

Revision Date -
Source - Bishops Office

DIRECTIVES IN THE MATTER OF EXORCISM

Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island

The ministry of Christ is to deliver us from all the powers of darkness and to bring us into the Kingdom of Light. Deliverance includes several forms of ministry - Baptism, Eucharist, preaching, absolution, prayer, casting out of evil spirits (i.e. exorcism), etc. Deliverances should be seen as a positive and not a negative thing. It is the ministry of the whole Church and not just that of the ordained priesthood.

These guidelines deal with that part of the deliverance ministry commonly called "EXORCISM".

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 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.
5. If symbolic action is required, it should be confined to appropriate Christian symbolism.
6. Prayer for the infilling of the Holy Spirit shall take place immediately following any exorcism.
7. It is essential that exorcisms not be performed in isolation, and ideally another priest should be present.
8. The officiating priest shall exercise his discretion to determine that all present are mature Christians.
9. Following the service of exorcism, the procedures that have been followed should be forwarded, in writing, to the Bishop.

NOTE: The basic elements of exorcism are (a) Ministrants who are in a state of grace and spiritually prepared through prayer and the Word; (b) Binding of Satan in the Name of Jesus Christ; (c) Command to the powers of darkness in the Name of Christ to leave the afflicted one and with the grace and power of Christ, acknowledge and follow Him, and be filled with His Spirit.

Follow up of Scriptural instruction, fellowship in prayer and Sacrament, in the Communion of the Church is most essential.