

# DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

## NORMS AND GUIDELINES FOR HEALING AND DELIVERANCE PRAYER BY THE LAITY IN THE DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

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### PURPOSE AND SCOPE

*The following guidelines are intended to give proper direction and oversight to those involved in any prayer ministry of healing and/or deliverance within the Diocese of Des Moines.*

*These directives apply to any person within the Diocese of Des Moines assisting with Prayer Ministry for Healing and/or Deliverance in any public, private, liturgical, or non-liturgical setting. This document will proceed in three sections, addressing healing and deliverance prayer generally, and then each specifically. Each section will provide a theological and pastoral foundation, followed by exhortatory, prescriptive, and prohibitive norms, which are particular law in the Diocese of Des Moines, reflecting the Diocesan Bishop's shepherding of various apostolates in accord with canons 223 and 394 §1. These guidelines presume obedience to the Disciplinary Norms published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the document Instruction on Prayers for Healing, 2000.*

*For the purpose of this document, the term "prayer recipient" will be used to describe the person receiving the ministry of prayer.*

### INTRODUCTION

*The longing for happiness, deeply rooted in the human heart, has always been accompanied by a desire to be freed from illness and to be able to understand the meaning of sickness when it is experienced. This is a human phenomenon, which in some way concerns every person and finds particular resonance in the Church, where sickness is understood as a means of union with Christ and of spiritual purification.*

*Moreover, for those who find themselves in the presence of a sick person, it is an occasion for the exercise of charity. But this is not all, because sickness, like other forms of human suffering, is a privileged moment for prayer, whether asking for grace, or for the ability to accept sickness in a spirit of faith and conformity to God's will, or also for asking for healing.*

*Prayer for the restoration of health is therefore part of the Church's experience in every age, including our own. What in some ways is new is the proliferation of prayer meetings, at times combined with liturgical celebrations, for the purpose of obtaining healing from God. In many cases, the occurrence of healings has been proclaimed, giving rise to the expectation of the same phenomenon in other such gatherings. In the same context, appeal is sometimes made to a claimed charism of healing. (Instruction On Prayers For Healing, Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith, September 14, 2000)*

## **SECTION 1:**

### **General Principles For Healing And Deliverance**

### **Prayer Ministry**

1. “Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness” (Mt 9:35). The healings of Christ were signs of His messianic mission and the victory He won by His Death and Resurrection. That victory is shown not only by healings and cures that He continues to bestow today, but also “through the voluntary and innocent suffering of Christ in his Passion, which gives every person the ability to unite himself to the sufferings of the Lord” (CDF 2000 Instruction on Prayers for Healing 1.1).
2. The Church continues this ministry of Christ through prayer and the sacraments, through teaching and proclaiming the Word of Truth, and through her pastoral care of the sick.
3. In healing ministry, it is helpful to differentiate three overlapping ministerial activities that are related one to another in a kind of continuum:
  - a. **Healing** (spiritual, mental, psychological, emotional, and physical), especially the two ‘healing sacraments’ of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, and prayers for healing either offered privately, or within a group, or liturgically in accord with the liturgical books. Jesus laid hands on the sick to cure them (Mark 6:5) and the Apostles continued this ministry (e.g., St. Paul in Acts 28:8).
  - b. **Deliverance** is prayer for the removal of obstacles, bondages, memories, entanglements and addictions, often of a demonic spiritual origin, that hold a person back, impair their functioning and well-being, and/or prevent their restoration to health. These related spirits need to be renounced, cast away, and ‘turned’ toward Christ. We see Jesus, portrayed in the Gospels, “casting out demons” such as the demoniac of Gadara (Mt 8: 2-34) and the apostles continuing that ministry (cf. the epileptic demoniac in Mt 17: 14-20 and the ministry of Philip in Samaria where in Acts 8: 4-8 he cast out unclean spirits).
  - c. **Exorcism**, either minor or major, that is, ritual, liturgical prayer, conducted by a minister, in order to cast out Satan and the powers of darkness who in some manner have ‘possessed’ a person. Exorcisms use various sacramentals such as a crucifix or holy water. The rites of minor exorcisms are usually reserved to a priest and the Rite of (Major) Exorcism requires the direct mandate of the Bishop, who may delegate the task to the diocesan Exorcist.
4. A pastoral framework of prudence, humility, and discernment should be applied generously here, in which the presumption is made in favor of a ‘lower’ rather than a ‘higher’ diagnosis and solution. In other words, the immediate and initial response to a pastoral situation will not be the need for a major exorcism, nor the ministry of deliverance, but for healing, utilizing both medical remedies and the ordinary means that the Church provides for healing, namely prayer and the sacraments. The deeper the affliction a person is experiencing, the more required is discernment and care in assessing the method of spiritual prayer and assistance to be rendered.

