



THE VISITATION

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Be Careful of Those Who Quote Celebrity Exorcists - By Fr. Robert J. Carr, Boston Fraternity

I was practicing one of my vices the other day, scrolling through Twitter. I read some Catholics raise concern about what many people name—celebrity exorcists.

For those of you who do not know, a celebrity exorcist is usually, though not always, a Catholic priest who uploads videos and/or podcasts on one or more of various platforms and addresses issues regarding demonic influence. One of the prime problems with their teachings is similar to the old game “Telephone”. They say something and eventually others quoting them take their words out of context and say things like “Father (Exorcist) warns you can be possessed by watching horror movies,” and similar statements.

I lived with an exorcist and I never heard of this from him. In any case, this causes an undo and inaccurate focus on the power of the devil and not enough focus on the ways of God. The devil, I am sure delights in this.

Note what I am writing. I am not saying the exorcist says this, I am saying that others say the exorcist says this. I believe this is a problem for the Church and really do wish that so called celebrity exorcists stopped posting on YouTube and other venues.

I believe the devil is real and I

believe sin is real but I also believe that we have a mission to focus people on the will and power of God. It is not the role of any priest or even Catholic minister of any type to get people to focus on the demonic even in the name of avoiding it.

One of the things I teach is something exorcists taught me, the most powerful form of exorcism is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I also explain that no one does movies about this potent rite because it just does not work in story form.

I learned from an exorcist who studied the case on which the book and movie were based of helping people renounce those attachments that become openings to sin and the demonic. This is exactly what the sacrament of reconciliation does. Someone comes into the confessional and confesses their sins. Their confession is actually renouncing their unhealthy connection to that which is against will of God. This is why the firm intention of amending their life is so important because it is a form of renunciation and breaking the bonds of sin. Unfortunately, many do not teach this and just proclaim the rules of a good confession and not the reason for the rules.

When you help people understand the work of the grace of the

sacrament you can see just how powerful it is. You can also see just how powerful all the sacraments are because they are a source of God’s grace.

Unfortunately, they rarely come with fireworks but fireworks sell movies, TV shows and books.

People forget that the Rite of Exorcism is a sacramental and it is not as powerful as one confession because that is a sacrament. The whole of the sacrament is that one has an encounter with God Himself and it is God that initiates it.

We understand no one enters a confessional unless they are guided there by the Holy Spirit. So, we know this is all manifestations of the Father’s love expressed through the priest *In Persona Christi*.

Several years ago, I wrote an article which I linked to the Catholicism subreddit on Reddit which is literally one of the most popular forums on the platform. I explained that someone who may feel they are possessed needs to see a neurologist. I added that my experience shows that people would rather learn they are possessed by thousands of demons than they need to see a medical professional.

Many of the faithful do not know that some of what people feel are demonic manifestations are actually neurological issues. One symptom of Temporal Lobe Epilepsy can be in

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Dear Fraternity Brothers and Friends of the Priesthood

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One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Fraternity Financial Report

Monthly Budget:
\$4,750.00

Actual Donations:
\$2,892.00

Budget Deficit:
\$1,858.00

*Current as of
January 31, 2022.*

Last year at our Fraternity gathering in Tucson, we were reminded that the Fraternity is celebrating 40 years this year. When I think of all God has done through the Fraternity over these years – what graces! Fraternity priests helped form me and nurtured my vocation to the priesthood, and they also led me to a greater acceptance of the power of the Holy Spirit working in my life.

When it was suggested that we go back to the Priest, Deacon, Seminarian Conference (PDS) at Franciscan University of Steubenville – where we were began – for the 40th Anniversary, I thought it was a great idea. I've been to the PDS Conferences several times and have always found them to be fruitful and a good time of gathering with the brothers.

The Conference office told me that, due to the national focus on Eucharistic revival, they will be focusing more on the Eucharist. Of course, I was delighted to hear that, as we all know how central the Eucharist is, not only to Catholic spirituality in general, but in a special way to priestly spirituality. Jesus invites us to intimacy as we receive the Eucharist, but when we preside *in persona Christi capatis*, the Lord invites us into a special intimacy. Every time I celebrate the Mass, I am reminded of the great call to holiness and intimacy with the Lord (even though I often fail miserably).

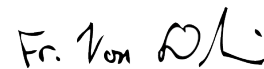
I pray that many from the Fraternity will be able to join us for the PDS Conference and Fraternity Meeting at Franciscan University. The dates are June 11-16, 2023. The PDS

Conference goes June 12-16, but we will gather on the 11th and meet and pray together on the 12th before the PDS begins. If you are able to come on Sunday, when registering

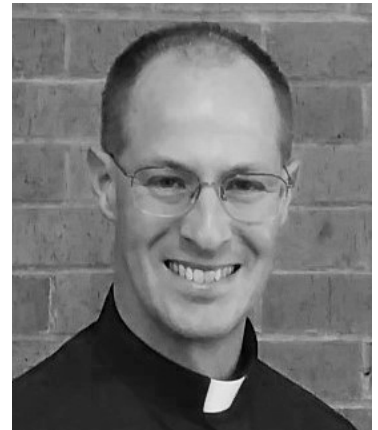
on the Franciscan Conferences website (steubenvilleconferences.com/events/pds), use promo code **FOPHousing-2023** to waive the fee for the Sunday overnight. If you fly in, please fly into Pittsburgh International Airport. More information will be coming about travel reimbursement and Brotherhood Award nominations.

