

Fr. Perozich comments —

Fides quarens intellectum: faith seeks [seeking] understanding.

I awakened today to an email from someone who really studies the Word daily. After reading the encounter with the demoniac the inquirer said, “I do not understand today's gospel..It seems like the man acknowledged who Jesus was.”

My first response is AN, not THE, interpretation of the gospel.

I wrote:

“The demon recognized the man, Jesus of Nazareth.

- The demon recognized the holiness in this man Jesus of Nazareth.
- The demon called him the “holy one of God”, the anointed, something that Jesus did not want to be revealed until “his time”.
- The demon recognized the power emanating from Jesus the man.
- The demon, even Satan in the scriptures, appears to know that this • Jesus is the promised one that was sent by God to Israel, and while sensing Jesus’ power, they do not recognize Jesus as the second person of the Blessed Trinity, as God.
- Oh what a surprise they had when they thought they had succeeded in getting the Jews and Romans to kill Jesus the man and to draw Jesus’ spirit to the netherworld of their kingdom of death.
- It was there that they saw Jesus as He truly is when he destroyed their power to keep the souls captive, when Jesus destroyed death and brought the souls who had been awaiting their liberation out of the sheol and up to God.
- The demons have limited knowledge, but great cleverness in how to use it.
- The angels received divine knowledge AFTER the fall of the demons which allows them divine understanding.”

I then sent this passage from Holy Saturday Office of Readings and the article from an exorcist Fr. Lampert which I previously sent to people to show that the devil has limited knowledge yet great creativity in how he uses it; angels have knowledge received after the fall of the demons which makes their understanding and power superior

From an ancient homily on Holy Saturday

(PG 43, 439, 451, 462-463)

The Lord descends into hell

Something strange is happening — there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because **God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began.** God has died in the flesh and Hell trembles with fear. He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, He who is both God and the Son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the Cross, the weapon that had won him the victory. At the sight of him Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone, ‘My Lord be with you all.’ Christ answered him: ‘And with your spirit.’ He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying: ‘Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.’

I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. Out of love for you and your descendants I **now by my own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise.** I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner in Hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. **Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I in you; together we form one person and cannot be separated.**

For your sake I, your God, became your son; I, the Lord, took the form of a slave; I, whose home is above the heavens, descended to the earth and beneath the earth. For your sake, for the sake of man, I became like a man without help, free among the

dead. For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed to the Jews in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden.

See on my face the spittle I received in order to restore to you the life I once breathed into you. See there the marks of the blows I received in order to refashion your warped nature in my image. On my back see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See my hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree.

I slept on the Cross and a sword pierced my side for you who slept in Paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side has healed the pain in yours. My sleep will rouse you from your sleep in Hell. The sword that pierced Me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you.

Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly Paradise. I will not restore you to that Paradise, but will enthrone you in heaven. I forbade you the tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I who am life itself am now one with you. I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The throne formed by cherubim awaits you, its bearers swift and eager. The Bridal Chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open. **The Kingdom of Heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.**

original post April 25, 2021

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.*

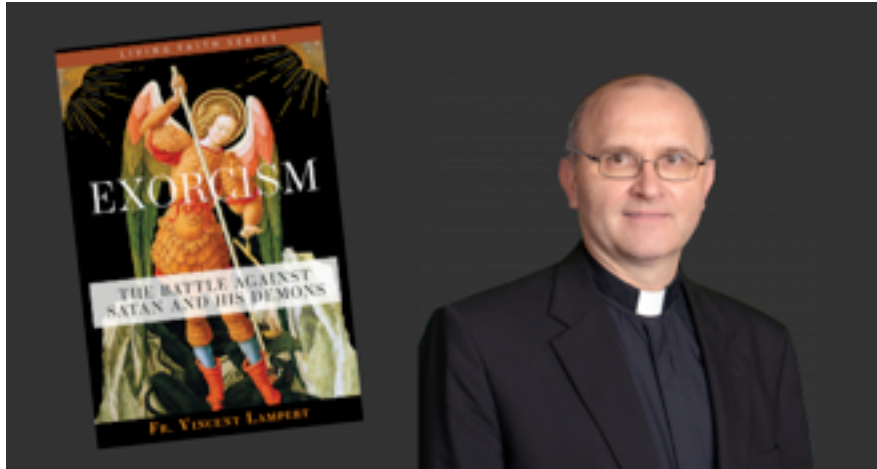
FIGHTING WITH JESUS AGAINST THE DEMONIC

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.***

end of commentary: article follows

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.**

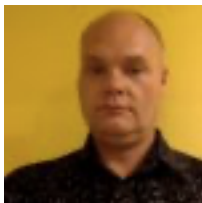
Lampert solidifies his case through practical advice. **Proper education for Catholics of all ages, particularly for children, teens, and young adults, plays a crucial role in preventing demonic influence. The devil’s “ordinary activity” includes “deception to create doubt and confusion when it comes 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.



By [Brian Welter](#) Brian Welter has degrees in history, theology, and (soon) education. He is a Canadian who teaches in Taiwan. His interests include history, philosophy, and critical thinking.