Prayer and the sacraments are the ordinary means of grace that God has provided, especially the two sacraments of healing, which always have a priority over other healing prayers and actions. In this regard, pastors and anyone with the care of souls need to exercise careful discernment when cases present themselves.

5. God gives the gift of His love abundantly and in many and various ways. He works notably through the care of doctors, nurses, psychologists and medical specialists. It is always right, in cases of sickness, whether physical or psychological, to encourage immediate recourse to the appropriate members of the medical profession.

The Church's understanding of sickness is derived from her maximal perspective and theological viewpoint which views healing and well-being from a holistic perspective involving the mind, body, and spirit. Thus, she rightly collaborates with the medical and psychological professions. The church's prayers for healing, deliverance and exorcism accompany, facilitate and assist the work of medical practitioners and others in carrying out God's will.

6. The Norms that follow are concerned only with the ministries of healing and deliverance as exercised within the Diocese of Des Moines, and not the ministry of exorcism. The ministry of exorcism, which already has its own protocols, is reserved to the Bishop and those priests whom he explicitly delegates. Additionally, these Norms are applicable within the scope of healing and deliverance ministry, and not meant to govern communal prayer experiences outside of this context.
7. Group or communal prayer experiences can be:
  - a. **Liturgical:** Any occasion utilizing the formal rites of the Catholic Church (i.e., The Sacraments, Eucharistic Exposition & Adoration, Blessings, etc.), or
  - b. **Non-Liturgical:** Any occasion of a gathering for faith formation, prayer, and worship (i.e., pious Devotions: Rosary, Holy Hours, etc.; Retreats, Workshops, Conferences, Parish/Regional/Diocesan Missions, etc.).
8. **The Role of the Bishop:** As the official teaching and practice of the Church makes clear, within his diocese, the bishop has the authority and responsibility to:
  - a. **discern** the authenticity of a particular healing/deliverance prayer ministry;
  - b. **authorize** any public liturgical celebration/practice of such a prayer ministry;
  - c. **issue norms and guidelines** for the exercise of any public liturgical or non-liturgical experience of healing/deliverance prayer ministry;
  - d. **evaluate and give approval** to an ongoing prayer ministry; and (if necessary),
  - e. **investigate and intervene** in any problematic situations (abuse, scandal, lack of liturgical norms, etc.) which may arise within such a prayer ministry.
9. In the Catholic Church, the ordinary and most effective means of dealing with sin, spiritual woundedness, sickness, and the various mental, emotional, and psychological obstacles that arise, comes through the Sacraments, especially Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, and the two 'healing sacraments' of Reconciliation and Anointing. Those in need should approach their parish priest in order to request them.
10. The parish priest has the primary joy and responsibility for the pastoral care of his flock and the care of the sick. It is his personal responsibility to oversee, direct and conduct the ministry to the sick in his parish, just like "Jesus, Who went about doing good" (Eucharistic Prayer for use in Masses for Various Needs IV). He will normally associate with himself others, such as

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and other parishioners, who will collaborate with him in this ministry, under his leadership, formation and direction.

11. Prayer for healing is an essential part of pastoral ministry. The Roman Missal contains a formulary for a Mass for the Sick and the Rite of Anointing. Pastoral Care of the Sick contains various other liturgies and prayers that can be used with the sick. The Book of Blessings provides blessings for the sick. The sick in their moment of need should also turn to Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction, the Rosary, devotions, pilgrimages, invocations of the saints and other prayers approved for use.
12. Besides the hierarchical and institutional gifts given to His Church, God also bestows charismatic gifts upon individual members of the Church. These include the gift or charism of healing (cf. 1 Cor 12: 4-11, especially v. 9). This admirably disposes a person to a particular function within the life and mission of the Church.

The Church takes care to discern the charisms given, and to form and train individuals to use their gifts wisely and appropriately in service. It is the responsibility of the Bishop at the diocesan level and the parish priest within his parish community to order the use of such gifts.

