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New Evangelisation:

## Spiritual Warfare in the New Evangelisation

Fr Rufus Pereira

In early 1997, *L'Osservatore Romano*, the newspaper of the Vatican, carried a series of six well-documented articles on "Sects and Satanic Cults". These only confirmed what I had gathered, to my great shock, from the two seminars on "Satanism", organised by the Lutheran Church and by the Catholic Church, in 1995, in East Berlin: that Satanism had succeeded Communism as the greatest scourge of Christian Europe today. A statement issued after the previous plenary assembly of the Italian Bishops' Conference corroborates this: "We are currently witnessing a rebirth of divination, sorcery, witchcraft and magic often mixed with a superstitious use of religion."

Already in 1971, Pope Paul VI had spoken at an audience of "some preternatural thing which has come into the world precisely to dispute, to suffocate the fruits of the (Vatican) Ecumenical Council." On 20 June 1972, he spoke about the smoke of Satan entering the temple of God, and on 15 November 1972, in answer to the question he himself put at a general audience, "What are the greatest needs of the Church today?" he himself too asserted, after a dramatic pause, "Do not let our answer surprise you as being over simple or even superstitious and unreal. One of its greatest needs is defence from that evil which is called the Devil." For when our first parents capitulated to the Tempter and sinned against God, they brought the whole of humanity with them under the domination of the Enemy. Blessed Pope John Paul II was more optimistic. "The Church shares in Christ's victory over the devil," he said on 20 August 1986, "and the Church exercises such victorious power through faith in Christ (in the prayer of deliverance), which, in specific cases, can assume the form of exorcism."

Unfortunately the actual labourers, i.e. the front line fighters in this spiritual warfare (Lk 10:3), continue to be so very few, for there is not a single exorcist appointed in most countries, and even in most dioceses in many of the other countries, and so our people in their need have no alternative but to go either to spiritists or to neo-Pentecostal healers.



It is no wonder then that Pope Benedict XVI said recently that the Church needs 3,000 more exorcists. Fortunately the Catholic Charismatic Renewal has stepped in the gap in this spiritual warfare through a renewed ministry of deliverance, one of its greatest contributions to the Catholic Church today. Many priests and lay people in the Charismatic Renewal are today exercising this ministry, having received from the Holy Spirit the charism of healing and specifically that of deliverance. However, they need mutual prayerful support, deeper Catholic knowledge of—and in-depth training in—this demanding ministry.

In February 1999, we were invited by the Tanzanian Episcopal Conference to conduct a five-day Seminar on Healing and Deliverance at the Tanzanian Episcopal Centre in Dar es Salaam. This was meant specifically by invitation for Church leaders, including heads of Pastoral Institutes and professors of Theology from the four major seminaries. At the conclusion of the Seminar, the participants drew up and passed an official statement that the ministry of healing and deliverance should occupy an important place in the New Evangelisation of the country for the new millennium.

It is clear from the Bible that Satan or the Devil, the Hebrew and Greek words for the Enemy, really does exist and does afflict man. This is also the consistent teaching of the Catholic Church as it is reflected in its theology and in its official pronouncements. However, above all it is a rediscovery of our present day pastoral ministry. This has shown us how there are many problems and many evils today, which are the result not only of one's personal inclination toward sin, one's own sinfulness (the flesh), or of

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the pressures due to the hurts caused by sinful man (the world), but also of some oppressive and preternatural personified evil (the Devil). Such problems and evils cannot be adequately dealt with even though personal repentance and interpersonal reconciliation, much less by medicine and psychiatry. They need the Prayer and Act of deliverance from such a spiritual evil power of force (1 Pt 5:8,9; Eph 6:10-13).

In like manner, both our life and our ministry will be subject to the onslaught of the Evil One but we will be victorious only through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Devil tempted Jesus to follow his attractive suggestions and to stop Him from fulfilling his God-given mission of bringing salvation to mankind. The three-fold temptation of Christ is thus a warning to us of how we can be similarly tempted to even use God's gifts in a way that is contrary to his plan, by giving in to the wiles of the Evil One, and an assurance of how we can nevertheless overcome these temptations, by imitating the mind and stand of Jesus (Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-1).


Today the Church is realising the necessity of such a prayer of solidarity (Mt 18:19,20) and is recognising the urgency of standing united in intercession, for the protection and deliverance of the whole Church and the whole world, with the prayer of Jesus himself, its head, "Father, protect them from the Evil One. Father, may they all be one" (Jn 17:15,21). This is just as, all the time Peter was in prison, the Church prayed to God for him unremittingly (Acts 12:5). We need to pray, in a way we have never done before, the Lord's Prayer, "But deliver us from the evil one" (Mt 6:13); and the Prayer of the Church in the Mass, "Deliver us, Lord, from every evil and grant us peace." For, even though it seems today as if "the whole world is in the power of the Evil One" (1 Jn 5:19), Jesus has declared and continues to assure us, "But be courageous: I have conquered the world" (Jn 16:33).

A greater awareness should therefore be created of the importance of the ministry of Deliverance for total healing, spiritual, emotional and physical. Throughout its history the Church has carried out the mandate entrusted to her by Christ, through the specific ministry of Exorcism and the general ministry of Deliverance. But it is especially today that through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, people are becoming more aware of the existence and the influence of Satan, the dangerous folly of seeking help from 'wrong' sources, and the availability of the resources of the Church not only to heal them from physical, emotional and mental sicknesses but to set them free from such demonic influence and attacks.

For us in our Catholic Tradition, Deliverance is more an expression and demonstration of compassion for the oppressed

person rather than an exercise of authority and power against the oppressing spirit. It is not a "once and for all" act of chasing away the devil, but rather a process of restoring the afflicted person to wholeness, re-integrating him into the community and encouraging him to witness to and to be a witness among his people. It is more a process of liberation, consisting of what we should do or how we should act before, during and after the prayer of deliverance rather than a once for all act of zeal and 'holy force'. The promotion of such an ongoing and systematic ministry of Deliverance within the local Church is and should be an integral part of the New Evangelisation in the New Millennium. This is especially true today when, as the Vatican's *L'Osservatore Romano* warns us, Satanism in all its varied forms and through all the modern means of communication is rearing its ugly head.

That is why Pope John Paul II addressed the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America on 9 March 1983 in Haiti: "Look to the future with commitment to a New Evangelisation, one that is new in its ardor, new in its methods, and new in its expression", and on 7 December 1990, the Pope exhorted the entire Church, in his forthright encyclical *Redemptorios Missio* to "renew her missionary commitment" (RM 2), and to "commit all of her energies to a New Evangelisation" (RM 3). For if the chief agent of Evangelisation is the Holy Spirit, and its main tool is the Holy Bible, and its guiding star is Holy Mary, and its main channel is the Church, the Body of Christ, it is obvious that its greatest Enemy is Satan himself, for that is what the word in both Hebrew and Greek means.

Even though as a result of man's succumbing to the wiles of the Enemy, the original sin, which brought mankind to ruin and disaster upon the whole human race, God so loved him that he did not abandon him but He gave through the Incarnation his only Son, Jesus the Saviour, Emmanuel —the God-with-us—, the Good News of great joy to all mankind, who would crush the power of Satan over the life of man, and would restore him in grace before God his Father (Gn 3:15; Jn 3:16). Thus the Son of God appeared to "undo the work of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8), to "overthrow the prince of the world" (Jn 12:31), to "rescue us from the ruling force of darkness," and to "transfer us into his kingdom" (Col 1:13). This is how Peter sums up the ministry of Jesus: "God has anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and healing all who had fallen into the power of the devil" (Acts 10:38). He even commanded his apostles, "Go throughout the whole world," and assured them, "Believers will drive out demons in my name" (Mk 16:17). 



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# Making Disciples

■ Denise Bergeron

## Go and Make Disciples

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.’” (Mt 28:18-20)

What a beautiful mission was Jesus’ assignment to the eleven disciples on the mountain in Galilee! Maybe in your heart you are telling yourself, “this is not for me.” Think again! Yes, this mission is for you, for me, for all of us. I will share with you here some thoughts on what it means to be a disciple. It’s simple. The disciple is one who has experienced a personal encounter with Jesus. He has experienced a profound encounter that upsets and gives meaning to his life.

This wonderful experience of Pentecost is an enduring reality. This encounter with the living Jesus at the core of your being draws you to examine your inner self and to welcome His renewal. The Holy Spirit gives you:

- The discovery of your beauty as a child of God, your inestimable value in His sight, and your new freedom that comes from knowing His love.
- His docility. The Spirit of Pentecost then manifests Himself in your life as a powerful wind... as a new presence that fills and strengthens, like a spreading fire that witnesses to the risen Christ.
- His gifts and charisms. They are “breezes,” soft and delicate motions, persistent and attractive, that the Spirit of love, by His presence, blows on you to give you the momentum, the boldness and strength to serve God faithfully.

## The disciple soaks himself in prayer and the Word of Jesus

Take time for God. At this stage, dedicate your time not only to active duty but also to prayer. Jesus said, “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Mt 6:6). By welcoming the Word of Life, you meet Jesus. You discover the compassion and the tenderness of the Father, God’s Truth and the truth of your being. The full power of the apostolate is revealed in this encounter. When you feel you have seen nothing or understood nothing, this moment gratuitously given for a heart to heart with God, will let you discover how the Word incarnates in your everyday life.

## The disciple commits himself in faith and trusts fully in Christ

Follow the example of Peter when Jesus said, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch” (Lk 5:4). It is astonishing what Jesus asks of Peter. Surprisingly, Peter, who believes in Jesus and decides to trust Him, is ready to try again. “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets” (5). Then a miracle happened: “And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking” (6).

## The Holy Spirit moulds in you the heart of a disciple

The Holy Spirit is making you a missionary. He gives you concern for others and the need to evangelise the world in one way or another. Jesus bore the tenderness of God in the world. To grow and develop, we need this tenderness. Jesus experienced the love of God Himself. He experienced a love that surrounds Him. The mission of the disciple of Jesus is to bring the presence and the tenderness of God to the world.

## The disciple lives in obedience to Jesus’ example

Jesus claims to be “come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me” (Jn 6:38) and that His “food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish His work” (Jn 4:34). In the devotion of Jesus, we see that His tender heart has journeyed through the Law but extends well beyond it.

The obedience to which Jesus invites you is not a slavish, infantile obedience that stunts your growth, but rather one that calls on your free choice to please your Master. This is why Jesus puts order in your life and helps you make choices that nurture love, and total trust in Him. This obedience never constrains freedom. Jesus was free, even when He submitted to the “order” that He had received from the Father.

## To become a disciple of Jesus, you need to:

- take the path of conversion away from evil and death, toward God, life, and freedom; and
- profess your faith through the witness of your life, your character, your integrity, and your charity, no matter your circumstance.

## The disciple of Jesus is a being in communion:

- Communion in prayer. In the primitive community of Jerusalem, the disciples “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).
- Communion in faith: Faith in the Church, faith in the efficacy of intercessory prayer in Jesus’ Name.
- Communion of the sacraments. The fruit of all the sacraments belongs to all. A disciple of Jesus allows the spiritual gifts and riches received at his baptism to bear fruit in the service of his brothers and sisters.
- Communion of charisms. In the communion of the Church, the Holy Spirit “distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank [...] for the renewal and building up of the Church” (*Lumen Gentium*, 12). However, “to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor 12: 7).
- Communion of charity (cf. Rm 14:7). Jesus gives you a new perspective on disease and the sick. He compels you to minister compassion and healing: “So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them” (Mk 6: 12-13).

May the Holy Spirit make you a disciple with a heart on fire for the Lord. Remember that the essence of the Church’s mission is to show the tenderness of God. 🕯



QUESTIONS TO THE ICCRS DOCTRINAL COMMISSION

The ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, currently headed by Dr. Mary Healy, is in consultation with theologians and experts from around the world.

If you have a question about the CCR, please send it to [newsletter@iccrs.org](mailto:newsletter@iccrs.org)

# Can several people pray or sing in tongues at once?

To answer this question, let me first emphasise that there is no specific Catholic teaching on how to use the gift of tongues. The brief references to tongues in Church teaching simply affirm that tongues is one of the charisms given by the Spirit and that all charisms are intended for the common good of the Church (see the Catechism, par. 2003). Thus to discern pastoral guidelines for the proper use of tongues, one must turn to the teaching of St Paul in 1 Cor 12-14, along with common sense and the practical wisdom that comes from experience.

Paul’s teaching in *1 Corinthians* implies that there are two different forms of the gift of tongues. The distinction between the two is sometimes described as “praying in tongues” and “speaking in tongues.”

“Praying in tongues” is the gift of tongues as a prayer language, an overflowing prayer and praise of the heart that is expressed aloud but not with rational sounds. “For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit” (1 Cor 14:2). This gift is something very close to contemplative prayer. Paul notes that it is valuable for a person’s own spiritual growth (1 Cor 14:4), and he indicates that this form of tongues is available to all (1 Cor 14:5). This form of tongues is very common in the Charismatic Renewal today, and several of the saints also seem to have had it, including Augustine, Bernard, Teresa of Avila and John Vianney. St Teresa wrote, “Our Lord sometimes gives the soul feelings of jubilation and a strange prayer it doesn’t understand... It seems like gibberish and certainly the experience is like that, for it is a joy so excessive that the soul wouldn’t want to enjoy it alone but wants to tell everyone about it so that they might help this soul praise our Lord” (*Interior Castle*, VI.6.10). It should also be noted that there are many recorded cases of miraculous tongues, where the speaker spoke a language unknown to himself but known to a listener.

“Speaking in tongues” is tongues in the form of a public message spoken to the assembly, a less common gift. In this case, Paul instructs that the message in tongues must be followed by an interpretation. Otherwise it is meaningless to people and has no capacity to edify them. When a message in tongues is followed by an interpretation, it is actually a form of the gift


of prophecy. Paul emphasises the superiority of prophecy because of its capacity to strengthen, encourage, and console the members of the body of Christ. “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified” (1 Cor 14:4-5; see 14:28).

The disorder that Paul corrects is evidently a disordered use of this second form of the gift of tongues. What seems to have occurred in Corinth is that people were speaking messages in tongues out loud without respect for proper order or for another person who was already speaking. This is why Paul instructs them, “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others

weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged” (1 Cor 14:29-31).

This brings us to the question, can people pray in tongues all at the same time? While we cannot know with certainty what occurred in the Corinthian gatherings 2000 years ago, contemporary charismatic experience does seem to correspond in many ways with what Paul describes. We know from contemporary

experience that when many people pray or sing in tongues together (the first use of tongues described above), there is a deep harmony brought by the Spirit. Sometimes there is a remarkable harmony in the musical tones; but more importantly, there is a spiritual unity brought about by worshipping the Lord in one accord. Each person is praising God in a different tongue, but the tongues all blend together in unity. This is the opposite of the discord Paul describes when the gift of speaking in tongues is used improperly—that is, when several people are trying to get attention for a message in tongues at the same time.

Paul reminds us that the ultimate standard for the use of tongues and of all charismatic gifts is love. “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor 13:1). Love is the motivation and goal that gives the gifts their value. If we are faithful to Paul’s counsel, both praying and speaking in tongues will glorify God and contribute to the upbuilding of the Church in love. 

“**We know from contemporary experience that when many people pray or sing in tongues together, there is a deep harmony brought by the Spirit.**”

