

DELIVERANCE MINISTRIES

The ministry of the Church in its wholeness includes the authority through Christ to deliver oppressed people from the powers of evil and darkness. "And he called to him the twelve ... and gave them authority over the unclean spirits" (Mark 6:7). The prayer given to Christ's followers instructed them to pray "deliver us from evil", or the "the evil one." In his life, and especially through his death, the demonic forces were disarmed and people were freed. "Jesus' miracles were not simply kind deeds done to aid individuals; they were concrete ways of proclaiming and affecting God's triumph over the power of evil in the final hour." (New Jerome Biblical Commentary, p.1321.)

There are many expressions of Christian liturgy which reflect deliverance, such as preaching, unction, confession and absolution, and the eucharist. The most explicit of all, however, is baptism which requires the renunciation of evil and a life-long perseverance in resisting evil.

There are cultural differences within our church which tend to lead to a wide variety in the interpretation of spiritual evil.

There are many people cognizant of the presence of evil and seek such rituals as the blessing of homes. Individuals may also identify the evil in particular association with their homes or inanimate objects, especially where there has been human tragedy.

Anglican liturgies acknowledge "Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God," as distinct from the social evils in society such as war or racism and from the sinful desires within us that draw us from the love of God.

Pastoral care should include a discerning of spiritual evil and the awareness and sensing of the reality of evil in a person's life. In such cases, there is need for the ordained minister to include a ministry of healing and deliverance.

The bishop should be consulted immediately by clergy who have been approached for a deliverance, commonly called "exorcism".

The following may be considered general guidelines:

1. Except in extreme instances needing immediate ministry, no exorcism may take place without the explicit permission of the Diocesan Bishop. In those urgent instances where the ministry is performed without the bishop's permission, the bishop must subsequently be informed with reasons given, in writing, for proceeding without it.
2. Due consideration should be given to the assessments and opinions of specialists in mental, physical or emotional disturbances; and where the need of medical attention is indicated, the priest should be assured that it has been obtained.
3. Opportunity for consultation with the person or family involved should be sought, and a period of instruction held with them.

4. Prayers suitable for use in a service of exorcism can be found in the Book of Common Prayer in the Penitential Service, the Litany, Holy Baptism, and Compline. In the Book of Alternative Services they can be found in Canticles 7, 9, 21; Responsories 2, 3, 7, 9; The Great Litany; Holy Baptism; Holy Eucharist and the Solemn Intercession for Good Friday.
5. If symbolic action is required, it should be confined to appropriate Christian symbolism.
6. Prayer for the in-filling of the Holy Spirit shall take place immediately following any exorcism.
7. It is essential that deliverance liturgies are not performed in isolation and only by a person in priest's orders. It is also essential that another priest be present.
8. The officiating priest shall exercise his/her discretion to determine that all present are mature Christians.
9. Following the liturgy, the procedures that have been followed should be forwarded, in writing, to the bishop.
10. After the deliverance liturgy, prayer for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit shall take place, followed by the celebration and making of Holy Communion. The priest will offer extended follow-up including further counsel and spiritual guidance in the person's participation in the fellowship, prayer, and sacraments of the on-going life of the Church.

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