses and will. But

medical explanations can never be used as reductionist explanations. We know that certain mystical exercises can enable a person to experience God as life-force-this kind of situation occurs in many religions. Where special help and counseling are required because of involvement with the occult, this should be within the fellowship of the Church. Any charisma of healing should be seen in relation to all the other charismata. If a special service is requested, then it should be in public, and associated with repentance and a declaration that Jesus is Lord” (Barker).

Avoiding the reductionist explanation for demonically possessed people is the best approach when dealing with someone who believes they are afflicted. It leaves a wider area for explanation, and includes respect of their individual spiritual condition. This is crucial to the nourishment of their being. There must be serious consideration given to the spiritual health of the individual. The priest, doctors and the entire healing team must work together to hold up the dignity of their respective magisterium. It is the way our modern world can holistically treat the psychologically and spiritually ill. This sets the foundation for rich discussion of such matters. It would be risky and tragic to lose Exorcism as a legitimate practice because it offers a historically, theologically, scripturally, and culturally important lens into adequately combating evil.

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