13. The ministry of deliverance, by its nature and by its proximity to a minor exorcism, is rarer. This ministry should only be exercised by a priest/deacon or by a 'lay minister' with the charism of 'discernment of spirits'. No one should undertake deliverance ministry without sufficient training and formation. Moreover, whenever possible, if there is evidence of demonic manifestations, anyone engaged in a ministry of deliverance with an individual should seek the consultation of the prayer recipient's pastor or the appropriate diocesan personnel for further assessment and ministry.
14. The need for healing in a person's life often becomes evident in several ways:
  - a. those seeking to become members of the Church through the pre-discipleship and RCIA processes,
  - b. those who have been away from the practice of their faith,
  - c. those who have experienced trauma or have been deeply wounded spiritually, emotionally, or physically, and
  - d. those seeking to grow in their spiritual journey.

Consequently, catechists and other ministers involved in the accompaniment of catechumens and those engaged in pastoral care and spiritual direction need to acquire a level of understanding and expertise in relation to healing ministry.

#### 15. **Spiritual Agency: Healing Comes from God Alone**

The prayer minister does not heal anyone. It is only by God's grace and authority that people are healed and delivered from any affliction of mind, body, or spirit. Whether through the ordained ministry of the Church or by special gifts or charisms bestowed upon by the Holy Spirit, people are only instruments of the saving and redeeming action of Jesus Christ. Therefore, a radical faith and humility are required of anyone seeking to be a minister of healing or deliverance.

#### 16. **General Consent and Approval of the Bishop**

- a. It should be presumed that in the Diocese of Des Moines only those working within the Norms articulated here are acting in the name of the Catholic Church. 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. Again, ministers should recognize their limitations and in case of doubt seek advice from the appropriate church authorities. They should also know the local healthcare professionals and who to contact for referrals and input.

- b. **Non-diocesan/Non-parish Based Prayer Ministry:** Within the Diocese, there may be some independent prayer-groups and prayer-teams that engage in personal or private 'prayer ministry', who pray with individuals for healing, or offer prayers and blessings after a Sunday or weekday Mass. Some priests and parishes or other lay ministerial groups organize occasional Healing Masses and Healing Liturgies, with the Sacrament of the Sick or Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament.

Further, charismatic prayer gatherings with healing and deliverance ministries are organized from time to time by different groups or individuals, including those from outside the Diocese of Des Moines.

These pastoral initiatives are laudable and to be encouraged, but they must adhere to right doctrine, and the governing and liturgical norms expressed in universal and particular law. Further, these groups should always communicate clearly and openly with the Diocese, and their parish pastor.

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

- 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 the 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.

## **SECTION 2:** **Principles For Healing Ministry**

### **17. Personal Spiritual Preparation for Prayer Ministry**

In addition to the prescribed formal training and formation for prayer ministry, ministers are strongly encouraged to practice the following:

- a. Regular and active personal prayer life – having a living and transformative relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church.
  - b. Regular and active sacramental life (especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation).
  - c. Focused particular devotional prayer, fasting, and/or penitential practices before exercising prayer ministry.
  - d. Regular spiritual direction to help guide one’s ongoing spiritual life and assist one’s discernment in general or particular matters related to his or her ministry.
  - e. Ongoing spiritual and theological formation and renewal opportunities.
- 18. Location:** Care should be taken to ensure that prayers for healing and prayers for deliverance take place in suitable locations that do not inadvertently compromise the professional integrity of ministers or recipients (e.g., in a public space, not behind closed doors). Always minister in public view, never alone. It is ideal that such ministry happen within a church or sacred/blessed space.
- 19. Competence:** Through experience, prudence, and discernment one should realize when he or she is engaging a healing/deliverance situation that is beyond his or her depth. The prayer minister should try to gently direct the prayer recipient toward a more experienced prayer leader or another more competent person or professional. The minister may prudently close the immediate prayer session.
- 20. Confidentiality:** All ministers have a responsibility to keep confidential anything learned in the course of praying with someone. However, this is not a complete and absolute confidence either legally or morally, such as the professional confidence of a doctor or lawyer, or the absolute seal found in Confession.

- a. If a prayer recipient asks members of the team if he or she can share an issue with them in complete confidence, any team member should gently make it clear that they cannot promise this, as they may need to share information with the appropriate family, legal, civil, medical, and/or spiritual authority.
- b. If someone shares direct information relating to the abuse of a minor or the potential of harming oneself or another, that information should be reported or referred to the proper authorities.
- c. If information of a criminal nature is shared, the prayer minister may need to report this to one's prayer leader/supervisor or the proper authority.

