

# Iowa case only regional exorcism

When Eva Mary Bott stepped off the train at Earling, Iowa, on an August morning in 1928, "she appeared anything but diabolical" to Rev. Joseph Steiger.

But a short while later, when Father Steiger said, "God bless you, child," his impression changed. She screamed and spit in his face.

Miss Bott had come to Earling for a specific purpose. She was possessed by the devil and had come to Earling to be exorcised by Rev. Theophilus Riesinger and Father Steiger.

The Earling case is the only exorcism in the area recognized by the Roman Catholic Church.

Signs of demonic possession were evident in Miss Bott at age 14. However, after extensive examination by medical doctors, it was decided she should seek

aid from other sources.

Not until she was 40 did ecclesiastical authorities decide hers was a clear case of demonic possession.

The exorcism was assigned to Father Riesinger, a Capuchin Father credited with 22 major exorcisms before he died in 1941.

## Exorcism begun

When Father Riesinger began the exorcism with the sign of the cross, the woman's body carried through the air, landed high above the room's door and clung to the wall "with a tenacious grip."

The woman constantly made noises. At times it was described as the "lowing of a cow" and indistinguishable murmurings.

During the exorcism, she received only small amounts of food. Still, she vomited incessantly,

according to Wegerer, 20 to 30 times a day.

In his report, Father Riesinger said Miss Bott emitted materials from her body "diabolical in nature, containing what appeared to be insects, living things . . ."

At one point during the exorcism, the woman assumed a death-like color and seemed on the brink of death. Father Steiger said, "Great God, she's dying! I will hasten to get the holy oils." However, Father Riesinger said it was the devil's trick.

## Auto destroyed

In the church next door to the convent, parishoners were praying for the woman.

But the voices within Miss Bott knew of the prayers. "Tell them they plead for nothing," the voices screamed.

Later the woman's head turned to Father Steiger and raged, "You are the cause of this and it is time to shut you up."

The next day, while he was returning from a call to a sick parishoner, "a veil of darkness" fell over his eyes and the car he was driving struck a bridge. The car was overhanging the bridge's edge when Father Steiger regained his sight.

## Ordeal ends

Before entering the room where the exorcism was taking place, Father Steiger said, "I heard the demons laughing, shouting to Theophilus, 'We got your partner, old fool,' and I knew at once the car wreck had to be the work of Satan. . . there was no other way for the demons to have known."

Upon entering the room, the possessed woman addressed him, "Today he pulled in his proud neck and was outpointed. What about your new auto, that dandy car that was smashed to smithereens? It served you right."

Finally on the 23rd day of the exorcism, Dec. 23, 1928, Father Riesinger, using the Roman Ritual, the Catholic exorcism rite, said "Depart ye friends of hell! Begone Satan, the Lion of Judah reigns!"

The woman, who had been standing erect upon the bed, collapsed. The exorcism was over. The woman opened her eyes and mouth, saying, "My Jesus, mercy. Praised be Jesus Christ!"

All the central figures in the Earling exorcism died within 20 years of the 1928 exorcism.

The material and quotations used in this article were from personal letters and official church documents as reported in the *Omaha World Herald* of Feb. 10, 1974 and *Begone Satan*, a book about the exorcism written by Rev. Carl Vogl.

## ...psychics

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"I compare God to a mass of light. We are a small stream of that light. When we entered our bodies, we came in on a silver stream. When that stream is out, we enter the spiritual world," said Norma.

But in certain cases, a spirit doesn't detach itself from earth and move upward in to the spiritual realm, she added. Some examples are the spirits of suicide, murder or accident victims.

"People who have suffered a violent death have left their bodies suddenly," Norma said. "Many of them don't even know they've died."

## Exorcisms performed

These spirits, Norma said, often return to inhabit objects that surround them during their lifetime. They can only be eradicated, she said, through exorcism.

"I have performed a few exorcisms," Norma said, "But I wouldn't want to get into it too deeply. It's a job that requires all your time and energy. You may as well forget having any time to yourself or any time for social life. Exorcists are chosen people who fill a definite need."

"Any man who has been in active combat should have an exorcism," she continued. "When a man has to kill another, he is in a state of disarray. During this time a person's aura (energy halo radiating from his body) is out of focus."

"These evil spirits can attach themselves to a person at this time."

Exorcism also can help alcoholics, drug addicts and mentally insane, Norma said. After removal of the spirit of an alcoholic, her husband cured his drinking problem, Norma said.

## "Death" experienced

In a dream, Norma said she experienced the sensation of death. She was in a cave, she said, when she started to move in a beam of light. The lower half of her body, she said, had been transformed into a stream of light.

Around her, people were dropping back to earth. They looked like shooting stars, she said.


"That's why religion is so important. Your guides will only protect you to a certain point. Then faith has to carry you up. When you fear, you drop back down," she said.

Norma predicted an increased interest in spiritualism.

"I don't think the world is in that bad of shape," she said. "I think the world wide famine in the future will actually be good for spiritual development. Whenever a person's material needs are denied, he starts looking inside himself and wondering why. He'll start exploring himself as a person."

"In the year 2,000 many Christian beliefs foresee the end of the world. It won't be the end of the world, but it will be the end of an era. There will be a change, a great revelation. That's why psychic arts are so important. It's the only way of really preparing for the future," Jennifer concludes.

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