



**Credible Catholic**

# **CREDIBLE CATHOLIC**

## **Big Book - Volume 14**

**SUFFERING, SPIRITUAL EVIL,  
AND JESUS' DEFEAT OF SATAN**



**Content by: Fr. Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D.**

# Credible Catholic Big Book

## Volume Fourteen

### The Reality of Spiritual Good and Spiritual Evil

**Fr. Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D.**

As dictated to Joan Jacoby

Edits and formatting by Joey Santoro

**Editor's Note:**

The content of this volume is limited to a very small portion of the total document, because much of the material will be published by Ignatius Press at the end of 2018 in a new trilogy on moral theology and the struggle between spiritual good and evil entitled *Called Out of Darkness: Contending with Evil through Virtue and Prayer* (Volume 1). Interested readers can purchase this text from Ignatius Press when it is available at the end of 2018. In December 2019, the full text of the document will be made available on [www.crediblecatholic.com](http://www.crediblecatholic.com). Readers interested in a summary of this document can click on the *Credible Catholic Little Book* (Volume 14) to read an abridged version.

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**This Volume supports The Catechism of the Catholic Church,  
Part Three – Life in Christ**

**NOTE:** All teachings in the **Credible Catholic** materials conform to the **Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)** and help to explain the information found therein. **Father Spitzer** has also included materials intended to counter the viral secular myths that are leading religious people of all faiths, especially millennials, to infer that God is no longer a credible belief. You will find credible documented evidence for God, our soul, the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the Catholic Church, as well as spiritual and moral conversion.

**Part One** from the **CCC** is titled, ***THE PROFESSION OF FAITH***. The first 5 Volumes in the *Credible Catholic Big Book* and *Credible Catholic Little Book* fall into Part One. **Part Two** of the **CCC** is titled, ***THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY***. This is covered in Volumes 6 through 12. **Part Three** of the **CCC** is ***LIFE IN CHRIST*** and information related to this topic will be found in Volumes 13 through 17. *Credible Catholic Big and Little Book* Volumes 18 through 20 will cover **Part Four** of the **CCC**, **Christian Prayer**.

The Big Book can also be divided into two major movements – the rational justification for God, the soul, Jesus, and the Catholic Church (Volumes 1 through 6), and life in Christ through the Catholic Church (Volumes 9 through 20). If you would like a preview of this dynamic, please go to Volume 6 (Chapter 7) at the following link – [Chapter 7 – Where Have We Come From and Where are We Going?](#)

**We all need to be Credible Catholics. St. Augustine said** in his work, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*,

*"Usually, even a non-Christian knows something about the earth, the heavens and other elements... Now, it is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel to hear a Christian, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking nonsense on these topics; ...If they find a Christian mistaken in a field which they themselves know well and hear him maintaining his foolish opinions about our books, how are they going to believe those books in matters concerning the resurrection of the dead, the hope of eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven..."*

**If we don't respond to these secular myths, who will?**

## Purpose of this Volume

Previous volumes have been dedicated to *intellectual conversion* and *spiritual conversion*, presenting contemporary, scientific, philosophical, social scientific, historical, exegetical, and theological evidence for the existence of God, our transcendent soul, the historicity and divinity of Jesus, the validity of the Catholic Church under the successors of Saint Peter as the legitimate Church of Jesus Christ, spiritual conversion, and the four levels of happiness. Yet this is not enough to provide a rational and responsible ground for *moral conversion*. If we are to do this, it will be necessary to provide cogent, rational, and empirical evidence for the reality of spiritual evil – that is, Satan, evil spirits, and their involvement in a cosmic struggle between good and evil which extends to the souls and lives of each one of us. The primary motivation of this enemy is to convince us to choose his way of darkness, egocentricity, domination, hatred, and self-worship over the way of the unconditionally loving God revealed by Jesus Christ – the way of light, compassion, virtue, love, other-centeredness, humility, community, and worship of the true God. If we understand this, then we will also understand why Jesus had to rescue us from the powers of darkness, and what we must do to stay out of the mesmerizing grip of this powerful, terrifying enemy who uses his illusions to persuade us to give our souls over to him.

Understanding the above will reveal why we need the Church's teaching, the virtues, the sacraments, and prayer – these four beautiful gifts of the Lord animated by the power of the Holy Spirit within us. The Church's teaching is not a bunch of arbitrary burdensome rules of some busybodies in Rome, but is our first line of defense against the power of our enemy who uses every form of deceit to bring us into the deadly sins, darkness, and despair. The virtues are not simply some abstract ideal to make people look good or holy; they are habits that become our second nature and identity which constitute the second line of defense against our enemy. The sacraments, particularly reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist, are, as it were, the direct infusion of grace into our being to help us conform ourselves to the heart of Christ, to repent when we have failed, and to return and remain on the road to salvation. Prayer, particularly contemplative prayer, is not rattling off a few common prayers at night when we were children, it is the essential vehicle for the personal encounter with Jesus Christ, His Heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus' Mother – so essential to our salvation as well as our capacity to recognize and reject Satan and his way.

As noted above, readers who would like to read an abridged version of the entire Volume 14, can click on *Credible Catholic Little Book* (Volume 14).

Please note: The following Table of Contents gives only the sample sections used in this document.

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## Introduction

Let us begin with the words of St. Paul describing the reality of spiritual evil and Christ's victory over it:

For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak (Eph. 6: 12-20).

## First Sample

### From Chapter One, Section II -- on the Reality of Visions, Apparitions, and Revelation

#### II.

#### Visions and Revelations – and their distinction from Psychologically Induced Phenomena

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How might we generally distinguish between heightened visions and revelations versus psychological illness? Dr. Craig Isaacs, a clinical psychologist and Anglican priest who has studied these phenomena extensively, responds:

The range of human functioning referred to [between psychosis on the one hand and mystical experience on the other] can also be conceptualized as the level of differentiation in the ability to consciously observe reality, to distinguish between self and other, between subject and object, and this is related to the proportionate integrity of the ego. At one end of the scope of ego functioning there is very limited differentiation between subject and object while at the other end there is a transcendent integration of subject and object, with various intervening levels of discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isaacs 2009 *Revelations and Possession* p. 62

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If the ego is functioning well, the subject will be able to distinguish easily between himself and others, subject and object, and real versus merely imaginary objects. However, if the ego is not functioning well, there will be a blurring of these ordinary distinctions. This blurring is precisely what characterizes psychological disorders. The most serious disorder which is tantamount to an eclipse of ego functioning is psychosis where there appears to be a loss of the ability to distinguish between self and others, subject and object, and real objects versus merely imaginary ones. Personality disorders (ranging from paranoid, schizoid, borderline, antisocial, and histrionic to narcissistic, avoidant, dependent, and obsessive-compulsive personality) have varying degrees of ego disengagement, but not complete disengagement. Thus, in personality disorders, the subject has partial ability to distinguish between self and others, subject and object, and real versus imaginary objects.

Much less serious than psychological disorders is the imaginary playmate of children. Evidently there is a suspension of ego engagement by the child, but there also appears to be awareness on the part of the child that the imaginary playmate is not completely real. As the child grows, ego functioning becomes clearer and stronger, making it difficult for the child to suspend ego functioning. When the imaginary playmate no longer seems real, the child loses interest in it.

Let us now turn to the opposite end of the spectrum—that is, the mystic or the recipient of an authentic revelation from God (e.g. a vision, or a voice).<sup>2</sup> One indication that the vision, voice, or mystical experience is authentic is that the subject has clear and strong ego functioning – and therefore discriminates clearly and strongly between self and others, and between subject and object. This enables him to distinguish clearly between real versus imaginary objects.<sup>3</sup> The subject is also aware that the vision or voice is extraordinary – that it is not part of ordinary experience. His ego functioning with respect to ordinary experience is acute, which makes the extraordinary experience stand out – as extraordinary. Frequently subjects of authentic revelation say nothing to family or friends because they know that their friends will not be able to relate to their extraordinary experiences. Thus they are not only able to distinguish between self and others, they realize what others can and cannot be expected to understand.

Additionally, recipients of an authentic revelation are able to distinguish the transcendental and sacred nature of the “Wholly Other” appearing to them in the midst of profane and immanent ordinary experience.<sup>4</sup> This sacred transcendental feature is not merely an authoritative voice, a divine vision, or a heightened experience—it is a voice, vision or experience filled with mystery, majesty, glory, and sacredness, inducing awe, reverence, and worship. Thus, the recipient of authentic revelation or mystical experience is not only able to make ordinary distinctions between self and others, subject and object, and real and imaginary objects, but also between the ordinary and the extraordinary — the transcendent and the immanent, and the sacred and the profane.

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<sup>2</sup> See Adolphe Tanquerey 1930, *The Spiritual Life: A Treatise on Ascetical and Mystical Theology*, trans. by Herman Branderis, (republished Rockford, IL: Tan Books 2000) pp. 701-708.

<sup>3</sup> See Isaacs 2009 *Revelations and Possession* pp. 61-64. See also Tanquerey 1930 *The Spiritual Life*, pp. 11-14.

<sup>4</sup> See Evelyn Underhill, 2002 *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*. (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications) pp. 9-13, 46-67, 78-81, 99-105, and 152-162.