21. **The Imposition or Laying-on of Hands:**

- a. When praying, the laity may not use priestly gestures such as the laying of hands upon a person's head or making the sign of the cross over them similar to the gesture of priests when giving a blessing.
- b. Lay ministers may not impart blessings on prayer recipients without the proper authority by natural law to do so (**see paragraph 33 for a description of authority**).
- c. If hands are imposed when praying with someone, it is better to place them upon the shoulders or upper back of prayer recipient.
- d. All physical contact should be appropriate. Touch is sacred and involves trust; when it is abused it is the cause of great hurt. To enter another's personal space is a privilege and should be done with great care and clear signals of respect.
  - 1) **Always ask permission to touch.** And be specific about where you are going to touch. e.g. "Is it ok if I pray with you?" "May I put my hand on your shoulder?" "Have you been prayed with before?" "This is what will happen, is that ok?" etc.
  - 2) If given permission, only touch the recipient's body outside their clothing.
  - 3) Never touch intimate areas or other parts of the body, beside the shoulders or upper back.
  - 4) If the prayer recipient wants to pray for a specific body part which he or she hopes will be healed, ask the recipient to place his or her own hand on the body part during the prayer.
  - 5) Team members of the opposite gender to the recipient should be wary of offering any touch beyond a hand on the shoulder. Remember the "opposite gender" code of practice is not fool proof; a person receiving prayer ministry may not be heterosexual.
  - 6) Never rub or massage the body of anyone receiving ministry.

22. **Sacramentals: Gestures, Prayers, and Blessed Objects** - Sacramentals are those prayers, blessings, rituals, and blessed objects that can be an instrument of conferring God's grace and protection. They can be used as an aid for/with others in prayer ministry.

- a. **Exorcized & Blessed Oil:**

- 1) Another area of some concern is the practice of laypeople anointing one another with blessed oil. The concern is that it resembles too closely the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, and many people are genuinely confused as to what is actually taking place.

**NB:** Therefore, one lay person anointing another lay person must be avoided, especially during a liturgical or non-liturgical prayer service.

- 2) Blessed olive oil can be used by the faithful upon/with themselves, somewhat like holy water or blessed salt. It is not sprinkled, but one can anoint one's own forehead, sore hand or arm, etc., or an individual can, for example, anoint the doorpost of a home or room, a bedpost, a holy statue, etc., to bring blessings and ward off evil.
- 3) Since it is olive oil, it can even be consumed by the faithful (in moderation). Blessed oil should not be indiscriminately used like regular olive oil, but adding a small amount to food for the religious purpose of bringing blessings or healings or warding off evil is not out of place.

b. **Other Sacramentals:**

Many other objects and images may be blessed by a priest (and often a deacon) as a source of devotion, prayer, healing, and protection. While these items may be used by the laity for own their personal/individual benefit, they generally should not be ministered (used) by one person over/to another within a ministerial context or setting – unless the minister has the proper spiritual authority.

Below are some of the common types of blessed sacramentals that may be used within prayer ministry:

- 1) **Exorcized & Blessed Holy Water:** Exorcized and Blessed Holy Water can be a very efficacious means of protection, blessing, and grace for oneself and others, as well as one's own home or possessions.
- 2) **Exorcized & Blessed Salt:** Exorcized and Blessed Salt can also be a very efficacious means of protection, blessing, and grace for oneself and others, as well as one's own home or possessions. Like Blessed Oil, it can even be consumed by the faithful with food (in moderation) for spiritual healing and protection.
- 3) **Exorcized & Blessed Incense:** Like Holy Water, exorcized and blessed incense can also be a very efficacious means of protection, blessing, and grace for oneself and others, as well as one's own home or possessions. It may be used for prayer services as a special means of blessing and devotion.
- 4) **The Bible – Sacred Scripture:** The reading and meditation of scripture, especially the Gospels and the Psalms, is always encouraged as part of any formal or informal prayer ministry experience.
- 5) **Crucifixes:** Of all the sacred images, a blessed Crucifix has a special place of honor as an icon of prayer, devotion, and grace. Crucifixes can be worn, held, or hung in one's home. During prayer ministry, the prayer recipient may hold a Crucifix while others pray with him or her.



