

Couple performs "mercy releases"

Editor's note: This is the first time Mr. and Mrs. J have consented to an interview, though they have been approached by several newspapers and magazines. The reporter had to submit his photo and a copy of his handwriting to the couple before they would consent to the interview.

By John Kalkowski
"Please help me."

Scrawled in the hand of a five year old, these words reflect the pain of a child stricken with grand mals - epilepsy.

The child who wrote these words was one of 1,100 "mercy releases" performed by an area couple last year.

Mr. and Mrs. J, who asked that their names and location not be released, said mercy release is the liberating of spirits which inhabit an individual's body.

According to Mrs. J, they discovered that the epileptic child's body was infested by the spirit of a 64-year-old woman. Through the help of spirits, they were able to release the woman's spirit, she said.

After the release of the spirit, the small girl, who had epileptic seizures since she was five months old, was cured, Mrs. J said.

The couple, who are in their seventies, were called to perform their work five years ago. Though they work on mercy releases fulltime, they said, they do not charge for their services.

The mercy release is performed by certain spirits, Mrs. J said. "We do not do the healing ourselves," she

said, "We are only the channels through which 'the Masters' work." Mr. and Mrs. J do not subscribe to any religious denomination.

They said the work they do is on the "seventh level" of consciousness and is done in the ethereal body, not the physical body. Mrs. J described the ethereal body as a level of consciousness and a part of a person's aura.

They distinguish their work from exorcisms, however.

The spirits that inhabit bodies are not necessarily evil, Mrs. J said. They are earth-bound spirits unable to rest.

However, she does not discount the presence of evil spirits. The exorcisms of demons performed by priests is on "another level of consciousness," she said.

She said she does not understand exorcism. She understands only that which has been revealed to her, she said.

The calls for help have come to Mr. and Mrs. J from around the world, some calls as far away as England, Austria and Switzerland, she said.

The couple is reluctant to describe the process of mercy release. "The Masters," the spirit board which aids them, protects them from being harmed, she said.

However, Mrs. J did say they need an example of the victim's handwriting and a picture of the individual to complete the release. She added that the process usually takes about two or three hours.

"We speak only when we have 'the Masters' permission," she said. According to Mrs. J, they have been approached often as possible topics for articles, but had refused any publicity until this interview.

"People do not understand the abstract ideas we work with," she said. "When people don't understand, they give negative feelings and hate thoughts. This is wrong."

She added that even certain members of her own family do not understand their work.

Persons who receive mercy release are referred by those who already have come in contact with them, she said. The couple does not publicize or advertise their venture.

Mr. J said the referral is an ongoing process and more requests than can be handled are received. He said that already this year, they have processed over 100 cases.

Mrs. J said only a "very few" of their cases are failures. She estimated 3 out of 100 do not work. If one approach fails, another approach is used, she said.

In one case, a boy with a blood clot was having a difficult time breathing, even though he was receiving oxygen. According to Mrs. J, they did not have an example of his handwriting or his picture, so they asked "the Masters" if they could use the father's image instead.

After consulting the spirits, she said, two hours later the boy was sitting up in bed. The examining doctor said there was nothing wrong with the boy, she said.

Midweek/Focus

Exorcism is no secret but not emphasized

By Deb Gray

The first battle began over an apple, and the Devil won.

And forever after, Christianity has devoted almost as much time talking about Satan as about God.

The word exorcism comes from a Greek root meaning "to put one on oath." No one knows exactly when the rite was first performed, but it is about as old as the Church itself.

The Catholic Ritual stated the first rites, "consisted mainly of the sign of the cross invoking the name of Jesus, and renunciations of Satan and threats uttered against him."

The rite was most widely performed in the Middle Ages. During that time, the Church commissioned an order of priests who specialized in administering the exorcism rite.

Criteria defined

Pope Leo XIII authorized prayers for the faithful "whenever action of the Devil is suspected, causing malice among men." Until recently, one of these prayers was spoken after Mass.