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Moreover, recipients of authentic revelation do not have the compulsiveness, confusion, fear and agitation that oftentimes accompanies psychosis and personality disorders<sup>5</sup> -- quite the opposite. They have an overwhelming sense of peace, fulfillment, enchantment, love, joy, and even ecstasy.<sup>6</sup> For these individuals, not only the ego, but the soul (as we have described it) is fully engaged. Thus the soul's awareness of perfect truth, goodness and love, the sacredness of the "Wholly Other," and the call to authenticity of self (in light of its awareness of perfect truth, goodness, and love) enables the recipient of authentic revelation to be aware of and strive for his most authentic self which leads to a conviction about the truth of his experience. Isaacs describes it as a "deep, calming, ego-syntonic conviction that what has been experienced is truly real."<sup>7</sup> This awareness leads the recipient of authentic revelation to a sense of humble and holy unworthiness -- as he experiences perfectly good, loving, and holy "Worthiness Itself." This inclines the subject toward surrender to the Holy One -- and in the case of the mystic, to complete surrender to the absolutely holy.<sup>8</sup>

This stands in direct contrast to psychosis in which the subject's loss of ego consciousness causes him to inflate his ego and construct what Isaacs calls, "a defiant, proud, judgmental attitude with an unrealistic elevation of self-worth."<sup>9</sup> This unfounded extreme ego inflation appears to be a defensive reaction to the fear, confusion, and agitation the psychotic experiences in his hallucinatory state.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the voices of a psychotic (or those suffering from serious personality disorder) are not encouraging, peaceful, and clear in direction and guidance. Rather, as Isaacs notes, "[The psychotic's] voices are often confusing, harsh, and destructive. The psychotic may experience hearing voices which savagely criticize the self or command him or her to die."<sup>11</sup> Finally, instead of gaining a heightened sense of one's authentic self (in the light of the divine authentic self), the psychotic loses his sense of self-continuity causing an inability to differentiate clearly between subject and object.<sup>12</sup>

Isaacs gives a case study of a newly ordained Anglican priest who began to have a severe doubt in his vocation. Instructed by his bishop to go to a retreat house in England, he was praying before the tabernacle to gain clarity on what the Lord wanted from him. Isaacs describes his experience as follows:

There, while kneeling and praying in the chapel, it happened to him. Out of the tabernacle placed above the altar appeared Jesus, arrayed in the robes and crown of the King of Kings. There was a glow to the otherwise seemingly corporeal image that stood before him. As Jesus emerged from the tabernacle he proceeded down the center aisle of the chapel until he stood beside this searching priest. As he approached, the priest had an increasing sense of awe, to such an extent that he was immobilized, and as Jesus came to his side he swooned. When he returned to normal

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<sup>5</sup> See Isaacs 2009 *Revelations and Possession* pp. 84-85.

<sup>6</sup> See Evelyn Underhill, 2002 *Mysticism*, pp. 18-24, 37-42, 74-77, 86-92, 129-133, 153-156, and 208-219.

<sup>7</sup> See *Ibid.* p. 86.

<sup>8</sup> See *Ibid.* p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> Isaacs 2009 *Revelations and Possession* p. 85.

<sup>10</sup> See *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> See *Ibid.*

consciousness his doubt and depression were gone, and he experienced the phenomenon known as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup>

Did this priest have an authentic experience of Jesus – or was it merely an intrapsychic projection to a wounded, and therefore, undifferentiated ego? Isaacs indicates that before the experience itself is analyzed, it is best to look at the history and current status of the subject – particularly to determine whether a physical or circumstantial cause might have induced the vision. With respect to physiological causes, was the subject taking medications that could have induced a hallucination? Are there tumors or abnormal functioning of the thyroid? If no physiological factors can be found, then Isaacs recommends that the next step be to rule out psychiatric, social, and familial factors. Does the subject have a history of hospitalization? Do his family members have such a history? Does the subject belong to a coercive cult or other group that might induce an intrapsychic projection or hallucination?<sup>14</sup> If not, then Isaacs recommends judging the specific qualities of the experience itself.

Isaac delineates five criteria for judging an authentic revelation or mystical experience which closely resemble the analysis given above as well as that of Evelyn Underhill<sup>15</sup> and Adolphe Tanquerey:<sup>16</sup>

1. The subject experiences a vision or voice as coming from outside himself from a Wholly Other (a transcendent, spiritual or divine Other). This quality must be present in the experience itself – and not merely thought to have been present after subsequent reflection on the experience.
2. The experience is numinous – filled with sacredness, mysteriousness, majesty, glory, and perfect goodness.
3. The numinous dimension of the experience induces reverence, rapt attention, worship, and awe – even to the point of being overwhelmed or fainting.
4. There is an immediate awareness of a message or a truth – of which the subject has exceedingly clear and immediate cognizance. This cognizance of truth does not come from subsequent reflection upon the experience or any process of reasoning.
5. When the vision is supernatural – if it is divine in origin, it will be accompanied by a beautiful light – and if it is evil in origin, by a “shadowy darkness.”<sup>17</sup>

After investigating potential physiological, psychiatric, social, and familial causes of the above-mentioned newly ordained Anglican priest, Isaacs determined that the experience should be judged on the basis of its qualities. There can be little doubt that the subject experienced Jesus as a transcendent or divine Wholly Other. Moreover, the experience was definitely numinous – filled with sacredness, majesty, and divine power which caused the subject to be in a state of rapt

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<sup>13</sup> Isaacs, 2009, *Revelations and Possession*, p. 67

<sup>14</sup> See Ibid pp. 68-69.

<sup>15</sup> See Underhill 2002 *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development* pp. 170-209.

<sup>16</sup> See Adolphe Tanquerey 1930 *The Spiritual Life*, pp. 700-710.

<sup>17</sup> For all five criteria see Isaacs 2009 *Revelations and Possession* p. 70.

attention, filled with reverence and outright awe – to the point of swooning. During the experience, the subject not only had a sense of himself, as distinct from others and objects, but also an intense awareness of humble and holy unworthiness before the holiness of Jesus. Yet instead of diminishing him, this experience dignified him, and gave him a clear and strong indication not only of his vocation, but also his belovedness by Jesus. The effects of the revelation remained with him.

Was the subject's experience an authentic revelation? There were no public miraculous phenomena accompanying the subject's apparition – such as the multiple medically verified miraculous healings at Lourdes,<sup>18</sup> the miracle of the sun at Fatima,<sup>19</sup> or the apparitions seen by Padre Pio accompanied by his stigmata and many public miracles.<sup>20</sup> However, since close scrutiny of the subject's physiological condition, history, family, and social milieu did not indicate a propensity toward low ego functioning or psychological illness, and since his experience was of the numinous Wholly Other manifesting beauty and glory (inspiring rapt attention and awe), which gave an immediate clear cognizance of God's will for him, it seems likely that he received an authentic revelation.

Some may believe that such revelations only occur in the lives of saints. Though many saints do in fact receive authentic revelations from God (particularly mystical experiences and sometimes apparitions), they are not altogether infrequent in the lives of individuals with committed faith and virtue. Much of the time these more ordinary individuals are genuinely surprised by these extraordinary experiences – and keep them hidden from friends and family. C.S. Lewis called his mystical experiences “surprises” or “stabs of joy.”<sup>21</sup> St. Ignatius Loyola called these experiences “consolation without previous cause” – implying that they come quite surprisingly from God without any seeming natural cause.<sup>22</sup> When such surprising and intense consolation occurs, Ignatius indicates that it may point to God's confirmation of a way of life, such as a religious vocation<sup>23</sup> (as in the case of the above mentioned newly ordained Anglican priest). Whether this be the case or not, these experiences are a call from God to a deeper commitment to prayer and service to His Kingdom.

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<sup>18</sup> See the Lourdes Medical Bureau, whose physicians investigate and catalogue miracles, in <https://en.lourdes-france.org/deepen/cures-and-miracles/medical-bureau-sanctuary>

See also Ruth Cranston 1988 *The Miracle of Lourdes* (Galilee Trade Publishers).

<sup>19</sup> See Stanley Jaki 1999 *God and the sun at Fatima* (Fraser, MI: Real View Books).

<sup>20</sup> See Renzo Allegri 2000 *Padre Pio: Man of Hope* (Ann Arbor, MI: Charis Books).

<sup>21</sup> See C.S. Lewis 1955. *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of my Early Life* (New York: Harcourt) pp. 72, 78, and 130.

<sup>22</sup> In the “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits” in his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius Loyola indicates that ordinary people can experience a high degree of affective and spiritual consolation from God – without any “previous cause,” – that is, without natural thoughts, preparation, or circumstance. Such surprising and intense consolation is caused by God alone. See Saint Ignatius 1989 *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (New York: Image-Doubleday) p. 133.

<sup>23</sup> See *Ibid.* pp. 83-85.

## Second Sample

### From Chapter Three, Sections II And III on Signs of Demonic Possession and Two Documented Cases of It

#### II.

#### The Signs of Demonic Possession

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My objective in this section is to give a brief description of the primary indications of demonic presence. When a large number of these indications are manifest in a single person, a reasonable inference of demonic possession or severe oppression can be made. The following list of demonic manifestation was taken from Craig Isaacs' *Revelations and Possession: Distinguishing Spiritual From Psychological Experiences*,<sup>24</sup> and may also be found in Matt Baglio's *The Rite: The Making of a Modern Exorcist*,<sup>25</sup> and Fr. Jose Antonio Fortea's *Interview With an Exorcist*.<sup>26</sup>

In a possession, a demonic spirit (or spirits) inhabits a person's body (but not his soul). This spirit (or spirits) can choose to manifest its presence when it wants – and when it does so, the victim goes into a trance (generally with the eyes rolled back), and begins to manifest a very dark, arrogant, and controlling personality. This sudden transition (called a “crisis”) is frequently accompanied by knowledge of facts and languages with which the victim would have no acquaintance. Paranormal activity – sometimes on a significant level – often accompanies the manifestation of the demonic personality. After its manifestation, the demonic spirit retreats into the background, allowing the victim's personality to re-emerge. Victims appear to have no recollection of the manifestation of the demonic personality within them. Those who witness the manifestation are confused and often terrified, but the victim—even long after a successful exorcism—has no recollection of it.<sup>27</sup> When threatened with exorcism, a demon (or demons) will frequently move the victim into the trancelike state and confront the exorcist with its blasphemies, rages, and spiritual power. The demon's first tactic is to hide behind the victim's personality, making it appear that nothing is wrong, but when confronted by holy objects and the prayers of exorcism, it will generally emerge to confront the exorcist directly.

