

QUESTION OF THE WEEK
(TAKE HOME SHEET) (Pass this on to someone.)
WHAT IS EXORCISM?

An exorcism, as defined in the official Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1673), is a *public and authoritative act of the Church to protect or liberate a person or object from the power of the devil.*

There are two kinds of exorcisms; simple and solemn or major. Simple exorcisms are the ordinary kind performed by a bishop, priest or deacon, such as in the Baptismal rite, or dedication of a holy place, etc. A major solemn exorcism frees an individual from the possession or major influence of Satan. These latter are quite uncommon in our culture and because of misunderstandings in the media are done as quietly as possible. A priest needs the special permission of the bishop to perform a major solemn exorcism. (CCC # 1237, & # 550)

Related to the rites of exorcism, but not the same, are private prayers and words of deliverance from evil. Some priests and some lay people occasionally do this in a public but unofficial way. All Christians have this authority, especially in private day to day ways. These are sometimes called private exorcisms but it is less confusing to call them deliverance. As baptized people belonging to Jesus we all have the right to expel the works of the devil and his demons from our lives and from the lives of our loved ones. We need not live in fear. We simply command evil spirits to be gone in the name of Jesus alive in us. Holy water is a comfortable aide here. Then we may ask the Holy Spirit to fill us so there is no more room for evil. Minor demonic infections are often expelled simply by a good confession and virtuous life. More serious satanic infections should be delivered by a team. It is well to first consult your pastor or spiritual advisor in such cases.

Healings and exorcisms were the main signs used by Jesus to announce the Kingdom. (Mt. 12:26>, Jn. 12:31>, Lk. 8:26>) The exorcisms of Jesus in history as well as in His Church today are signs that anticipate the complete victory over evil when Jesus comes again in glory.

Besides the deliverance from evil of individuals we should use forms of deliverance in prayer to free our society from the influence of the evil one. People who are militantly pro-abortion or anti Christian, etc. may be unwitting victims of the father of lies. Satan is expert at convincing sincere people that evil is good and good is evil. This too is an infection we can heal.

Be gone, worldly tyrant. Come Lord Jesus.