- 6) **St. Benedict Medals:** Seeking the intercession of St. Benedict for spiritual protection and healing has long been a tradition within the Catholic Church. Specially blessed “St. Benedict” medals can be worn, hung, or placed around one’s home.
- 7) **Sacred Images:** Blessed images, icons, medals, and statues of our Lord, the Blessed Mother, and the angels and saints can be a source of great devotion, healing, and protection when used with faith.
- 8) **Other Items of Prayer and Devotion:** Some blessed objects of faith have special devotions and prayer practices associated with them, such as: the Rosary, Scapulars, Candles, Relics, Prayer Books & Prayer Cards.

### **Extraordinary Charismatic Gifts in the Context of Healing and Deliverance Prayer Ministry**

#### **23. Charismatic Gifts in the Life and Ministry of the Church:**

- a. Besides the hierarchical and institutional gifts given to His Church, God also bestows charismatic gifts upon individual members of the Church. These include the gift or charism of healing (cf. 1 Cor 12: 4-11, especially v. 9). This admirably disposes a person to a particular function within the life and mission of the Church.
- b. *“The Holy Spirit, while bestowing diverse ministries in Church communion, enriches it still further with particular gifts or promptings of grace, called charisms. These can take a great variety of forms, both as a manifestation of the absolute freedom of the Spirit who abundantly supplies them, and as a response to the varied needs of the Church in history.*

*The description and the classification given to these gifts in the New Testament are an indication of their rich variety. "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor 12:7-10; cf. 1 Cor 12:4-6, 28-31; Rom 12:6-8; 1 Pt 4:10-11) (**Christifideles Laici: On The Vocation And The Mission Of The Lay Faithful In The Church And In The World, #24**).*

- c. *“It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but, allotting his gifts to everyone according as He wills, He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit." These charisms, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the needs of the Church.”*

*Extraordinary gifts are not to be (randomly/rashly) sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from their use; but judgment as to their genuineness and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good. (**Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, #12**)”*

## 24. Hierarchical and Charismatic Gifts: In Relationship for A Common Purpose

- a. *“The relationship between them appears close and well-articulated. They have the same origin and the same purpose. They are gifts of God, of the Holy Spirit, of Christ, given to contribute, in diverse ways, to the edification of the Church. He who has received the gift to lead in the Church has also the responsibility of keeping watch over the good exercise of the other charisms, in such a manner that all contribute to the good of the Church and to its evangelizing mission, knowing well that the Holy Spirit distributes the charismatic gifts to whomever he desires (cf. 1 Cor 12:11).*

*The same Spirit gives to the hierarchy of the Church the capacity to discern the authenticity of the charisms, to welcome them with joy and gratitude, to promote them generously, and to accompany them with vigilant paternity. History itself testifies to the multiform action of the Spirit, through which the Church, ‘built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the capstone’ (Eph 2:20), lives her mission in the world.”* **(Juvenescit Ecclesia, Regarding The Relationship Between Hierarchical And Charismatic Gifts In The Life And The Mission Of The Church, Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith, May 15, 2016, par. #8).**

- b. The Church takes care to discern the charisms given, and to form and train individuals to use their gifts wisely and appropriately in service. It is the responsibility of the Bishop at the diocesan level and the parish priest within his parish community to order the use of such gifts.

## 25. The Gift of Healing:

*“The gift of healing is God’s supernatural action to bring a sick person to physical, emotional or spiritual health. Paul literally speaks of this gift in the plural, ‘gifts of healings’ (1 Corinthians 12:9), since there are many different kinds of healing. Healing is not something we can do in our own strength or ability. It is done by God’s power, which comes as a gift through our faith and prayer. When we pray for people, laying hands on them, and nothing happens, we see what we can do. On the other hand, when the person is healed, we see what God’s energy can so powerfully do through us (see Colossians 1:29)”* **Clark, Randy; Healy, Mary. *The Spiritual Gifts Handbook: Using Your Gifts to Build the Kingdom* (p. 156). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.**

- a. **Testimonials:** 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 **CDF 2000 Instruction on Prayers for Healing, Art. 9.**

## 26. The Gift of Tongues:

*“The gift of tongues is speech inspired by the Holy Spirit in a language the speaker does not understand. In First Corinthians, Paul seems to speak about two different forms of this gift: tongues as a language for personal prayer and praise, and tongues as a public message for the congregation.”* **Clark, Randy; Healy, Mary. *The Spiritual Gifts Handbook: Using Your Gifts to Build the Kingdom* (p. 178); Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.**

- a. **Speaking/Interpreting Tongues:** The biblical charism of “*Speaking in Tongues*” generally refers to an individual who is able to speak in another known language for the purpose of proclaiming the Good News, or for a person who can understand another known language for the purpose of understanding the proclamation of the Good News (“*Interpreting Tongues*”).