The following list (given in Sections II.A – II.C) gives three kinds of indications of demonic presence: paranormal indications, behavioral indications, and effects of demonic presence on other people. Notice that these indications of demonic presence are not restricted to a demonic possession, but can also occur in what is called “severe demonic oppression” – where the demonic spirit attacks victims – pushing, hitting, scratching, or even levitating them. It also tries to influence or invade victims, temporarily overwhelming their personalities with feelings of hatred, arrogance, and violence. The key difference between possession and severe oppression

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<sup>24</sup> Craig Isaacs 2009 *Revelations and Possession: Distinguishing Spiritual From Psychological Experiences* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing) pp. 114-126 and 164-165.

<sup>25</sup> Matt Baglio 2009 *The Rite: The Making of a Modern Exorcist* (New York: Random House) pp. 49-51.

<sup>26</sup> Fr. Jose Antonio Fortea 2006 *Interview With an Exorcist* (Westchester, PA: Ascension Press) pp. 86-87.

<sup>27</sup> This will be important in answering the question of why God would allow a demon to possess an innocent person like a child—or allow an evil person to curse a child into demonic possession. See below Section IV.

is that in the latter, the demon does not inhabit the victim with the intent to stay. It intends only to attack and invade victims for the purpose of intimidating and terrifying them and their loved ones.

As will be seen below (in Section IV), possession occurs when either a victim voluntarily cooperates with the occult or demonic forces – or when another person actively cooperating with demonic power brings it to bear on a victim. According to Matt Baglio, possession must originate either from a person opening the door to the devil or being a victim of one who has opened that door.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, severe oppression can occur merely by being in a demonically infested house or being emotionally close to someone who is possessed. Oppression need not take place in the infested house—demons can follow victims outside the house and attack or invade them in remote places. Opening oneself to the demonic or being directly cursed by a demonically influenced person is not ingredient to demonic oppression (as it is for possession).

We now proceed to the three kinds of indications of demonic presence:

1. Paranormal indications (Section II.A).
2. Behavioral indications (Section II.B).
3. Effects of demonic possession on others (Section II.C).

Recall that the trancelike state (with the eyes generally rolled back into the head) and the emergence of an alternate personality which is filled with hatred, arrogance, and violence, is almost always present in a possession along with other indications.

## II.A Paranormal Manifestations of Demonic Possession

There are eight common paranormal manifestations of a demonic spirit which have been observed in virtually every culture throughout the world:<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Matt Baglio 2009, *The Rite* p. 59.

<sup>29</sup> One of the most common beliefs among the world's diverse religions and cultures is the belief in demonic spirits, their capacity to haunt and possess, and the need for rituals of exorcism to free dwellings and people from their effects. See the accounts of possession and exorcism in China and India detailed in L. Stafford Betty's, 2005 "The Growing Evidence for "Demonic Possession": What Should Psychiatry's Response be?" in the *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 44, No. 1, Spring 2005.

<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~jporter/spiritualism/Stafford%20demonic%20possession.pdf>

There is belief in demonic spirits and rites of exorcisms in other religions. For Judaism see Rabbi David Wolpe 2012 "Dybbuiks, demons and exorcism in Judaism" in *Jewish Journal* posted June 27, 2012.

[http://www.jewishjournal.com/cover\\_story/article/dybbuks\\_demons\\_and\\_exorcism\\_in\\_judaism\\_20120627](http://www.jewishjournal.com/cover_story/article/dybbuks_demons_and_exorcism_in_judaism_20120627)

For Islam, see <http://www.islam-universe.com/Exorcism.html>.

For Buddhism, see Aromiekim 2015, "Tibetan Buddhism: Ghosts, Demons, and Exorcisms."

<https://exorciseme.wordpress.com/2015/01/28/tibetan-buddhism-ghosts-demons-and-exorcism/>

For Taoism, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daozang>.

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1. *Poltergeist activity* – flying objects and destruction of objects (without known physical cause), slamming of doors, loud footsteps, evidence of footprints, loud noises, and movement of furniture (without known physical cause).
2. *Levitation* – possessed person defies gravity and is elevated without known physical cause.
3. Excessive weight of an individual -- individual can become so heavy that they are impossible to lift with several strong men, and sometimes collapse the beds or furniture on which they are reclining.
4. Telepathy, ability to read the mind and communicate with remote individuals – and even to effect phones and other information devices.
5. Remote movement or destruction of religious objects.
6. Understanding (and sometimes speaking) hitherto unknown foreign languages with proficiency – e.g. Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.
7. Knowledge of the personal secrets and sins of the exorcist and exorcism team members.
8. Appearance of dark figures, animals or insects, and other apparitions.

Every possession is not the same, and some possessions have very few paranormal features, but the ones discussed in Section III—Julia and Robbie Mannheim-- have virtually all of the above paranormal features seen by multiple witnesses. In view of this, a reasonable judgment of possession can be made.

### II.B Behavioral Manifestations

By “behavioral” manifestations, I am speaking only of *outward* manifestations of mental and emotional states, but not the actual interior mental or emotional states themselves. Some of these behavioral manifestations are less frequent than others, but in virtually every possession, trance-like states, violent and blasphemous reactions to religious or holy objects, and revulsion at the name of Jesus or holy objects are present.

- Trance-like states (frequently with the eyes rolled back) during exorcism rite frequently followed by blasphemous and violent outbursts.
- Scratching’s on the body (sometimes words) – not produced by the subject or others.
- Revulsion toward anything religious or holy – holy water can cause pain; being touched by religious artifacts can cause violent reactions.
- Fear or revulsion at the name of Jesus, hatred of religious objects, destruction of religious objects.
- Extreme secretions generally from vomiting (beyond normal bodily capacity).
- Remarkable strength – far beyond subject’s normal capacity.
- The presence of another personality (personalities) frequently manifesting a deep guttural voice. Sometimes the voice or voices emerge when the jaw is clamped shut.
- Highly irregular changes in facial features – sometimes manifesting “an evil face with an evil smile.”
- Extreme bodily contortions – sometimes into seemingly impossible positions.

## II.C

### Effects of the Possessed Person on Other People

In addition to witnessing paranormal phenomena (particularly poltergeist activities), team members or other witnesses at an exorcism may see, feel, or smell the following:

- Significant drop in room temperature (without known physical cause).
- Acrid or putrid stench.
- A feeling of pressure on the chest.
- Feeling of a dark or dangerous alien presence (not the subject) in the room.

Craig Isaacs gives a fuller explanation of all the above phenomena.<sup>30</sup> We are now in a position to examine four well-documented cases of possession, after which we will address the difference between possession and mental illness as well as the causes of possession.

## III.

### Two Documented Cases of Possession

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There are many documented cases of exorcisms throughout the world, but the best documented ones (which include analysis from psychologists and psychiatrists) come from Catholic exorcism rites and Christian deliverance ministry in the United States and Europe.

The following well-documented cases – the case of Julia and that of Robbie Mannheim (underlying the movie “The Exorcist”<sup>31</sup>) – are sufficient to show the reality of demonic spirits, because they are based on multiple witnesses whose good reputation is indisputable, paranormal phenomena of almost every sort, and most of the other signs of demonic possession given above (Section II). They will be explained in detail below in Sections III.A (Julia) and III.B (Robbie Mannheim).

Readers interested in additional cases of exorcism will want to consult the two cases of exorcism detailed in Scott Peck’s book, *Glimpses of the Devil* (which were videotaped and had a team of psychological and religious experts present).<sup>32</sup> Readers may also want to consult the 2012 exorcism of La Toya Ammons and her three children detailed in the *Indianapolis Star* as well as a memorandum of the principal exorcist Fr. Michael Maginot.<sup>33</sup> Matt Baglio’s work, *The*

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<sup>30</sup> Craig Isaacs 2009 *Revelations and Possession: Distinguishing Spiritual from Psychological Experiences* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing) pp. 114-126.

<sup>31</sup> See the detailed description of this case in Robert Spitzer 2017 *Called Out of Darkness: Contending with Evil through Virtue and Prayer* (San Francisco: Ignatius), Chapter 1.

<sup>32</sup> Scott Peck 2005 *Glimpses of the Devil* (New York: Simon & Schuster) pp. 15-132 (For Case #1 – Jersey) and pp. 133-170 (For Case #2 – Beccah).

<sup>33</sup> The reporter from the “*Indianapolis Star*” Marisa Kwiatowski who assists 800 pages of documentation on the exorcism from psychologists, Department of Child Protective Services case workers, the four officers from the Gary Police Department, family members, and friends. See Marisa Kwiatowski “The Exorcisms of La Toya Ammons” in *The Indianapolis Star* October 30, 2015. (<http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2014/01/25/the-dispossession-of-latoya-ammons/4892553/>) See the report of Fr. Michael Maginot, S.T.L., J.C.L. of the Diocese of Gary in—

*Rite - The Making of a Modern Exorcist* details several contemporary exorcisms witnessed and performed by Father Gary Thomas in the early twenty-first century.<sup>34</sup>

There are other less contemporary well-documented cases of exorcism—including the detailed narrative of the exorcism of Anna Ecklund in 1928—by Fr. Carl Vogl entitled *Begone Satan!* (based on a diary by Fr. Theophilus Riesinger--chief exorcist).<sup>35</sup> Another volume by Leon Cristiani *Evidence of Satan in the Modern World* details multiple exorcisms in France and Italy prior to 1940.<sup>36</sup>

### III.A The Case of Julia

We may now proceed to the case of Julia which took place in 2007. This case was witnessed and reported by psychiatrist, Dr. Richard E. Gallagher, and recounted in *The New Oxford Review* (Feb., 2008).<sup>37</sup> Richard E. Gallagher, M.D., is a board-certified psychiatrist in private practice in Hawthorne, New York, and Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at New York Medical College. He is also on the faculties of the Columbia University Psychoanalytic Institute. He is a graduate of Princeton University, and trained in Psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine.