When I think about 40 years of gathering, praying, praising, teaching, listening to the word... I wonder at God's goodness ... and also what He has in store for the next 40 years. Remember, we were made for this time. May the Holy Spirit continue to move in our hearts, to minister us and through us to the people of God.

Grace and Peace,



Fr. Von DeRosia



Editor's Note: Please send articles, comments, and photos to the our editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to editor@fraternityofpriests.org. Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted.

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fact seeing demons or angels.

As one exorcist told me, if someone has a brain tumor and you treat him or her for possession the patient will die of a brain tumor.

However, people in the forum complained about “these priests who will not simply go over and bless someone.” You can see the problem with not understanding the issue more holistically.

Exorcism is reserved to the bishop and he has to authorize it. The reason is, according to exorcists, the devil only recognizes the authority of the bishop. So if someone starts to perform one without his permission, the devil will say “The Church is not here,” and the exorcism will fail.

The danger with this focus on exorcism is by default the podcasts and videos can encourage people to be prideful in their knowledge on the workings of the demonic. Whenever I hear of an exorcist boasting of his successes I really get nervous. A prudent exorcist will be humble and careful of any form of boasting.

Many years ago, I learned the lesson that we do not fight evil hence the reason why we do not cast out demons, God does.

Malachi Martin in his book *Hostage to the Devil* tells a story of someone who attempts just that. Instead of speaking in the name of Jesus, he spoke in his own name and was thrown against the wall. We do not have the power to fight evil directly only God does so we ask him to battle for us. When people get caught up in the drama of ministries of deliverance or exorcism they can be filled with their own power and this is dangerous.

We are currently in the period of

Lent and many people focus on sin and try to turn away from it. There are many who will share ways to turn from sin that focus on the work of the devil in unhealthy narratives. We need to call the faithful to the power of the sacraments and instruct them on this rather undramatic but potent avenue of grace and healing.

I would not necessarily call people to reject the teachings of celebrity exorcists but I would encourage them to have a more complete understanding of all that Lord gives us to lead us to eternal life.

One of the disciplines we have in the Fraternity of Priests is daily prayer and many members pray the rosary daily. These are powerful weapons against evil. In my own life, I’ve prayed a holy hour since the seminary and I know it is an essential part of my priesthood. We also have a call to the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis. These are powerful tools for our own priesthood but they are also powerful tools for all sincere Catholics.

During the Covid lockdowns, I encouraged people to use YouTube or other video services to stream live Eucharistic Adorations that Catholic parishes and shrines offer on a regular bases. What I found fascinating is some of these streaming forms of adoration come from well know devotions such as the Divine Mercy Shrine in Vilnius, Lithuania, The Maximilian Kolbe Shrine in Illinois and so many others. These are great tools even now for the laity to use to assist in their prayers and to deepen their faith.

It also leads people to focus on Christ.

I always explain to people the words of St. Alphonsus Liguori who taught to speak to Jesus as you would a good friend. I also add that he said it is those who pray who are saved. I also remember the words of St. James, resist Satan and he will flee you.

These are the messages people need to hear in a world where the words of celebrity exorcists can be ubiquitous. Again, I am not implying any malicious intent on their part but they have no control over their words once they leave their video channel or podcast and those words can lead people on a path they do not belong.

Many years ago an exorcist sent me out to check out a case, a woman seemed to act strange and speak a strange unknown language. I prayed with her and her family but also encouraged the family to take her to the emergency room. I learned later that the doctor took one look at her and said she was possessed. He did not have the training or ability to make that diagnosis. One exorcist explained to be the two things he despised: priests who immediately dismissed such cases as medical and doctors who immediately dismiss such cases as possession. A full evaluation is in order.

I later spoke to a pharmacist, and anonymously described the symptoms and asked if this could be caused by a bad interaction of medicines. She said, yes. That was my original suspicion by the way.

Help your people to understand the power of the sacraments and to warn them from taking the words of celebrity exorcists at a higher level than even the teachings of the Church.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

April 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rev. 30 Ian Taylor <i>Port of Spain</i>						1 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 2 Ben Williams <i>New Jersey</i>	Rev. 3 William Cosgrove <i>New York</i>	Rev. 4 Tom Devery <i>New York</i>	Rev. 5 Alan Shnob <i>Ogdensburg</i>	6 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	7 For prayer requests received	8 Rev. Joseph Muldoon <i>Ottawa</i>
Rev. 9 Robert Boyle <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 10 John Brennan <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 11 Thomas Galvin <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 12 Tony Gargotta <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 13 Stan Gregorek <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 14 Thomas Kredel <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 15 Joseph Luisi <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>
Rev. 16 John Lynam <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 17 Daniel Mahoney <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 18 Nicholas Mastrangelo <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 19 Kenneth Oldenski <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 20 Thomas Sparacino <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 21 John Sweeney <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>	Rev. 22 Paul Zywan <i>Pittsburgh, PA</i>
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A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Fraternity of Priests, Inc.
PO Box 442
Steubenville, OH 43952-5442

Email: contact@fraternityofpriests.org
<http://www.fraternityofpriests.org>

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

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This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.

\$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

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