- b. **Praying in Tongues:** The practice of “*Praying in Tongues*” is something different. Generally, when a person is “praying in tongues” the spoken words are unknown or unintelligible both to the individual praying and to others. This prayer is primarily for the benefit of the one who is praying – not for others. Whether or not this is an authentic charismatic (supernatural) gift or just a natural way of spontaneous, conscious, jubilant prayer continues to be a matter of some theological discussion and speculation. Generally, this practice is something that can be done at will and moderated by the person praying.
- c. To avoid any confusion, misunderstanding, or appearance of manipulation of those involved, prayer leaders are prohibited from encouraging “praying in tongues” in the Holy Spirit, during any public healing/deliverance prayer service.

**NB:** The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has set out norms in its, *Instruction On Prayers For Healing, 2000.*, Art. 5 states, “*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.*”

27. **Words of Knowledge/Prophecy/Discernment of Spirits:**

*“The gifts of the word of wisdom, word of knowledge, and discernment of spirits are often called revelation gifts because they depend on the Holy Spirit revealing what is known only to God. Commentators differ on what precisely Paul meant by these three terms, but they are commonly used today in a way that is based on biblical principles as well as reflection on what God is doing now. Like the early Christians, who sought to understand God’s will for the new Gentile converts in light of both Scripture and the present works of God, so Christians today seek to understand the gifts of the Spirit by studying both Scripture and the present works of God (see Acts 15:7–8, 12–18)”* **Clark, Randy; Healy, Mary. The Spiritual Gifts Handbook: Using Your Gifts to Build the Kingdom (pp. 137-138). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.**

- a. It is appropriate to pray in the expectation that the Lord will respond to prayers for healing, be it spiritual, emotional, psychological, or physical: but always in accordance with God’s will, his timing, and his plans for a person’s life. Prayer ministers should never tell someone that his or her lack of faith has prevented his or her healing.
- b. While praying with the individual prayer recipient, a prayer minister may sense the Lord has prompted the minister with a picture, a verse of scripture, or a sense for the delegate he or she is praying with – these are to be offered to the specific person for his or her own discernment and no pressure should be placed on the person to accept them.
- c. In these situations prayer ministers should pray quietly for wisdom before speaking a word of knowledge.
- d. The prayer minister should simply share what he or she believes God has given in a way which makes no unwarranted promises, and leaves the person receiving prayer free to accept or reject what is offered by the prayer minister.
- e. Prayer ministers should be prudent and humble in sharing discerning of spirits and words of knowledge (or prophesy) as they minister. Some words are only for the minister and not for the prayer recipient.

**NB: Remember, these insights may be fallible or incorrectly discerned.** In any situation when a Word of Knowledge is shared, discernment is necessary on the part of both the prayer minister and the prayer recipient.

- f. Persons should not try to interpret these promptings or tell the prayer recipient how they should understand them. It should be up to the individual prayer recipient to discern and decide the meaning of these things.
- g. A person's individual conscience and his or her relationship with God must always be respected and treated with great dignity and care. Individuals should have appropriate time and proper assistance in discerning God's presence, action, and holy will for themselves. Prayer ministers should never:
  - 1) instruct a person with specific advice or opinion about delicate situations.
  - 2) tell anyone God's specific desire or plan for them in a definitive way: such as, "God told me He wants you to do this or that", "God said for you to do this or that".
  - 3) mention vocational calling in a definitive way, such as "God is calling you into the priesthood: say instead, "Have you ever thought of becoming a priest" etc.
- h. Prayer ministers must not give specific guidance about situations in the person's life or relationships. They should:
  - 1) always phrase things in an affirming, rather than negative, way.

*Example:* If a prayer minister feels Jesus is telling him or her that the prayer recipient has unforgiveness, ask the person instead if there is anyone in their lives they might be struggling to forgive.

- 2) never tell a prayer recipient directly that he or she has a specific illness, sin, emotional/spiritual wound, spiritual/demonic attachment, curse, etc.
  - 3) avoid saying anything that may cause guilt or condemnation. Never give the impression that someone's lack of healing comes from a lack of faith or some other moral defect. Never use words that judge, accuse, blame, or condemn. One should always be a minister of God's love and consolation.
- i. **Corporate/General/Public Words or Pronouncements Regarding Healing:**
  - 1) **Corporate/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) are not permitted.** This should never be done especially in the context of any liturgical prayer.