Dr. Gallagher agreed to anonymity, and so very little incidental material that could lead to the identification of “Julia” was provided. Given the date of the article (February 2008) and the fact that Dr. Gallagher is a Board psychiatrist in New York, it might be inferred that the exorcism took place somewhere in New York in 2007, though this cannot be verified. Dr. Gallagher notes that the team members of the exorcism were both credible and reliable, including several qualified mental-health personnel, at least four Catholic priests, a deacon and

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“Report Seeking Permission of Bishop for Exorcism,” May 21, 2012--

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1005721-report-to-bishop.html> . See also the interview with Fr. Maginot in Patty Armstrong 2014 “Parish Priest Aids Family in Fight Against Demons,” *National Catholic Register*, February 11, 2014. <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/parish-priest-aids-family-in-fight-against-demons>

<sup>34</sup> Matt Baglio 2010 *The Rite: The Making of a Modern Exorcist* (New York: Doubleday). Baglio recounts seven exorcisms witnessed by or connected to Father Gary Thomas – an unnamed woman in Rome in 2007 (pp. 2-5), Doug (235-242), Giovanna (pp. 180-85, 188), Maria (pp. 231-234), Silvia (pp. 192-193), Sister Janica (pp. 125, 126-133, 146-147, 167, 174, 193), and Stephanie (pp. 223-227, 228-229). Baglio also recounts several other exorcisms performed by Father Carmine DeFilippis – the instructor of Father Gary Thomas – pp. 90-185.

<sup>35</sup> This detailed account of the two series of exorcism of Anna—one in 1912 and the other in 1928—both of which were successful shows many of the same paranormal and demonic activities mentioned in the case of Julia and Robbie Mannheim (given below). See Carl Vogl 2010 *Begone Satan! A True Account of an Exorcism in Earling, Iowa in 1928* (Charlotte, NC: Tan Books). The exorcism was also documented in newspapers at the time.

<sup>36</sup> Leon Cristiani 1961 *Evidence of Satan in the Modern World* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc.) pp. 74-91 (the case of Antoine Gay – 1837), pp. 92-95 (the case of a possessed woman exorcised by Saint Jean Vianney – 1850), pp. 96-104 (the case of Thiebaud and Joseph Burner – Illfurth, France – 1864-1869), pp. 104-107 (The Case of Helene Poirier – Coullons, France -- 1914), pp. 106-107 (Claire-Germaine Cele – Natal, Africa – 1906-1907), and pp. 109-123 (The bewitched woman of Piacenza, Italy 1920). Cristiani relates other cases beyond these five – especially those performed by Saint Jean Vianney.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Gallagher 2008 “Among the Many Counterfeits, a Case of Demonic Possession” in *New Oxford Review* V. 75, No. 2, February 2008. <http://www.newoxfordreview.org/article.jsp?did=0308-gallagher>.



his wife, two nuns (both nurses, one psychiatric), and several lay volunteers.<sup>38</sup> The name of the Catholic exorcist is not mentioned for the same reason of anonymity.

Background of the case. “Julia” (a pseudonym) was a former Catholic who apparently disavowed her religion and became a prominent Satanist throughout “a long disturbing history of involvement with explicitly Satanic groups.”<sup>39</sup> Her Satanic practice brought her extraordinary psychic powers, but also possession by a demonic spirit who would put her into trances in which the demon became the dominant personality. The presence of virtually all signs of demonic possession (see above Section II) distinguished these states from Dissociative Identity Disorder (what used to be called Multiple Personality Disorder). When Julia was not in this trance state in which the demonic presence became dominant, she had no memory of what she said and did in the trance. Furthermore, she was logical, articulate, and friendly, and did not manifest any signs of psychosis. Nevertheless, she intuited the presence of the demon because of its oppressive manifestations, and so she very uncharacteristically sought the help of an exorcist in the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church agreed to examine Julia, and retained Dr. Gallagher as a psychiatric consultant – at which point he became intimately familiar with the case. After psychiatric causes of Julia’s condition had been ruled out because of the presence of paranormal activities which have no causative basis in psychiatry or the known laws of physics, an exorcist was assigned to the case. Because of the complexity of the case, the many team members mentioned above, including Dr. Gallagher, were present at the rites of exorcism, along with the exorcist.

Manifestations of paranormal and demonic activity. There were several manifestations of paranormal and demonic activity arising out of Julia, both during the times of trances, and also between trance-states:

- Julia went into a trancelike state during which another intelligent and evil personality would become manifest. This personality exemplified hatred for God and an extreme reticence to leave Julia, cursing and threatening those who tried to do so. This is a universal sign of a possessed person when it is accompanied by paranormal activity such as those recounted below.
- On one occasion in front of all the team members, Julia levitated one-half foot off her bed for 30 minutes.
- Psychokinetic activity (objects flying through the air without known physical cause) occurred several times, particularly when Julia was in a trancelike state.
- Julia was uttering intelligible phrases in both Latin and Spanish – languages with which she was completely unfamiliar.
- Julia was aware of the thoughts of various team members and when the demonic personality was dominant, could recount facts about the clothes team members were wearing away from the site of the exorcism, the characteristics as well as the place and time of death of team member’s relatives and friends, and also unrevealed facts about team members personal or family history.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

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- On one occasion, Julia was aware of conference calls among the team members -- to which she was not privy – and on one occasion actually inserted her demonic voice into one of those conference calls without the benefit of a phone.
- Julia displayed enormous strength beyond any natural capacity, which the nuns and other team members were frequently unable to resist or restrain.
- She had an extreme aversion to religious objects, was able to distinguish between holy water and unblessed water, and when her demonic voice was dominant, she would curse and utter blasphemies. She would also groan, growl, and make other animal sounds, which most team members did not believe could be made by a human being.

As a psychiatrist who has acted as a consultant to other possible cases of demonic possession, Richard Gallagher is probably one of the world's best experts in distinguishing true demonic possession from psychiatric conditions that look like possession – but in reality are explicable through recognizable DSM disorders.<sup>40</sup> Gallagher elucidates three kinds of psychological disorders which may be mistaken for demonic possession<sup>41</sup> (which will be discussed again in Section III.B):

1. Chronic psychotic disorders (such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorders) or brief psychotic conditions or episodes). These conditions are frequently accompanied by hallucinations – visual, auditory (voices) and gustatory – and frequently include a conviction of the presence of and possession by an angelic or demonic personality.
2. Personality or character disorders in which patients believe themselves to have a strong interior disposition toward evil. Sometimes this inner sense or feelings leads to the conviction that there is a devil or demonic spirit distinct from them, but present in them.
3. Severely histrionic or dissociative individuals. These conditions, particularly Dissociative Identity Disorder (formerly called Multiple Personality Disorder), give rise to alternate personalities, some of whom manifest aggressive, hateful, evil, and psychotic dimensions (as Mr. Hyde was to Dr. Jekyll). These alternate personalities can be so hateful and aggressive that they fool people into believing that a devil or demonic spirit is really present.

Dr. Gallagher ruled out all three of the psychiatric conditions for Julia, first because of the manifest paranormal and demonic activities which cannot be explained whether by purely mental states or the known laws of physics. Furthermore, each of the above 3 psychiatric conditions has accompanying features that Julia did not possess when she was not in a trancelike state. Psychosis is a highly unlikely diagnosis for Julia because she manifested logic, prudence, good judgment, friendliness, and restrained behaviors between trances. This would not be the case for psychotics. Furthermore, Julia did not consistently manifest the full range of behaviors associated with personality disorders, character disorders, hysteria, or Dissociative Identity

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<sup>40</sup> See Richard Gallagher, 2015 “True & False Possessions, Revisited” in *New Oxford Review* (May 2015); <http://www.newoxfordreview.org/article.jsp?did=0515-gallagher>.

The psychiatric profession recognizes a standard set of mental disorders which are classified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. The classification of these disorders changes from time to time, and so the manual has gone through five editions. The latest edition is American Psychiatric Association 2013 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* Fifth Edition (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Disorder. In view of this, it seems likely that Julia's other personality – that manifested itself with a low guttural voice accompanied by animal growls and sounds – was in fact a demonic spirit that had taken over her body, and could at will induce a trancelike state in which its evil, dark, and blasphemous character could emerge.

The cause of Julia's possession is quite clear – her frequent participation in Satanist practices and rituals over many years. Dr. Gallagher later revealed that she was a high priestess in a satanic cult.<sup>42</sup> Though these practices apparently gave her great psychic capacities, they opened her to possession by a strong demonic spirit which ultimately scared her into asking for an exorcism from the Catholic Church.

### III.B

#### The Case of Robbie Mannheim (1949)

This case of the possession and exorcism of a young man with the pseudonym “Robbie Mannheim” or “Roland Doe” took place in Georgetown University Hospital (first failed exorcism) and the Alexian Brothers Retreat House in St. Louis, Missouri (second series of exorcisms). The successful exorcism was performed by Fr. William Bowdern, S.J., (an associate pastor of College Church at St. Louis University) and was assisted by Fr. Raymond J. Bishop, S.J. (who kept an extensive diary), and a Jesuit seminarian Walter H. Halloran (who provided later testimony). This exorcism formed the basis for the well-known book and movie entitled *The Exorcist* (1973) by William Peter Blatty.

There are two primary sources for the facts surrounding the possession and second exorcism--a diary kept by Fr. Raymond J. Bishop, S.J., who was present at events after March 9, 1949<sup>43</sup> and an interview with former seminarian Walter H. Halloran, S.J., by Thomas B. Allen for his book *Possessed*—a much more accurate portrayal of the St. Louis exorcism than Blatty's fictionalized account.<sup>44</sup> Allen's account of both exorcisms is very well researched and documented, and those interested in a much more detailed account of them - than the very brief one given here - will want to read this volume. The updated edition of this book (2000) by iUniverse.com, Inc.) has the complete diary of Fr. Raymond Bishop of the second exorcism.<sup>45</sup>

There are two other primary sources for the possession and exorcism which are not available to the public:

1. Fr. William Bowdern's report to the provincial of the Missouri Province of the Jesuits (and to the Archdiocese of St. Louis).
2. Fr. Walter Halloran's witness report also given to the Missouri Jesuit Provincial and to the St. Louis Archdiocese.

