

**APPENDIX 2**  
**DIOCESE OF DES MOINES: GENERAL DIOCESAN NORMS**  
**FOR HEALING AND DELIVERANCE MINISTRY**

*Promulgated April 13, 2023*  
*Effective April 16, 2023*

- Art. 1.** Only those who abide by the following Norms can act in healing or deliverance ministry in the name of the Catholic Church.
- Art. 2.** All liturgical and all public non-liturgical prayer ministries being exercised within the Diocese of Des Moines need the consent and approval of the Bishop and are subject to his direct and/or delegated oversight and authority.
- Art. 3.** Any individual intending to exercise a public prayer ministry within a specific parish, or Catholic institution/entity, do so only with the permission of the Bishop, his delegate, or the parish pastor and only with appropriate formation and training. Where a pastor gives a delegation at parish level, it is not transferable to another parish.
- Art. 4.** Prayer ministers must exercise their function in full communion with the Church, in accordance with her teaching and canonical discipline.
- Art. 5.** All involved in assisting with healing prayer ministry should have sufficient and approved training and formation for healing and deliverance ministry as directed by the Diocese of Des Moines.
- Art. 6.** Deliverance ministry should only be exercised by a fully initiated adult Catholic in good standing with the church who is in a state of grace. No one should undertake deliverance ministry without sufficient diocesan approved training and formation.
- Art. 7.** All involved in assisting with healing and/or deliverance prayer ministry, especially when ministering with minors and/or vulnerable adults, are subject to the Virtus (Safe Environment) training and certification process for the Diocese of Des Moines.
- Art. 8.** All involved in assisting with healing and/or deliverance prayer ministry must comply with all diocesan policies and guidelines, especially those relating to safeguarding and protection of vulnerable adults and children and be subject to safe-environment procedures (e.g., Virtus).
- Art. 9.** In the case of groups or individuals from outside the Diocese of Des Moines invited to work within it, parish pastors, priests, and organizers must ensure that these groups are in good standing with their own bishops; that valid Testimonials of Suitability and Celebrets for any clergy involved have been submitted to the Diocese; and that leaders and lay ministers are appropriately formed and trained, and have been through a certified safe environment training process.

**NORMS FOR HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY**

- Art. 10.** There should always be a minimum of two (2) persons assisting an individual prayer recipient - taking into account gender balance.

- Art. 11.** Formal and informal prayers for healing and deliverance must take care not to mimic sacramental actions, especially regarding blessings, the laying on of hands, and anointing with blessed oil. The exception would be for those who have the proper spiritual authority/rights by natural law to do so (see “Spiritual Authority and Rights of the Laity to Command”, #34).
- Art. 12.** Any physical contact must be appropriate, and must be preceded by permission.
- Art. 13.** Whenever a particular healing occurs, testimony and evidence should be gathered and submitted to the diocesan bishop or his delegate, for review and assessment.
- Art. 14.** Public accounts or testimony of particular healings are prohibited until the review is complete and a determination has been made regarding its possibility and/or probability.
- Art. 15.** Ministers are not to tell anyone directly and explicitly that they (the prayer recipient) have a specific illness, sin, emotional/spiritual wound, spiritual/demonic attachment or curse, or claim other definitive insights into an individual’s condition. A person’s individual conscience and spiritual well-being (good) must always be revered.
- Art. 16.** General pronouncements during prayer ministry gatherings within a public or group setting which identify specific illnesses, sins, emotional/spiritual wounds, spiritual or demonic attachments, curses, etc., which need healing; or will be healed; or have been healed are prohibited.
- Art. 17.** Prayer ministers are prohibited from encouraging “praying in tongues” in the Holy Spirit during any public healing/deliverance prayer service.
- Art. 18** If there is evidence of overt demonic or preternatural manifestations during the course of healing prayer ministry with an individual, the healing prayer minister should seek the immediate consultation and assistance of his or her prayer ministry leader. If possible and necessary, the prayer recipient’s pastor or the appropriate diocesan personnel should also be consulted for further assessment and ministry.

### **NORMS FOR DELIVERANCE PRAYER MINISTRY**

- Art. 19.** Anyone involved in deliverance prayer ministry is to be well-formed, and given proper training and approbation (blessing/certification/permission) by the authority of the church.
- Art. 20.** During healing and deliverance ministry laypersons are prohibited from using imprecatory prayers unless they have the proper authority over another person by way of natural law (see “Spiritual Authority and Rights of the Laity to Command”, #34).
- Art. 21.** It is not licit that the faithful use the formula of exorcism against Satan and the fallen angels, extracted from the one published by order of the Supreme Pontiff Leo XIII, and even less that they use the integral text of this exorcism.
- Art. 22.** Persons engaged in a ministry of deliverance with an individual are prohibited from addressing any evil spirits directly by name aloud. Also, they are prohibited from uttering

any invocations to obtain release from demons in which demons are questioned directly and their identity sought to be known.

**Art. 23.** In liturgical or non-liturgical prayer settings, the reality of diabolical oppression, obsession, or possession must never be used as a method of provoking fervor or docility to ministry leaders.

**Art. 24.** The possibility of diabolical oppression, obsession or possession as the source of various afflictions is not to be suggested to any individual prayer recipient.

## CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

### INSTRUCTION ON PRAYERS FOR HEALING

September 14, 2000

#### DISCIPLINARY NORMS

- Art. 1** – It is licit for every member of the faithful to pray to God for healing. When this is organized in a church or other sacred place, it is appropriate that such prayers be led by an ordained minister.
- Art. 2** – Prayers for healing are considered to be liturgical if they are part of the liturgical books approved by the Church's competent authority; otherwise, they are non-liturgical.
- Art. 3** – § 1. Liturgical prayers for healing are celebrated according to the rite prescribed in the *Ordo benedictionis infirmorum* of the *Rituale Romanum* (28) and with the proper sacred vestments indicated therein.
- § 2. In conformity with what is stated in the *Praenotanda*, V., *De adaptationibus quae Conferentiae Episcoporum competunt* (29) of the same *Rituale Romanum*, Conferences of Bishops may introduce those adaptations to the Rite of Blessings of the Sick which are held to be pastorally useful or possibly necessary, after prior review by the Apostolic See.
- Art. 4** – § 1. The Diocesan Bishop has the right to issue norms for his particular Church regarding liturgical services of healing, following **can. 838 § 4**.
- § 2. Those who prepare liturgical services of healing must follow these norms in the celebration of such services.
- § 3. Permission to hold such services must be explicitly given, even if they are organized by Bishops or Cardinals, or include such as participants. Given a just and proportionate reason, the Diocesan Bishop has the right to forbid even the participation of an individual Bishop.
- Art. 5** – § 1. Non-liturgical prayers for healing are distinct from liturgical celebrations, as gatherings for prayer or for reading of the word of God; these also fall under the vigilance of the local Ordinary in accordance with **can. 839 § 2**.
- § 2. Confusion between such free non-liturgical prayer meetings and liturgical celebrations properly so-called is to be carefully avoided.
- § 3. Anything resembling hysteria, artificiality, theatricality or sensationalism, above all on the part of those who are in charge of such gatherings, must not take place.
- Art. 6** – The use of means of communication (in particular, television) in connection with prayers for healing, falls under the vigilance of the Diocesan Bishop in conformity with

**can. 823** and the norms established by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Instruction of March 30, 1992.(30)

**Art. 7 – § 1.** Without prejudice to what is established above in art. 3 or to the celebrations for the sick provided in the Church's liturgical books, prayers for healing – whether liturgical or non-liturgical – ***must not be introduced*** into the celebration of the Holy Mass, the sacraments, or the Liturgy of the Hours.

§ 2. In the celebrations referred to § 1, one may include special prayer intentions for the healing of the sick in the general intercessions or prayers of the faithful, when this is permitted.

**Art. 8 – § 1.** The ministry of exorcism must be exercised in strict dependence on the Diocesan Bishop, and in keeping with the norm of can. 1172, the Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of September 29, 1985, (31) and the *Rituale Romanum* (32).

§ 2. The prayers of exorcism contained in the *Rituale Romanum* must remain separate from healing services, whether liturgical or non-liturgical.

§ 3. It is absolutely forbidden to insert such prayers of exorcism into the celebration of the Holy Mass, the sacraments, or the Liturgy of the Hours.

**Art. 9 –** Those who direct healing services, whether liturgical or non-liturgical, are to strive to maintain a climate of peaceful devotion in the assembly and to exercise the necessary prudence if healings should take place among those present; when the celebration is over, any testimony can be collected with honesty and accuracy, and submitted to the proper ecclesiastical authority.

**Art. 10–** Authoritative intervention by the Diocesan Bishop is proper and necessary when abuses are verified in liturgical or non-liturgical healing services, or when there is obvious scandal among the community of the faithful, or when there is a serious lack of observance of liturgical or disciplinary norms.

**CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH**

**LETTER TO ORDINARIES  
REGARDING NORMS ON EXORCISM**

**29 September 1985**

Your most Reverend Excellency,

Recent years have seen an increase in the number of prayer groups in the Church aimed at seeking deliverance from the influence of demons, while not actually engaging in real exorcisms. These meetings are led by lay people, even when a priest is present.

As the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has been asked how one should view these facts, this Dicastery considers it necessary to inform Bishops of the following response:

1. Canon 1172 of the Code of Canon Law states that no one can legitimately perform exorcisms over the possessed unless he has obtained special and express permission from the local Ordinary (§1), and states that this permission should be granted by the local Ordinary only to priests who are endowed with piety, knowledge, prudence and integrity of life (§2). Bishops are therefore strongly advised to stipulate that these norms be observed.
2. From these prescriptions it follows that it is not even licit that the faithful use the formula of exorcism against Satan and the fallen angels, extracted from the one published by order of the Supreme Pontiff Leo XIII, and even less that they use the integral text of this exorcism. Bishops should take care to warn the faithful, if necessary, of this.
3. Finally, for the same reasons, Bishops are asked to be vigilant so that – even in cases that do not concern true demonic possession – those who are without the due faculty may not conduct meetings during which invocations, to obtain release, are uttered in which demons are questioned directly and their identity sought to be known.

Drawing attention to these norms, however, should in no way distance the faithful from praying that, as Jesus taught us, they may be delivered from evil (cf. Mt 6:13). Finally, Pastors may take this opportunity to recall what the Tradition of the Church teaches concerning the role proper to the sacraments and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Angels and Saints in the Christian's spiritual battle against evil spirits.

I take the opportunity to express my deepest respects,

Your most esteemed in Christ,

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger  
Prefect

Alberto Bovone  
Secretary