**While people may receive genuine words of knowledge, wisdom, or prophecy, this particular form of exercising or manifesting that gift lacks any substantive historical, biblical, theological, or liturgical grounding.**

- 2) These general pronouncements, sometimes used to build-up the expectant faith of individuals within a group, can be inaccurate, sensationalized, vague, and even manipulative with an inordinate focus on the person making the pronouncements.

- 3) **The greatest pastoral care and discernment should be taken when given these promptings** as they can come from either Satan, one's own mind, or from God.
- j. Stay away from "foretelling" future events such as healings, deliverance, marriage, deaths and births. Forth-telling, prophesying God's good intentions for them, is more spiritually edifying.

**28. Giving Counsel:**

- a. Prayer ministers should not give advice; but rather offer appropriate, prudent spiritual encouragement. They may encourage the prayer recipient to go to Confession, to forgive someone, and to avoid the occasions of sin or occult practices.
- b. Prayer ministers should never give any kind of medical or psychological advice (i.e. – "Stop taking your prescriptions", etc.)
- c. Prayer ministers should never suggest names of specific doctors, lawyers, counselors, helpful herbal supplements, etc. While a prayer minister may encourage general medical interventions, (i.e. – "Have you seen a doctor regarding this condition", etc.) specific recommendations to see a particular physician, counselor, or other professional are inappropriate.

**DIOCESE OF DES MOINES: 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 that 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.

### **SECTION 3: Principles For Deliverance Prayer By The Laity**

29. Within the Catholic Church deliverance is understood separately from exorcism and is deemed permissible for appropriately trained lay people in certain circumstances. Prayer ministers may sensitively lead prayer recipients through a time of personal deliverance or freedom from various inappropriate attachments or struggles with unforgiveness.
30. It is considered licit and laudatory for the laity to pray for protection and deliverance from any type of evil.

**NB:** However, the way and manner of this type of prayer should be properly understood in practice. **These distinctions are essential** (vis., non-negotiable) to ensure the safety and spiritual well-being of anyone involved in or in need of prayers of protection and deliverance from evil.

31. Anyone involved in this type of prayer ministry should be well-formed and given proper approbation (blessing/certification/permission) by the authority of the Church. Even if well-intended, this type of prayer should not be entered into casually, but with great discernment, prudence, humility, piety, knowledge, integrity of one’s moral and spiritual life, and docility to ecclesial authority.

#### **Specific Deliverance Prayer Guidelines:**

32. Individuals should never engage in deliverance ministry alone; there **must always** be at least two responsibly trained persons. Preferably, there should be at least one prayer minister (or prayer support person) of the same gender as the prayer recipient.
33. When ‘deliverance’ is spoken of within the context of healing prayer, it is implying that ***trained prayer ministers*** are praying with a recipient of prayer through issues, concerns or worries that ***have been identified by the prayer recipient themselves*** prior to or during the time of ministry. Ideally, the prayer recipient has had time to prayerfully discern any attachments in need of renouncing or people who need forgiven.
34. **Spiritual Authority and Rights of the Laity to Command:**

**Authority and rights of the laity over each other to directly command/adjure the demonic come from the natural law within the context of the Sacraments of Baptism and Marriage and/or the proper ordering of the roles within the family.** They include:

- a. A baptized person has authority over himself/herself
- b. A baptized person can have authority over objects and property by right of ownership
- c. The head of a household has authority over all those living within the household
- d. Spouses have authority over each other which stems from the Sacrament of Matrimony
- e. Parents have authority to command over their minor children
- f. Parents have right to council over their adult children
- g. Siblings have some authority over each other when acting in place of a parent in some situations (4<sup>th</sup> Commandment)

**NB:** Godparents and/or Grandparents do not have any natural authority and/or rights over their extended family and/or their godchildren.

NB: This document sets disciplinary norms for the Diocese of Des Moines, and as such is not intended to address current theological debates regarding the capacity of laity to directly command. Instead it sets prudential limits for healing and deliverance ministers in the context of all healing and deliverance ministry, whether liturgical or non-liturgical, public or private.