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<sup>42</sup> See ‘Richard Gallagher 2015 “True & False Possessions, Revisited.”

<sup>43</sup> The entire diary is available online. See Raymond J. Bishop 1949 “Diary and Case Study of Robbie Mannheim” [http://archive.ksdk.com/assetpool/documents/121026010134\\_SLU-exorcism-case-study.pdf](http://archive.ksdk.com/assetpool/documents/121026010134_SLU-exorcism-case-study.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Thomas B. Allen 2000. *Possessed: The True Story of an Exorcism*. (Lincoln NE: iUniverse.com, Inc.)

<sup>45</sup> See Thomas Allen 2000, *Possessed* pp. 243-291. As noted above, this diary is available on the following URL: [http://archive.ksdk.com/assetpool/documents/121026010134\\_SLU-exorcism-case-study.pdf](http://archive.ksdk.com/assetpool/documents/121026010134_SLU-exorcism-case-study.pdf)

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These reports have been read by officials who indicated to Thomas Allen that they cited forty witnesses to the possession and second exorcism.<sup>46</sup> The diary itself which recounts events after March 9, 1949 mentions fourteen witnesses to them.<sup>47</sup>

Prior to March 9, 1949, there was a first exorcism performed on Robbie by Fr. E. Albert Hughes in Mt. Rainier, Maryland—which did not end successfully. There are three sources for this exorcism which Thomas Allen was able to procure and summarize:

1. An interview by Thomas Allen with Fr. Frank Bober who was told about the first exorcism by Fr. E. Albert Hughes.<sup>48</sup>
2. Notes taken by Fr. Reppetti (Georgetown University Archivist) of a lecture given by E. Albert Hughes at Georgetown University (in the Georgetown University Archives).<sup>49</sup>
3. An interview with Fr. John J. Nicola who had access to some of the secret archives, but was discreet about giving information on the Mannheim exorcism.<sup>50</sup>

There is an important secondary source concerned with distinguishing the paranormal and spiritual causes from the psychoanalytical and psychiatric causes of Robbie's behavior—Cooper's and Epperson's *Evil: Satan, Sin and Psychology*.<sup>51</sup>

The possession and exorcism of Robbie Mannheim is one of the most detailed accounts of a full possession available to the public. Though Richard Gallagher's account of Julia has the advantage of being witnessed by very credible psychiatrists and other scientific professionals, Gallagher's promise of confidentiality about Julia's case prevented him from relating the kinds of details explicitly mentioned in Fr. Bishop's diary and the other sources of Robbie's possession and two exorcisms, the latter of which included 30 recitations of the full Roman Ritual. There can be little doubt that the substantial paranormal and demonic phenomena—exhausting virtually every indicator of demonic possession mentioned in Section II above—indicates a demonic spiritual cause of Robbie's acute condition. The following brief summary will make this clear.

The description of the events surrounding Robbie Mannheim's possession may be divided into two parts:

1. The paranormal and demonic phenomena manifested before the beginning of the second series of exorcisms (March 16, 1949). These include events that took place in Robbie's home (Cottage City, Maryland), the first failed exorcism at Georgetown University Hospital by Fr. E. Alfred Hughes, the move to St. Louis, and the phenomena manifested in St. Louis at the homes of Robbie's Lutheran and Catholic relatives.
2. The series of 30 exorcisms beginning March 16, 1949 including events that took place at Robbie's relatives' home, the rectory at College Church at Saint Louis University, the

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas Allen 2000, *Possessed* p. 300

<sup>47</sup> See Ibid and also and Raymond J. Bishop "Diary and Case Study."

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Allen 2000, *Possessed* p. 302

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p. 309 and p. 309

<sup>50</sup> Ibid p. 302

<sup>51</sup> Terry Cooper and Cindy Epperson 2008. *Evil: Satan, Sin, and Psychology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press).

move back to Maryland, and the move to the Alexian brother's hospital in St. Louis where the exorcism was successfully completed.

Though most of the events described in Part One (leading up to the exorcisms starting on March 16, 1949) are described in pages 1-7 of Fr. Bishop's diary, I have relied heavily on Thomas Allen's book *Possessed* which fills out the details of these events with material he gleaned from four additional sources mentioned above. The material from Part Two (the exorcisms after March 16, 1949) is taken mostly from the diary kept by Fr. Bishop (pp. 7-29). It should be noted that though Fr. Bishop was the author of the diary, he referred to himself in the third person throughout it.

### III.B.1

#### **Paranormal and Demonic Phenomena Manifested in and around Robbie Mannheim prior to March 16, 1949**

Robbie Mannheim (a pseudonym), born June 1, 1935, was the only child of a Lutheran couple residing in Cottage City, Maryland.<sup>52</sup> Robbie grew close to his Aunt Harriet who was a spiritualist, and regularly tried to make contact with the dead through a ouija board and other occult means. Since Robbie was an only child who was not inclined toward sports and other activities outside the home, he associated regularly with his aunt who taught him how to use the ouija board during her frequent visits to the home. Robbie became proficient at using the ouija board and began to make contact with spirits on his own.

The ouija board is an occult tool used to communicate with spirits of the dead, but also can mediate demonic spirits. The objective of the people using the board is to make themselves mediums of these spirits, who would then enter the consciousness and body of the participants who placed their fingers on the board. The board has the letters of the alphabet, the numerals 0-9, and the words "yes" and "no" on it, and the movement of a planchette spells words and responses to questions asked of the spirits conjured in the game.<sup>53</sup>

Though this may seem to be a harmless child's game, it is not. In order to play the game, one must actively conjure spirits whose identities may be supposed, but are really unknown to the participants. Moreover, one must open oneself to being a medium for the spirits – which is an invitation to an elementary form of possession! Even if people use the ouija board as if they are playing a game – not even certain about the reality of spirits – they still open themselves up to this form of temporary possession – which could become, as we shall see, far worse.

There is good reason why the Bible prohibits the use of mediums, séances, and other means of conjuring spirits – if you want to make use of occult powers, you must also subject yourself to them! The Book of Deuteronomy makes this absolute prohibition clear:

Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in

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<sup>52</sup> Thomas Allen 2000, *Possessed*, p. 9

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.

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witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD (Deut 18:9-12).<sup>54</sup>

This prohibition is presumed by Jesus and the Apostolic Church. (See above Chapter Two).

Countless numbers of house infestations, oppressions, and even rare cases of possession have begun by making recourse to these seemingly harmless unseen spiritual powers through occult means like the ouija board, and in today's world "the game "Charlie, Charlie."<sup>55</sup> These games are not to be trifled with. Subjugation to dark or evil powers is not only dangerous to the individuals opening themselves to such powers, but also the family, household, and friends of those individuals. Furthermore, it is an endangerment to one's eternal salvation – and may even entail pledging allegiance to the dark lord – Satan himself. All forms of mediumship should be avoided – no matter how "harmless" their proponents make these practices seem. The proponents of them have already, wittingly or unwittingly, subjected themselves to the power of unknown spirits who can be deceitful and incredibly evil.

The consequences of Robbie's and his Aunt Harriet's use of the ouija board were worse than anyone could have imagined. They had released the power of an evil spirit within Robbie's house. On January 15, 1949 (when Robbie was 13 years old), paranormal activity began to manifest itself in the Mannheim household. Dripping sounds could be heard without any known source. Scratching and tapping beneath the floorboards led Robbie's father to believe that there were rats in the house – yet none could be found. A picture of Jesus on the wall started shaking – almost as if it the wall behind it were being pounded from the back causing it to jump off the wall. The family was perplexed and was becoming alarmed.<sup>56</sup>

On January 26th, 1949, Aunt Harriet died, devastating Robbie. In order to make contact with her, he used his ouija board, which caused the poltergeist activity to intensify. It also seems to have led to the spirit (or spirits) initial invasion of Robbie's body. First, squeaky shoes could be heard walking and marching next to his bed, the furniture began moving on its own, then a Bible, a pear, and an orange flew through the air. One day in the midst of friends, Robbie's heavy living room chair rolled up on one side and tipped over causing Robbie to fall out of it tumbling onto the floor. All the adults tried to imitate this but could not – and then a vase levitated – moved across the room and shattered against the wall.<sup>57</sup>

These phenomena were not limited to the Mannheim household. The spirit seemed to follow Robbie to school and elsewhere. Several times, Robbie's desk would "lurch into the aisle and begin skittering about, banging into other desks and causing schoolroom uproar."<sup>58</sup> Once when the family took a day off to visit with friends away from the infested home – the spirit again followed Robbie. During a conversation in the living room with family and friends, his rocking chair began to spin around like a top -- with his legs in the air – not propelled by any

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<sup>54</sup> See also the prohibition in Leviticus: "Don't dabble in the occult or traffic with mediums; you'll pollute your souls. I am God, your God" (Lev 19:31).

<sup>55</sup> See Matt Baglio 2009 *The Rite* pp. 15-16 and 59-60. See also Cristiani 1961 *Evidence of Satan* pp. 182-183.

<sup>56</sup> See Thomas Allen 2000, *Possessed* pp. 11-15.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p. 18.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

known physical force.<sup>59</sup> All these incidents – including the shaking and moving of Robbie’s bed – caused his parents to consult their Lutheran minister, then a pediatrician, and then a psychiatrist at the University of Maryland. Though their minister thought that something was highly unusual, he had difficulty believing that it could be a demonic spirit. The pediatrician and psychologist did not see the phenomena for themselves – and flat out disbelieved any of the reports from Robbie and his parents. The psychiatrist declared Robbie to be “normal.”<sup>60</sup>

The spirit then began to invade Robbie himself. At first it would cause his bed to shake, his dresser to move across the room with all the drawers moving in and out. Robbie would go into a trance and be cursing his parents and grandmother with incredible profanity – words they were sure he did not even know.<sup>61</sup> Scratches began to appear on Robbie’s body on his arms, legs, and chest – at first long scratches, but eventually, they began to spell out coherent words, like “hell.”