The church uses several criteria to determine demonic possession:

- An ability to speak with some coherency in a foreign language or tongue, unknown to the victim previously.
- The faculty of predicting future events or knowledge of facts unknown to the victim.
- A display of powers far beyond that person's condition or strength.

But, even if the conditions are met, there is still doubt.

"Much of what passed for exorcism in the Middle Ages was really a medical or psychiatric disorder," said Father Nicholas of Mt. Michael Abbey in Elkhorn. "Even now, that's why all medical or psychiatric means have to be exhausted before an exorcism is authorized."

Rite rarely used

All priests are given the power to exorcise, he said, but the ritual is used rarely, and only with the authorization from the diocesan bishop. The presiding priest, he said, must lead an life of exemplary holiness.

"That was something that was pointed out very well in the movie," he said. "If there is a chink of weakness in the priest performing the exorcism, the devil can enter the chink and attack."

The Church has never hidden the existence of demonic possession, Father Nicholas said, it just hasn't emphasized it.

"If the Church downplays the rite of exorcism, it's not really secrecy, but recognizing the possibility of inducing hallucinations and hysteria in other people."

Counterparts exists

The rite of exorcism is "by no means a strictly Catholic rite," Father Nicholas said. There are counterparts to the Catholic rite in the Orthodox Jewish and Anglican faiths, he said.

The Rev. Raymond Bishop S. J., instructor in the Education Dept. at Creighton University, was one of several priests assisting in an exorcism in St. Louis, Mo. in 1949. Blatty based his book on this incident.

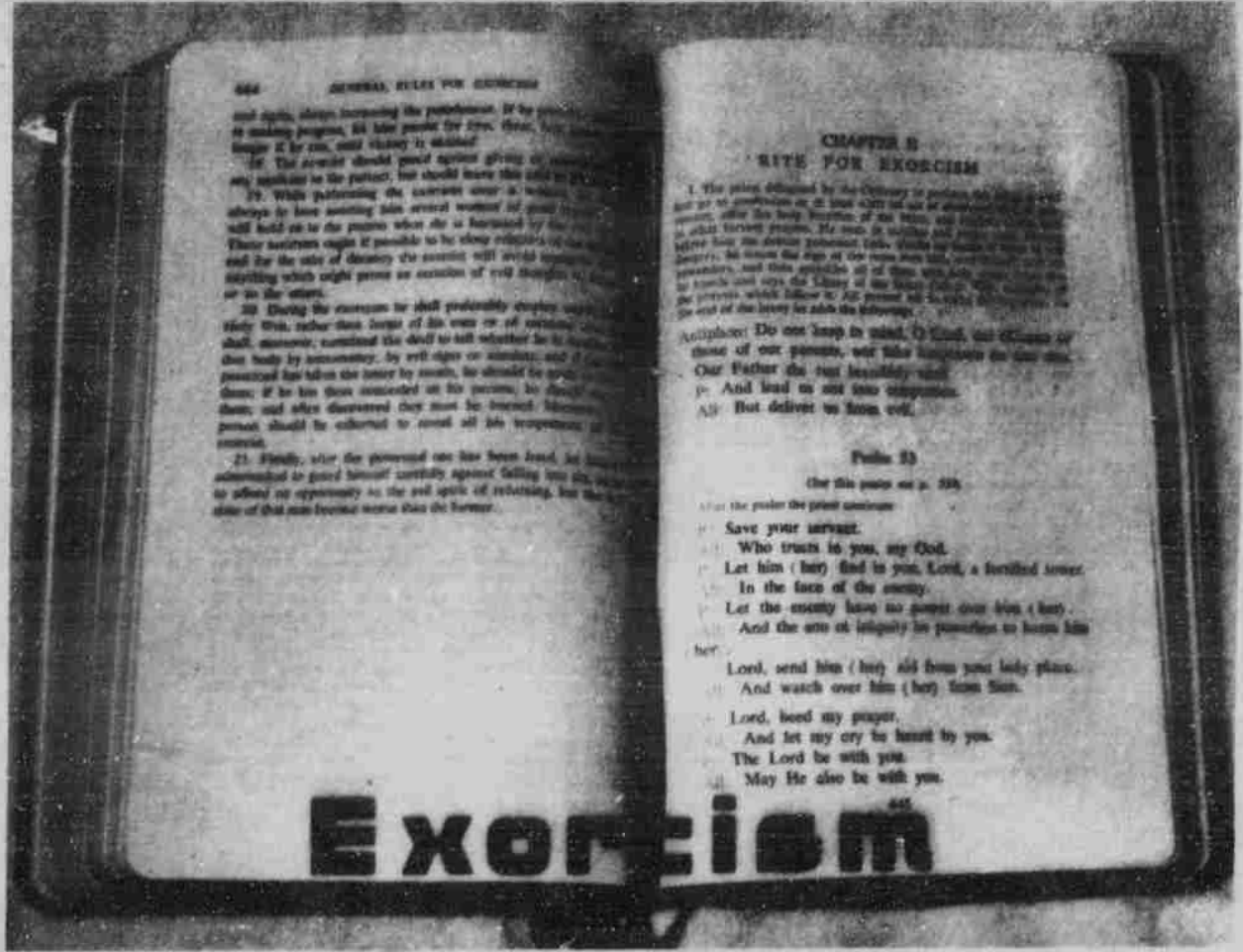
He said he was ordered then not to discuss the case and declined any further comment.