### 35. **Imprecatory and Deprecatory Prayer of the Laity:**

- a. An **imprecatory** prayer is one in which a person directly (1<sup>st</sup> person) commands the demons to leave (*i.e.* - *"In the name of Jesus, I command you..."*). In the context of all healing and deliverance prayer ministries only a layperson with the proper spiritual authority may pray this type of deliverance prayer over another person (see "Spiritual Authority and Rights of the Laity to Command", #33).
  - b. A **deprecatory** (intercessory/petitionary) prayer is one in which a person petitions Jesus, and the intercession of Our Lady, the Angels, and Saints to drive the demons out (*i.e.* - *"Dear Jesus, through the intercession of Blessed Mary and all the saints, please deliver N. from the bondage of these spirits..."*). Any well-formed layperson can pray this type of deliverance prayer over another following certain guidelines.
36. When ministering with individuals, if the source of the problem is suspected to be the evil one, or if they begin to manifest distracting behavior, one may say a deprecatory binding prayer (not addressing evil spirits by name but asking the Lord to do it) silently in your mind such as "Lord Jesus Christ, may You bind all manifestations of any evil spirit present here and bring (person's name) your peace and comfort."
37. Prayer ministers may never address any evil spirits directly by name aloud.
38. Due to the uncertainty in discernment and the possible psychological or spiritual harm to a person, the possibility of diabolical oppression, obsession or possession as the source of the problem will **NOT be mentioned** to the individual.
39. Outwardly, prayer ministers should calmly speak the name of the person they are praying with, telling him or her that one has the ability to regain control, assuring the person he or she is loved by God. When the person is in control, the minister may say a prayer asking God's blessing over him or her and gently suggest that the person consult with his or her pastor. The

Diocese has procedures in place to address those in need of greater spiritual care, and the pastors know the guidelines.

40. If a prayer minister is led to pray for a specific issue or in a specific way, he or she may do so with a quiet authority.
41. Prayer ministers can lead the prayer recipient into a prayer of renouncement of the identified concern, issues, or behavior which he or she has identified and then in a prayer of recommitment to Jesus. If the person is Catholic, the minister may encourage him or her to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation when possible.
42. If the ministry does become loud or disruptive, the prayer minister may ask the person to come to a private space and continue the ministry there, ensuring that a person with suitable experience is present. The team should always seek to protect the person's dignity.
43. After deliverance ministry it is important to pray God sends His light and love into the person and that the Holy Spirit would fill him or her. Prayer ministers should do all that is reasonable to ensure that the person is at peace before he or she leaves the event. Deliverance ministry may also need to be accompanied by prayer for inner healing.

#### **Exorcism And Deliverance In The Context Of Healing Prayer**

44. In keeping with the norms of can. 1172 of the *Code of Canon Law*; *The Letter on the Instruction On Prayers For Healing*, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of September 14, 2000; 29, 1985; *The Letter To Ordinaries Regarding Norms On Exorcism*, Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith, 29 September, 1985; and the *Rituale Romanum*, the following norms must be followed:
  - a. 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). The ministry of exorcism must be exercised in strict dependence on the diocesan bishop. Bishops are therefore strongly advised to stipulate that these norms be observed.
  - b. 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.
  - c. 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.
  - d. Therefore, **no layperson** (except the afflicted themselves, or those with proper authority and/or rights from natural law) should **directly** name, question, command, or address the demonic when seeking deliverance.
  - e. The prayers of exorcism contained in the *Rituale Romanum* must remain separate from any healing services, whether liturgical or non-liturgical.
  - f. 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.



- g. A person should never use imprecatory prayers of command (1<sup>st</sup> Person) unless one has the proper authority and/or rights given by either Natural Law (Self, Spouses, Parents, and Siblings) or by Divine Positive Law (Holy Orders). E.x., *“In the name of Jesus, I command...”*
- 45. It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that only priests who are trained and explicitly authorized (mandated) by the bishop can perform exorcisms. The Diocese of Des Moines has a designated exorcist. If prayer ministers have identified genuine concerns of demonic possession or manifestation, the time of ministry needs to be brought to an end sensitively and safely with the guidance of the prayer team leader.
- 46. The prayer minister must immediately inform his or her pastor or designated prayer team leaders. They will communicate with the appropriate diocesan staff/authority to identify the correct support for the prayer recipient. Genuine demonic manifestation is rare and must be discerned by the exorcist and his team.
- 47. The Rites of Exorcism are never to be undertaken by the laity at any liturgical or non-liturgical prayer event, experience, or gathering. In accordance with the teaching of the Church, prayer for exorcism can only be done with the Bishop’s approval and by priests who are explicitly authorized by him to do so.

## **DIOCESE OF DES MOINES: DIOCESAN 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.

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