Finally out of desperation, Robbie’s parents appealed once again to their minister, Rev Luther Schulze, who decided he could help Robbie by inviting him into his house. This would enable him to see the phenomena for himself, and to determine what kind of treatment might help the disturbed boy. He slept in another bed next to Robbie’s in a guest room, and soon Robbie’s bed began to shake; so Schulze got up and offered Robbie a cup of cocoa, after which they returned to the room. Schulze had Robbie sit in a heavy chair instead of lying in bed, but the chair also began to shake, then move across the floor to the wall, and then topple over – throwing Robbie out of the chair onto the floor. Schulze tried to imitate the feat, but because of the chair’s weight and low center of gravity, was unable to do so. He then decided that Robbie should sleep on the floor on some blankets between the beds. At 3 in the morning the blankets with Robbie on them – as one unit – began to glide across the floor. When the minister shouted, “Stop that,” Robbie and the blankets moved under the bed, and then began to move up and down, propelling Robbie’s head into the springs under the bed, causing him to be cut. At this juncture, Schulze began to think that Robbie’s behavior was not nearly psychokinetic, but perhaps demonic possession.<sup>62</sup>

Schulze had no acquaintance with demonic possession, and could only think of one church where Robbie might be able to get some relief – if indeed a demon was really present. He told Robbie’s parents, “You have to see a Catholic priest. The Catholics know about things like this.”<sup>63</sup> In late February, Robbie’s father called St. James Parish in Mount Rainier Maryland (a short distance from Washington, D.C.), and spoke with Fr. E. Albert Hughes, a young inexperienced priest who had little knowledge of possession and exorcism. Robbie’s father asked Hughes if he, Robbie, and his mother could come to the rectory as Protestants -- and Hughes agreed to see them. According to Hughes, during the meeting, the room turned cold, Robbie began to curse him, and the phone on Hughes’ desk, began to move. Hughes gave a bottle of holy water and two blessed candles to the Mannheim’s to take home with them for blessing and

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p. 18

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. pp. 21-22.

<sup>62</sup> See Ibid. pp. 28-29.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 30/

protection.<sup>64</sup> When the Mannheims returned home, Robbie's mother sprinkled the house with holy water, and then lit one of the candles – at which point the flame shot up nearly hitting the ceiling, causing her to extinguish it before it set the house on fire. During the night, the holy water bottle was picked up, moved across the room, and smashed into the wall. Robbie's mother called Fr. Hughes, and while on the phone with him, the table under the phone lifted off the ground and smashed into a hundred pieces – at which point Father Hughes decided to come to the Mannheim home to see the phenomena for himself.<sup>65</sup>

Hughes visited the house, and according to one of his accounts, Robbie spoke fluent Latin to him (a language with which Robbie was not familiar) saying, “O sacerdos Christi, tu scis me ess diabolum. Cur me derogas?” – “O priest of Christ, you know that I am the devil. Why do you keep bothering me?”<sup>66</sup> As a result, Hughes decided to ask Archbishop O’Boyle for permission to do an exorcism on Robbie.

O’Boyle granted permission to Hughes to do the exorcism, asking him to keep the details secret. Though Hughes had very little knowledge of exorcism, he decided that it had to be done in a hospital where Robbie was under restraints. In March of 1949, he and the Mannheim family entered Georgetown University Hospital where Robbie was placed in a special room in a bed with restraints. As Hughes began the exorcism, the bed moved across the room on its own and slammed into the wall – in full view of the nuns who were present, and scratchings began to appear on Robbie's body and he began to curse Hughes. Hughes, kneeling down by the side of the bed, did not notice that Robbie had slipped one of his hands outside of the restraints down the side of the bed and unhinged a piece of the spring supporting the bed. As Hughes continued to pray, Robbie took the spring and slashed Hughes's arm from shoulder to wrist – his blood saturated the cassock and surplus.

Hughes discontinued the exorcism and required 140 stitches to close the wound in his arm. He suffered a breakdown, but then resumed pastoral duties – never fully regaining use of his arm.<sup>67</sup> Robbie's first exorcism had ended disastrously.

When the Mannheim's went back to their home, rumors abounded about Robbie – and the extraordinary phenomena at the house became well-known, scaring the neighbors. Robbie's mother who was from St. Louis, considered moving there to get away from the neighbors and to look into another course of action. Soon after, Robbie screamed out from his bedroom, and when they rushed in, they saw the word “Louis” scratched into his chest. So the Mannheims left Maryland and went to St. Louis.<sup>68</sup>

While in St. Louis, the Mannheims stayed at the home of Lutheran relatives who decided – along with the consent and participation of their Lutheran minister – to help Robbie by using a ouija board to connect with Aunt Harriet! They received the message that Aunt Harriet was present in Robbie and the home. This confirmation was followed by more shaking of the bed,

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<sup>64</sup> See Ibid. pp. 34-35.

<sup>65</sup> See Ibid. pp. 35-36.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p. 35.

<sup>67</sup> See Ibid. pp. 42-43.

<sup>68</sup> See Ibid. p. 45.



loud rapping's, and violent disturbances to confirm Aunt Harriet's presence. These were witnessed by the Mannheim's relatives.

It should be noted here that evil spirits – particularly Satan, the head of all evil spirits – are deceivers. The idea that the family could make recourse to a ouija board (an occult practice open to the intervention of evil spirits) to find the truth could not possibly be more absurd. If it would behoove evil spirits to identify themselves falsely as Aunt Harriet, they would not hesitate to do so. Furthermore, the idea that one could appeal to the spirits tormenting Robbie to make a confirmation of “the truth” they found by using the ouija board doubles the absurdity. If evil spirits are willing to deceive the first time, then they are willing to deceive a second time. In any case, it seems that the Lutheran minister who participated in these activities became scared, and surmised that he had taken the wrong path to finding “the truth.” At that juncture, he recommended that the family see a Catholic priest.

The Mannheims then moved to the home of their Catholic relatives on March 8, 1949. While there, Robbie experienced some temporary peace which caused his mother to think that the affair might be over. She discussed with her relatives the possibility of sending Robbie back to school. Immediately after which Robbie screamed out in pain, and showed them his chest which had the words scratched into it, “No school.” That evening the Mannheims decided to put Robbie in a room with his cousin Marty (who was about the same age) because they got along so well. During the night, scratching noises could be heard in the mattress and throughout the room. The mattress began to flop violently with both boys lying on it in a trance. This convinced the Mannheims that a priest should be consulted.<sup>69</sup>

Robbie had an older cousin, Elizabeth who was attending St. Louis University – a Jesuit university. She contacted her professor, Fr. Raymond Bishop (who kept the diary throughout the second set of 30 exorcisms) to talk about Robbie's condition. Bishop was the head of the Department of Education at St. Louis University, and a very logical, scientific, yet spiritually sensitive man. He heard Elizabeth's story, and suspected demonic possession – though he wanted to verify it. He consulted broadly with the Jesuit community who had several resources, and then questioned the Mannheim family about all of the incidents that occurred prior to contacting him. He asked about the number of witnesses for each of the paranormal events which he indicated totaled 14 witnesses.<sup>70</sup>

Bishop then went to the Mannheim house to interview Robbie. During the interview Robbie seemed to be normal, and Bishop blessed all the rooms in the house, giving a special blessing to the room in which Robbie was staying. Robbie went to bed, and Bishop went down to consult with his parents. As he was about to leave, Robbie screamed, and he went back upstairs with the family members to see Robbie's mattress moving – and scratches welling up from underneath his skin. At this juncture, he had seen for himself that Robbie's parents' account of the paranormal and demonic happenings were true.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> See Ibid. pp. 48-50.

<sup>70</sup> See Ibid. pp.55-59.

<sup>71</sup> See Ibid. pp. 60-61.

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Fr. Bishop then enlisted the support of Fr. Bowdern (described below), and on March 11, 1949, Bowdern accompanied Bishop to the house to do a special blessing of Robbie with some relics from the College Church. Bowdern then became a witness to the paranormal phenomena. A relic of St. Margaret Mary was launched from Robbie's pillow into a mirror in the room, scratches of a cross appeared on Robbie's arm, violent shaking of the mattress without any physical cause, a bookcase (weighing approximately 50 pounds) was turned around and moved into the entrance of Robbie's room, a bottle of St. Ignatius holy water was thrown from a table two feet from Robbie's room. At this point Fr. Bowdern was convinced – some kind of evil spiritual power was working in and around Robbie.<sup>72</sup>

On Saturday, March 12, Frs. Bishop and Bowdern returned at 11:45 p.m. to the house. While there, the bookcase moved from the wall in an arc of about 5 ft. toward the side of Robbie's bed. The priests stayed praying the rosary until 3:00 a.m. Between March 12th and March 16th events at the house were relatively calm with intermittent movement of the stool in Robbie's room, launching of the relic of St. Margaret Mary, shaking of the bed, and some other usual phenomenon.

The fathers of the Jesuit community believed they were morally responsible for helping Robbie, and so petitioned Archbishop Ritter for permission to begin an exorcism. Ritter granted the permission on March 15, 1949, selecting Fr. William Bowdern to be the exorcist, because Bowdern seemed to be a very well-grounded, spiritual man. Prior to becoming pastor of St. Louis University's College Church, Bowdern had been principal of 3 Jesuit high schools, and was a remarkably strong, pastorally sensitive man. Fr. Bowdern was to be assisted by Fr. Raymond Bishop, Mr. Walter Halloran (a seminarian), and Fr. William Van Roo. Other Jesuits assisted Bowdern intermittently throughout the 30 exorcisms that concluded on April 18th, 1949 around 10:45 p.m.<sup>73</sup>

### III.B.2

#### The 30 Exorcisms of Robbie Mannheim Commencing March 16, 1949

The following details of the exorcisms of Robbie Mannheim beginning at the home of his relatives in St. Louis, Missouri, are taken directly from the diary of Fr. Raymond Bishop – now available in the second edition of Thomas Allen's *Possessed* and also online at KSDK.com (broadcasting station NBC affiliate).<sup>74</sup> I reference Thomas Allen occasionally when he presents material from sources other than the diary. Since much of the diary is repetitive, I summarized the events taking place in the four settings where the exorcism took place:

1. Robbie's relatives' home in St. Louis.
2. The rectory of College Church at St. Louis University.
3. The rectory at Cottage City, Maryland (when Robbie and his family returned there temporarily), and

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<sup>72</sup> Raymond Bishop 1949 "Diary and Case Study of Robbie Manheim"

[http://archive.ksdk.com/assetpool/documents/121026010134\\_SLU-exorcism-case-study.pdf](http://archive.ksdk.com/assetpool/documents/121026010134_SLU-exorcism-case-study.pdf) p. 6.