Ron Bassett, a former monsignor living in Lincoln, said an exorcism was performed when he was attending seminary in Chicago.

He said he saw a young girl, the subject of the exorcism, run across the sanctuary, leaping over obstructions like a gazelle.

A Franciscan nun, now retired and asking not to be named, was living in the convent at Earling, Ia., in 1928 when an exorcism was performed there (see related story).

Although she did not witness the ceremony, she said she cared for the victim and knew the priests involved.



The Roman Ritual

"Psychics" affirm exorcism

By Deb Gray

Before Linda Blair's snarling blasphemies, demon possession was a Gothic fantasy, locked in Transylvanian mythology and Dark Shadows reruns.

Then, Warner Brothers unleashed The Exorcist, and, honest to God, some people were really afraid. In Chicago, Catholic authorities said they received dozens of calls from people fearing demon possession; in New Jersey, teenagers spent the night at churches praying they would not become possessed by the devil; even in Lincoln persons fainted during the movie.

This hysteria explains why believers of spiritual entities have not discussed openly exorcism. For as Jennifer, a Lincoln believer, said, "People were not yet ready for it."

At first, Mr. and Mrs. J (see related article) were reluctant to discuss their work, for until people, as they said, reach a certain level of spiritual understanding, skeptics could send out intense hate vibrations hampering their work.

"I think the history of this planet has also been a history of spiritual involvement," Mrs. J said. "The earth plane is millions of years old. When it began, it was rough and hewn and men lived in caves. Since that time, man has accumulated knowledge and grown through the centuries."

Psychic feats performed

Jennifer said "more people around Lincoln are looking into exorcism all the time." And Nancy, a 21-year-old Lincoln resident, said, "There are more people having exorcisms around

here than you might think."

Norma M., a Lincoln resident who might be labeled a psychic or spiritualist by the terrestrial majority, claims to perform feats ranging from astral projection to exorcism.

Norma said her birth 42 years ago generated not joy, but fear.

"When I was born, my mother, who also was psychic, took one look at me and knew I was different," she said. "She saw that I was going to have a hard life. Rather than let me suffer misery, she tried to poison me. But at the last minute she panicked and called the doctor."

When she was 10, Norma said she recalled the attempted poisoning during a vision.

"I confronted my mother with the accusation, and she admitted it was true," she said.

Norma said she first exhibited extrasensory talent during childhood.

Childhood experiences

"I would call my pets and talk to them through mental telepathy," she said. "And sometimes I'd stare into the corner of the living room. There I'd see another room and hear a conversation going on."

"Maybe six months later, I'd be visiting someone, and I'd realize I was in that same room hearing the same conversation I'd heard months before."

To Norma, the relationship between the occult and religious world is not only natural, but essential.

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