

STATEMENT ON LAY DELIVERANCE MINISTRY

Lay deliverance ministry has a time-honored place in Catholic tradition. Many non-ordained saints and holy men and women have been anointed to set captives free from the devil's influence. Today we see that the Lord is again raising up men and women anointed for deliverance, because it is greatly needed in this time of intense spiritual conflict.

Every human struggles with temptation and with the results of wounding, neglect, or sin. Yet these obstacles to growth in holiness and union with God often lie deep under layers of deception that deliverance ministry can uncover and oppose. The help of a person trained in a safe, non-confrontational model of deliverance ministry can provide valuable assistance to souls seeking deeper conversion.

In particular, greater self-awareness and greater awareness of spiritual battle can help souls to identify underlying thought patterns and automatic reactions that feed sin patterns. This understanding can take confession to a new level, beyond the "bad fruit"—the obvious sin—to the roots of the sin, exposing them ultimately to the light of healing offered in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Additionally, in solid deliverance ministry, the person receiving prayer is led to honestly acknowledge personal choices that contribute to his bondage, things that he may not have considered sins: unforgiveness, self-justification, blame, agreement with lies, for example. These often block true and lasting repentance.

Deliverance is never a substitute for the Sacrament of Reconciliation; rather, it enriches a person's authentic participation in the sacrament and gives him additional artillery in his daily fight for virtue.

Faithful Catholics understand that any effective lay ministry must stand in proper relationship to church authority, must operate in the context of sacraments, and must act in accord with church teaching. When these things are in place, deliverance ministry can be a powerful tool that helps people overcome barriers that block the fruitfulness of graces showered on them by the Lord.

Clearly, for a Catholic ministry to flourish, its leaders must follow the instruction of the local bishop. Some bishops reserve the right to take authority over the enemy on behalf of another to priests, while others encourage the development of trustworthy lay deliverance ministries. In situations where the bishop does not allow lay people to speak with authority on behalf of another person, then the process of ministry is adjusted so that the person receiving prayer will speak the word of command after closing doors to the enemy's work through repentance, faith, forgiveness, and renunciation. Scripture is clear that every believer receives power over the enemy as part of his new identity as a child of God and disciple of Jesus—thus, any baptized Catholic can take authority in Jesus' name over his own life and situation.

Deliverance ministry should never be confused with exorcism, which is a rite of the Catholic church that sets people free from possession, i.e., from an extreme degree of bondage, at least for periods of time. In contrast, deliverance ministers stand alongside a person exercising his free will to choose against Satan's work in his life, recognizable in particular areas of struggle and oppression. The minister adds his faith to the faith of the person, and, together, they claim the freedom that the Father intends for his children.

Finally, deliverance ministry may properly be considered a ministry of healing . . . but spiritual healing, not physical or psychological. However since human beings are intricately woven together—mind, body, and spirit—deliverance are often brings about a simultaneous blessing of physical and/or emotional healing.

In fact, since the enemy's end goal is spiritual death, we could accurately call deliverance ministry a ministry, not of healing, but of resurrection!