<sup>73</sup> See Thomas Allen 2000 *Possessed*, pp. 58-63.

<sup>74</sup> See Thomas Allen 2000, *Possessed* pp. 243-291. As noted above, this diary is available on the following URL: [http://archive.ksdk.com/assetpool/documents/121026010134\\_SLU-exorcism-case-study.pdf](http://archive.ksdk.com/assetpool/documents/121026010134_SLU-exorcism-case-study.pdf)

4. The fifth floor of the Alexian Brothers Hospital in St. Louis.

**Robbie's relatives' home in St. Louis (commencing March 16, 1949)**

The exorcism began at 10:45 p.m. with Frs. Bowdern and Bishop and Mr. Halloran. Almost immediately paranormal activity began. Mr. Halloran, S.J., described it as follows:

The first night I was there I was kneeling at the bed on which the boy was lying and the bed started going up and down [eight inches] and then I just about got hit with a holy water bottle that was sitting on the dresser and came flying across the room and just missed me by an inch or two.<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, Fr. Bowdern helped Robbie examine his conscience and make an act of contrition. Other family members came up and made acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition. When Fr. Bowdern spoke the first Praecipio (command or order to the demon to identify himself), there was immediate action. Scratch lines started forming all over Robbie's body – arms, legs, and chest – and then a red figure of the devil with arms stretched above his head and webbed like a bat. The word “hell” emerged on Robbie's chest, and everyone agreed that the figure of the devil and the word “hell” could be no other word or figure. These scratch marks and brands hurt Robbie and were obviously not caused by him (he was in full view of the exorcists and the family). By the time he fell asleep, more than 25 different marks were made on his body, including the word “GO” above his groin.<sup>76</sup>

As the prayers continued, Robbie alternated between a state of fighting and wrestling (which he indicated was a fight with a large red demon who was holding him in a pit) and then breaking into song in a very high pitched voice when he seemed to relax. He alternated back and forth until he finally fell asleep. Over the next three days, Robbie went into combat with the devil. It took several men to hold him down. The liberal use of holy water and the presence of the Blessed Sacrament subdued the dark power within him. On Friday, March 18th, Robbie stood up in bed and seemed to be lifting the darkness out of himself. He claimed that a dark cloud was leaving him – and in the cloud there was a black hooded figure and other smaller demons. At one point he declared that the demon had left him. He was his old self again – put on his bathrobe, spoke with the priests, and thanked them as they left. It was about 1:30 a.m.

About 2:00 a.m., after the priests had left, Robbie began to scream out that the demons were coming back. The priests returned to the house about 3:00 a.m. and resumed the rite of exorcism.

Events proceeded along the same line for the next few days. Every time the prayers of exorcism started, Robbie became exceedingly animated. As time progressed, he began to show real animosity toward the exorcists – screaming every imaginable obscenity at them. He would also break into song showing a proficiency and knowledge of music that he did not have. In fact, Robbie was incapable of holding a tune, but he would sing the melody of the Blue Danube

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<sup>75</sup> Michael Brown “An Interview With the Priest Involved in the Case Behind *The Exorcist*” *Spirit Daily* <http://www.spiritdaily.net/Halloran.htm>

<sup>76</sup> See Raymond Bishop 1949 “Diary and Case Study of Robbie Mannheim” pp. 7-8.

waltz and other classics perfectly. When awake, and out of his trance, he had no knowledge of the songs he was singing.<sup>77</sup>

### **The rectory of College Church at St. Louis University (Wed. March 23, 1949)**

Since the health of Robbie's mother was being affected, Fr. Bowdern decided to move the exorcism into the Rectory of College Church (at St. Louis University). As the exorcism continued, Robbie's violence increased significantly. He broke Mr. Halloran's nose, and gave Father Van Roo a bloody nose. His language became more foul and more deviantly sexual. He claimed to see some of the priests in hell (8 years from the time of the exorcism), barked and howled like a dog, then began to sing, and then curse the exorcists. He would tear off his clothes and make obscene gestures – and then break into very uncharacteristic sarcastic expressions – “You like to stay with me. Well, I like it too.”<sup>78</sup>

After five days, Robbie was moved back to the relatives' house. Again Robbie would go into trances, tantrums, vulgarity, and snide remarks. Nevertheless, when he was out of his trances, Fr. McMahon was giving him instruction in Catholic faith (since March 23rd). Robbie seemed to be accepting this, but when the Exorcism Rite began, he would go into his rages and obscenities.

Robbie began a curious new practice when he was in his trances. He would be reading from something like a blackboard which responded to information asked by the priests at earlier moments. He indicated that he would leave (the devil) in ten days and that his name was Satan himself. He also made threats concerning his salvation and that of the priests.<sup>79</sup>

Robbie asked to be baptized Catholic (when he was not in his trance), and his parents decided to let him be baptized in the religion of his choice. As he was being driven by his relatives to College Church—where he was to be baptized and receive Holy Communion—Robbie fell into a trance and became unmanageable. He started by saying, “So, you are going to baptize me! Ha! Ha!—And you think you will drive me out with Holy Communion! Ha! Ha!” At this point Robbie's behavior became quite violent. He had to be held down by two men in the back seat, while his aunt drove. At one point, he leaped up and seized his aunt who was driving. The struggle persisted so that it was impossible to bring him into the Church. It was decided to bring him to the third floor of the rectory. He resisted so violently that the men were almost unable to get him there.

The Baptism was not an easy matter. Every time Robbie was asked to say the Creed, he would go into a trance. Fr. Bowdern found a short form of the Creed and Robbie was able to say this at one point when he remained normal. When he was asked to renounce Satan, he would go into a trance. Finally, Fr. Bowdern found an opening of normalcy to which Robbie stated, “I do renounce him.” Prior to the Baptism proper, Robbie erupted with the greatest violence ever. Every time Bowdern began the Rite—“Ego te baptizo in nomine Patris” -- Robbie would fall into a trance, but eventually Fr. Bowdern was able to accomplish it.

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<sup>77</sup> See Ibid. pp. 9-13.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>79</sup> See Ibid. pp. 15-16

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The priests resumed the Rite of Exorcism to which Robbie responded with his usual violent rages and cursing.

On April 2nd, Robbie exhibited enough normalcy to go through a conditional confession after which the priests decided to give him his first Holy Communion. A particle of the host was placed on his tongue but he spat it out five times, over two hours. Finally they decided to pray a rosary to Our Lady of Fatima, after which Robbie finally swallowed the particle of Holy Communion.<sup>80</sup>

Fr. Bowdern was now joined by Fr. O’Flaherty—and they drove Robbie back to his relatives’ home. Though there were three men in the back with Robbie, he was in a state of rage and fighting throughout the trip. Once home, Robbie came downstairs and when asked to return to his room rushed toward the cross and reliquary to do damage to them, but Fr. O’Flaherty caught him in time. The violence began again, and Robbie fell into a trance. Fr. Bowdern asked in Latin “Dicas mihi nomen tuum, et horam exitus tui finalis.” [“Tell me your name and the hour you will finally exit.”] Robbie seemed to understand the Latin, and each time he was asked, he responded with a curse, “No!” or by a laugh of ridicule.<sup>81</sup> Eventually, the word “GO” appeared above Robbie’s groin as it did on the first night of the exorcism. Then as Fr. Bowdern persisted “Tell me the time of your exit,” three parallel scratches appeared on Robbie’s right thigh, and then the words “at horam” [“at the hour”] and then an “X” was branded.

The next day, Robbie had some intermittent moments of peace, but when he fell into a trance, his violent tantrums and cursing would continue – with attempts to destroy religious objects, the light in the room, etc. Since Robbie’s father had missed so much work and the strain on Robbie’s St. Louis relatives was becoming arduous, it was decided that the family would return to Maryland – along with Frs. Bowdern and Van Roo to continue the rite of exorcism there. Fr. Bishop made special note of the nine Jesuits who were official witnesses to paranormal activity and Robbie’s possession: Rev George Bischofberger, Rev Raymond J. Bishop, Rev Joseph Boland, Rev William S. Bowdern, Rev Edmund Burke, Rev John O’Flaherty, Rev William Van Roo, Mr. Walter Halloran, and Brother Albert Schell.

### **The rectory at Cottage City, Maryland (April 4, 1949)**

Robbie was normal on the train going to Maryland. When the group arrived, Fr. Bowdern contacted Fr. E. Albert Hughes (a priest who started to perform the failed first exorcism). He was willing to help Frs. Bowdern and Van Roo, but could not offer a place at St. James Church for the exorcism due to lack of space. Fr. Bowdern did not want to return to Robbie’s home, and so contacted several hospitals, churches, and health institutes, but no one was willing to accept him given the extenuating circumstances of the exorcism so Robbie remained home.

After two days of relative peace, Robbie fell into a 5-hour trance on April 7th, 1949. 20 scratch marks and branding appeared all over Robbie’s body – the number “4,” a pitch fork,

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<sup>80</sup> See Ibid. pp. 17-18.

<sup>81</sup> See Ibid. p. 18.

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four scratch marks, and claw marks appeared on his belly and legs. Robbie went into violent tantrums with cursing, filthy talk about priests and nuns, and then would break into singing the “Ave Maria” – as if two personalities were fighting within him. This continued on the evening of April 8th, 1949.

