

Fr. Perozich comments —

I send out this article for two reasons.

First, I experience in people an inordinate interest in the demonic which sometimes seems stronger than interest in the practices of holiness to which Christians are called.

Second, I myself learned things and also had some of my other understandings affirmed by the article, all of which I feel are worth sharing for building up of the Christian soul in the fight against evil and the growth in holiness.

While these teachings may not be defined dogma, they are from some Catholic scholars and from Fr. Lampert's experience as an exorcist.

This synopsis is my organization for understanding.

- 1. Good outweighs evil*
- 2. What became a demon is a creature of God as is all of creation.*
- 3. Demons are angels who were created with a good nature.*
- 4. In the hierarchy of angels higher ones have influence over lower ones.*
- 5. Lucifer brought down many angels with him when he fell.*
- 6. Humans, even exorcists, have no power over demons.*
- 7. Jesus came to release humans from demonic power.*
- 8. Casting out demons was integral to Jesus' ministry and a sign of the Kingdom of God.*
- 9. Demons know who Jesus is and the meaning of His mission. They recognize His authority.*
- 10. Demons only have incomplete knowledge over the natural order which they possessed at their creation.*
- 11. Angels have knowledge of the supernatural order given after demons fell. Thus angelic knowledge is greater than the demonic.*

THE DEMONIC BATTLE PLAN TO STEAL SOULS

- 12. The devil uses a four-stage plan of attack on us": deception, then division, which proceeds to diversion, and ends in discouragement.*
- 13. The devil's "ordinary activity" includes "deception to create doubt and confusion when it comes to the truth as revealed by God" the devil tricks us into believing in a false reality.*
<https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2021/04/24/schismatic-stratagems/>
- 14. The devil engages in both extraordinary and ordinary activity, the latter being his distorting influence on the souls of people without a strong faith.*

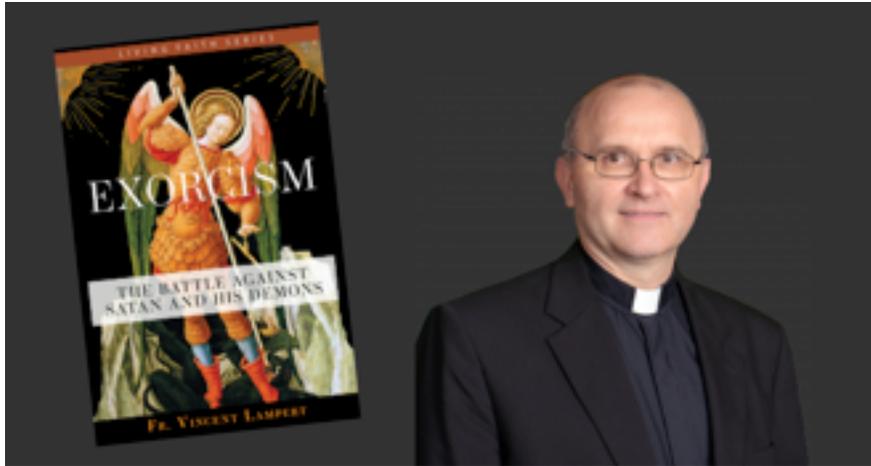
15. *attributes growing demonic activity in recent years to changes in society and individuals, not to changes in the devil's approach. Secularism encourages belief in "anything and everything" (6), Lampert notes. Secularism contravenes human nature because "our ultimate identity comes from a relationship with God and not apart from Him.*

FIGHTING WITH JESUS AGAINST THE DEMONIC

16. *Proper education for Catholics of all ages, particularly for children, teens, and young adults, plays a crucial role in preventing demonic influence*
17. *understanding how post-Christian society and demons work together to nudge us away from God.*
18. *individuals in our post-secular societies misunderstand freedom to mean freedom from God's law. This leads to three basic but false assertions: "You may do all you wish, no one has the right to command you, and you are the god of yourself" (7). These beliefs, which mirror those of Lucifer and the fallen angels, open individuals to evil and demonic forces.*
19. *identify the point at which the demonic entered the person's life. Such entry points are becoming more and more common nowadays and include demonic-oriented games and activities (seances, Ouija boards, tarot cards), a life of sin, certain entertainment, and the black mass or other direct interaction with the demonic world. The author attributes growing demonic activity in recent years to changes in society and individuals*
20. *The Rite's effectiveness requires acceptance of this truth about God by the possessed individual. The exorcist must help people return to God and the Church's sacramental life.*
21. *Individuals receiving the Rite of Exorcism must turn to God as the way to heal themselves. [The Sacrament of Penance is a form of exorcism — rp*
22. *get the possessed individual back into a relationship with God, starting with regular participation in the Church's sacramental life.*
23. *The afflicted individual, when Roman Catholic, will seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation, lead a life of prayer and penance, and attend Mass regularly. **In fact, people who do such things are normally not susceptible to demonic intrusion in their lives in the first place. A life of faith is the best prevention.***

The Battle Against Satan: A Review

BRIAN WELTER



Experienced exorcist Fr. Vincent Lampert provides pastoral, theological, spiritual, and biblical insights into the nature and purpose of the Rite of Exorcism. He bases the discussion on his own experience and on the biblical witness, mostly from the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel depicts the reality of evil during the New Testament era and how Jesus triumphantly confronted it. The New Testament world was infested with demons.

While Lampert evaluates at length the nature of the devil and his minions, [*Exorcism: The Battle Against Satan and His Demons*](#) ultimately offers hope because it focuses on the fact that **Jesus came to release people from demonic power. The devil is only a creature of God. Good always outweighs evil.** Exorcism, perhaps surprisingly, can in fact be a way to evangelize, as it shows the power and love

of God not only to those facing demonic attack but also to their family members and friends.

This evangelization requires understanding how post-Christian society and demons work together to nudge us away from God. Lampert helpfully observes that **individuals in our post-secular societies misunderstand freedom to mean freedom from God's law. This leads to three basic but false assertions: "You may do all you wish, no one has the right to command you, and you are the god of yourself" (7).** These beliefs, which mirror those of Lucifer and the fallen angels, open individuals to evil and demonic forces.

What is the nature of those forces? **The devil engages in both extraordinary and ordinary activity, the latter being his distorting influence on the souls of people without a strong faith. The extraordinary activity includes infestation, vexation, obsession, and possession, which Lampert explains with real-life examples.** Infestation involves an evil presence in a particular location or object, including occult objects. As elsewhere in *Exorcism: The Battle Against Satan and His Demons*, the author argues that humans are not passive victims that demons simply jump into. **Infestation in occult items, obsession, and possession depend on a willingness to engage with evil.** This excludes young children, whose guardians or parents would likely be the ones inviting evil into the child's life.

The author provides a wider context to help readers better grasp the nature of the devil and demons. His discussion of the mostly-forgotten or ignored topic of angelology relies on the teachings of traditional thinkers such

as Dionysius the Areopagite and St. Thomas Aquinas. **Angels are ordered hierarchically, with higher angels having influence over lower ones. When Lucifer fell, he therefore took many angels with him. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, “demons are not evil by nature, since as angelic creatures they owe their origin to God. Everything that God created is good in its nature”** (27).

Angels have greater knowledge than demons. The latter are limited to Evening Knowledge, whereas angels possess both Evening and Morning Knowledge. The author relies on St. Thomas Aquinas for this, who defined the former Knowledge as **the imperfect knowledge that angels have about “the natural order,” which they possessed “from the outset of their creation”** (22). Morning Knowledge, **“what the angels can know in the supernatural order,”** was only given to those angels who used their Evening Knowledge to stay with God (22). **Regarding fallen angels, their rebellion prevented them from completing “their creation according to God’s plan,” with the result that “their minds were darkened”** (23). That is why the devil tricks us into believing in a false reality.

The Rite of Exorcism is grounded in Jesus’ exorcisms. **Casting out demons was integral to Jesus’ ministry and a sign of the Kingdom of God.** We can learn much about the nature of evil and the demonic from these Gospel episodes. Lampert notes that while Jesus most often called people to follow Him, after He freed the Gerasene demoniac from evil forces, and the man asked to follow Jesus, the Lord told him to return home instead. **According to Lampert, this reflects the human brokenness, including broken**

relationships, which demons exploit. Jesus wanted the man to rebuild his broken relationships. This highlights how exorcism is not the end of the process. It is the beginning of the call to the Kingdom of God. Individuals receiving the Rite of Exorcism must turn to God as the way to heal themselves.

The exorcisms in the Gospel of Mark also indicate that **demons know who Jesus is and the meaning of His mission. They recognize His authority.** Readers would have benefitted from a wider reference to biblical sources on exorcism, particularly from the other Gospels. Do they provide any additional information on exorcism or the nature of demons? How do they portray Jesus' dealings with demons? In any case, Lampert warns that **exorcists need to act under the power of Jesus. They as humans have no power over demons. Exorcists must therefore be spiritually prepared.**

Lampert spends much time on the practical aspects of exorcism. He emphasizes the crucial need to identify the point at which the demonic entered the person's life. Such entry points are becoming more and more common nowadays and include demonic-oriented games and activities (seances, Ouija boards, tarot cards), a life of sin, certain entertainment, and the black mass or other direct interaction with the demonic world. The author attributes growing demonic activity in recent years to **changes in society and individuals, not to changes in the devil's approach. Secularism encourages belief in "anything and everything" (6), Lampert notes. Secularism contravenes human nature because "our ultimate identity comes from a relationship with God**

and not apart from Him. God must not be viewed as a threat to the human person but the one who helps us to understand what it truly means to be human. **Faith in God will lead us in one direction and the lack of faith in another”** (6). This perspective reflects another aspect of the evangelical nature of exorcism. **The Rite’s effectiveness requires acceptance of this truth about God by the possessed individual. The exorcist must help people return to God and the Church’s sacramental life.**

Lampert solidifies his case through practical advice. **Proper education for Catholics of all ages, particularly for children, teens, and young adults, plays a crucial role in preventing demonic influence. The devil’s “ordinary activity” includes “deception to create doubt and confusion when it comes to the truth as revealed by God”** (119). Those who are properly catechized will handle such lies better. Lampert cites Fr. Louis J. Cameli’s observation that **“the devil uses a four-stage plan of attack on us”: deception, then division, which proceeds to diversion, and ends in discouragement.** Such vital information would enhance Catholic education programs.

The Rite of Exorcism follows Church law and is a part of Church life. **An exorcist always operates under the local bishop’s jurisdiction and permission. In this way, exorcists work with the power of the Church,** rather than as lone actors. Canon law requires a certain procedure, which Lampert outlines well. The greatest skeptic of a case of possession, he notes, must be the exorcist himself. Individuals who suspect that they are under demonic power must attend psychological counseling first in order to eliminate other explanations.

Canon law also requires a national protocol for each country because of differing cultures. The author notes that South Africa, because of the openness to the existence of the spiritual world and the work of demons, would require a lower need for psychological evaluation than the U.S., where there is widespread skepticism in the existence and activities of the spiritual world. The various national protocols **all aim to get the possessed individual back into a relationship with God, starting with regular participation in the Church's sacramental life.** Unfortunately, the author fails to clearly state whether exorcisms performed in other churches and religions are effective.

Exorcism: The Battle Against Satan and His Demons provides a hopeful message because exorcism, as a Rite of the Church, proclaims the Good News. Lampert notes that the Rite not only involves kicking demons out of a person's life. More significantly, it involves a renewed commitment to God. **The afflicted individual, when Roman Catholic, will seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation, lead a life of prayer and penance, and attend Mass regularly. In fact, people who do such things are normally not susceptible to demonic intrusion in their lives in the first place. A life of faith is the best prevention.** Instead of providing a sensationalist account of exorcism, Lampert, as a good evangelist, provides readers with a solid theological case for turning their lives to God.

Fr. Vincent Lampert (2020) [Exorcism: The Battle Against Satan and His Demons](#). Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-64585-061-8. 163 pages.



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