Father Bowdern and others decided to return to St. Louis because the Alexian Brothers had graciously offered a place on the fifth floor of their hospital where the exorcism could proceed. There were accommodations for violent psychiatric patients in case Robbie should need them.

### **The Alexian Brothers Hospital (April 9, 1949)**

The train ride from Maryland to St. Louis was quite peaceful, and so also was the check in to the Alexian Brothers Hospital. Robbie was at peace throughout the remainder of April 9th and 10th. On the evening of April 10th, Robbie received Holy Communion and sank back into his pillow in a state of peace. Robbie remained at peace throughout the day of April 11th, but at about 9:00 p.m. he felt a sting on his chest. This was followed by a much sharper pain and a branding on Robbie’s chest spelling the word “EXIT.” The word “EXIT” reappeared three different times on Robbie’s body with an arrow pointing toward his groin. Robbie cried suffering from very painful urination, and severe pain in his kidneys.

At around midnight, the priests prepared Robbie to receive Holy Communion, but immediately Robbie resisted and the word “HELL” appeared on his chest and thigh. When the priest tried to give Robbie a particle of Holy Communion, he was taken off into a trance and the voice Satan said that he would not allow Robbie to receive it. The priest then tried to administer a spiritual communion (where a person who cannot receive the Holy Eucharist says, “Lord, I wish to receive you in Holy Communion”), but every time Robbie came to the word “Communion,” he was stopped short, and could not pronounce it. This led to more violent thrashing, cursing, and foul language throughout the whole night. Robbie would wake to relatively peaceful mornings, but launched into his barking, swearing, spitting, thrashing, and foul language in the evening. This continued for two days with the voice of Satan saying, “I will not let him receive Holy Communion.”

These events led to Holy Week (Holy Thursday, April 14th through Holy Saturday, April 16th). Robbie was quite peaceful during these days, received Holy Communion, and was able to watch the Easter Services on the Catholic television channel.<sup>82</sup>

On Easter Sunday (April 17th), events took a turn for the worse. When the hospital Chaplain came to give Robbie Holy Communion, he would not receive it. He then leaped out of bed, grabbed one of the Alexian brother’s breviary and scapular (a monastic garment symbolizing the pledge to Christian life), and proceeded to trample the scapular underfoot in an Indian war dance. In the evening, Robbie again went into a trance and began to fight viciously. The devil tried to assert his power by showing he could make Robbie say various things. After the prayers of exorcism Robbie calmed down and the Fathers left.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> See Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>83</sup> See Ibid. p. 26.

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Easter Monday was to be the final day of Robbie's possession – his liberation from the demons who had occupied his body. When Robbie awoke, he was in a fighting mood. He would not receive communion – not even spiritual communion. Satan spoke from within him saying that Robbie would have to receive communion 9 times before he would leave, but he (Satan) would never allow him to do it – and would never allow Robbie to say the word, “communion” (for spiritual communion). Robbie then leaped out of bed, threw a bottle of Holy Water at the wall, threw a plate of chipped beef and other objects at the brothers, and taunted the Alexian brothers.

Father Bowdern, Father Bishop, and Father O'Flaherty came in the evening and made some adjustments to the rite of exorcism. He decided to ask for the responses to be in English, and put a crucifix in Robbie's hands. As the exorcism proceeded, something very different began to happen. First, when Robbie came out of his trance states, he would revert immediately to prayer – and would recite the words “for spiritual communion” on his own. When he was forced back into a trance, he reported seeing light – as if at the end of a tunnel – as he went into the trance. With each later trance, Robbie reported seeing more light – and he became more reverent when he came out of the trance.

At 10:45 p.m., something truly extraordinary occurred. Robbie went into another seizure but remained calm. Fr. Bishop reported the following:

In clear commanding tones, and with dignity, a voice broke into the prayers. The following is an accurate quotation: ‘Satan! Satan! I am Saint Michael, and I command you, Satan, and the other evil spirits to leave the body in the name of Dominus, immediately. – Now! NOW! N O W!’ Then there were the most violent contortions of the entire period of exorcism, that is since March 16. Perhaps this was the fight to the finish.<sup>84</sup>

In an interview with Father Walter Halloran (the Jesuit seminarian present at the exorcism), the exit of the demon was quite forceful:

I was taken off five days before the conclusion, but from what I understand there was a very loud sound, a boom – sort of like a sonic boom – and then the boy opened his eyes and said St. Michael came and that it was over. At the same time this took place there were about six or seven priests over in the college church saying their office and there was a huge boom over there and the whole church was completely lit up. Father Bowdern, who was doing the exorcism, and the boy were at the rectory. There was a very, very bright light that lit up the whole church.<sup>85</sup>

The following day Robbie was perfectly normal. He participated in mass for the first time since his possession (and also his conversion), received Holy Communion, and prayed ten

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p. 28.

<sup>85</sup> Michael Brown “An Interview with the Priest Involved in the Case Behind *The Exorcist*” *Spirit Daily*.  
<http://www.spiritdaily.net/Halloran.htm>

rosaries in thanksgiving for his liberation from the devil. Several checks have been made by staff members of the exorcists, as well as Thomas Allen, who discovered that Robbie has grown up to be a very healthy, responsible family man. He has no recollection of anything that happened to him from January 15, 1949, to April 18th, 1949.

### III.B.3

#### A Psychiatric Assessment of the Facts behind the Robbie Mannheim Case

Terry Cooper, Ph.D., a psychologist with doctorates from Vanderbilt University and Saint Louis University, and Cindy Epperson, a doctoral fellow at the University of Missouri, have done a thorough psychological review of the facts behind the Robbie Mannheim case, and concluded that they cannot be explained by psychological interpretation alone.<sup>86</sup> Aside from the large number of paranormal activities – ranging from levitation, dozens of cases of psychokinesis, the hundreds of scratches and brandings on Robbie’s body, and Robbie’s awareness of Latin – which have no known physical cause, Robbie’s behavior does not fit any known psychological disorder. Several psychological explanations have been offered, but Cooper and Epperson rule them out for a variety of reasons.

The first psychological explanation offered is Dissociative Identity Disorder (Multiple Personality Disorder) where an individual splits into several different personalities in order to cope with a traumatic experience.<sup>87</sup> Cooper and Epperson discount this explanation for three reasons:

1. The manifestation of Robbie’s second satanic personality completely disappeared when the exorcism was complete. This does not occur in MPD where the only solution appears to be long and tedious therapy to reintegrate the personality and cope with the trauma.<sup>88</sup>
2. MPD is linked to ongoing abuse during childhood. Investigation into Robbie’s background indicates no such abuse.<sup>89</sup>
3. Prior to the possession beginning on January 16th, 1949, there was no evidence of other personalities manifest in Robbie’s life – which would have been expected if he had MPD.<sup>90</sup>

Another psychological explanation offered for Robbie’s behavior is schizophrenia. As Cooper and Epperson indicate, schizophrenia is more of a shattered personality – instead of a split one. This shattering causes hallucinations, delusions, and other kinds of psychotic behavior. It is now thought to be a brain disorder which can be resolved by antipsychotic medication.<sup>91</sup> The important point, say Cooper and Epperson, is that schizophrenia cannot be resolved without antipsychotic medication – therapy alone will not resolve the disorder.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Terry Cooper and Cindy Epperson 2008 *Evil: Satan, Sin, and Psychology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press).

<sup>87</sup> Cooper and Epperson 2008, *Evil: Satan, Sin, and Psychology* p. 28.

<sup>88</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> See Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>91</sup> See Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> See Ibid.



There are 3 problems with diagnosing Robbie as a schizophrenic:

1. Robbie was 13 years old – too young for the onset of schizophrenia (which occurs between 17 and 25).
2. When Robbie was not in a trance state, he remained coherent, indicating that he did not have a break with reality (which occurs during schizophrenia).
3. Robbie was completely cured on April 18th, 1949 (after the exorcism) without antipsychotic drugs and/or psychotherapy.<sup>93</sup>

A third psychological explanation suggested to describe Robbie's behavior is Tourette's syndrome – a psychological disorder in which a person manifests a tic as well as outbursts, cursing, and other inappropriate expressions. This explanation is also inadequate for two reasons:

1. Though Tourette's can explain Robbie's cursing and blasphemous outbursts, it cannot explain the violent rages, the repulsion to holy water and sacred objects, and the harmful acts done to Fr. E. Albert Hughes, the Alexian brother, Mr. Walter Halloran, etc. Furthermore, it cannot explain the paranormal activity mentioned above.
2. Tourette's syndrome does not simply go away – it is treated with counselling and medication.<sup>94</sup>

A fourth psychological explanation for Robbie's behavior is sexual abuse by Robbie's Aunt Harriett. Aside from the fact that there is no evidence for this, Cooper and Epperson note, "Sexual abuse is unfortunately quite common in our society. How often do we see symptoms such as the ones displayed by Robbie?"<sup>95</sup>

A fifth psychological explanation for Robbie's behavior is group hysteria, but as Cooper and Epperson note, there were 48 witnesses to the paranormal activity and violent rages of Robbie who were spread out in many places in Maryland and St. Louis. Were all of these groups collectively hysterical?<sup>96</sup>

Other suggestions have been bipolar disorder and substance abuse disorder, but these suggestions do not describe Robbie's behaviors or frame of mind. In view of all this, it seems highly unlikely that Robbie's behavior – and the paranormal activity accompanying it, can be explained by psychological or psychiatric paradigms. In view of the paranormal activity and the evil manifest by the second personality, there is need to make recourse to a transphysical and trans-psychological explanation such as an evil spirit or an evil demon.

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<sup>93</sup> See Ibid. pp 29-30.

<sup>94</sup> See Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>96</sup> See Ibid. p. 31.

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Craig Isaacs has provided a general set of norms to distinguish psychologically explicable phenomena from phenomena requiring a transphysical and trans-psychological explanation (i.e. a spiritual explanation).<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Craig Isaacs 2009 *Revelations and Possession: Distinguishing Spiritual From Psychological Experiences* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing).