

Extraordinary Action of the Devil and Imputability

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ABSTRACT:

No person, who is really a victim of an extraordinary diabolical action and who is sane and morally well-oriented (even only from the standpoint of natural law), can achieve, under the extraordinary influence of the devil, to perform abominable acts such as those reported below?

Keywords: exorcism, mental health, disorder

PREMISES

In 2011, terrible news filled the pages of Spanish newspapers. A man, of Colombian origin, decapitated his two-year-old daughter, probably with a knife, in front of another six-year-old daughter, while his wife was not at home. After the bloody crime, the man called the police explaining the insane gesture by saying, "The devil ordered me."

In 2012, Yoselyn Ortega, a 56-year-old nanny, "apologized" for the murder of two brothers aged six and two in New York City (United States of America) saying "The devil ordered me to do it."

In 2014, Brazilian police arrested a vigilante, 23-year-old Jhonatan Lopes de Santana, who confessed to murdering six people after a pact with the devil that



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asked him to kill 36 homeless people "because they don't pay taxes and live on other people's shoulders."

In 2016 in Mexico, 18-year-old Jesus Guadalupe Medrano Alvarado justified the double murder of his mother and grandmother by saying that the devil had commanded him.

In 2017, a 13-year-old boy from Indiana (United States of America) killed an 11-month-old brother and a 23-month-old sister by saying that he had acted on the orders of an angel, who also "helped" he smother them with a blanket. The angel also allegedly ordered him to "squeeze" a kitten so hard that its internal organs exploded.

In 2018, the auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Managua, Bishop Mario Guevara, was attacked while confessing in the church by Elis Leonidovna Gonn, who threw sulfuric acid on him, causing severe burns to his face and body. Stopped and then tried, in court, she justified herself by saying that she had acted because "the devil told me to kill someone" otherwise "the devil would have taken my life."

In 2019, 30-year-old Tisha Sanchez smothered her son Jovani Antonio Delapen with a pillow in Texas (USA). The woman, cornered, confessed everything, but defended herself by saying that she had acted this way by a precise order received in her head by "demons."



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From these facts reported by the mass media, it is clear that it is not uncommon for people to commit deplorable acts justifying themselves by saying that they acted because they were pushed, or commanded, by an inner voice that identified itself with that of the devil or some other superhuman entity. In fact, it is statistically likely that the number of such cases is far greater than reported by the mass media.

The issues raised by such events are certainly complex and would require a multidisciplinary approach to be adequately addressed.

Our contribution along these lines is limited to addressing them from the perspective of exorcist science, against the backdrop of moral theology's teaching on human acts and the imputability of human acts. In other words, we want to understand whether people, who are really victims of an extraordinary diabolical action, can, under the influence of this action, perform acts such as those mentioned above and, if so, whether or not they are responsible for them.

First, we will briefly explain the common moral doctrine concerning human acts and their quality usually indicated by the term imputability, mentioning what its possible impediments are.

Later on, after reporting some fundamental notions of demonology and recalling the basic data concerning the extraordinary diabolic action, we will try to give an answer to the question that stimulated the writing of these pages.

The moral doctrine concerning human acts and their imputability



1. Human acts

By human acts we mean those actions in man which proceed from the intellect (cognition, awareness, warning) and from free will (consent, approval, free assent). Human acts, thus understood, must be kept distinct from the so-called acts of man, which, having the human person as subject, do not depend on his cognition and free will.

1.1. First, for an act to be human, cognition (awareness, warning) must include:

- *the action that is taking place (the person must have consciousness, warning, and awareness of what he is doing; therefore, they are not human acts, but simply human acts, the imaginations or feelings that occupy a person's cognitive faculty before he becomes aware of it);*
- *the object of the action taking place with all its immediate circumstances (a hunter who shoots a man and kills him knowing that he is a man commits murder; a hunter who shoots a man and kills him convinced that he is an animal which it is lawful to hunt, from this point of view and from a purely moral point of view, does not commit murder per se);*
- *the possibility of not doing the action or of acting differently (without the awareness of this possibility one cannot, in fact, speak of free assent).*

1.2. Furthermore, for an act to be human, along with the aforementioned knowledge, the free assent (approval, consent) of the will is required, which can be:



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- *perfect (if something is desired with full awareness and full consent), or imperfect (if something is desired with imperfect knowledge and imperfect consent, as happens, for example, in semi-sleep or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or overwhelming passionate excitement);*
- *actual (if the person acting is aware of what he is doing and wills it while doing it, as can happen to a priest in the act in which, during the H. Mass, he consecrates the bread and wine with full attention to what he is doing and with the intention of doing it) or virtual (if the assent still exists in the agent's intention, but without actually existing in his consciousness, as can happen to a priest, who, after having formulated during the preparation made in the sacristy the intention to consecrate, in the act in which he actually consecrates is the victim of a distraction);*
- *voluntary in itself (it is what is directly wanted, even if only as a means, as when, for example, a fetus is killed to save the mother) or voluntary in question (when something is not directly wanted, but only allowed to occur because of the inevitable connection with the action that arises, as happens, for example, when the death of the fetus results from the surgical removal of a malignant tumor in a pregnant woman. side effect).*

2. The imputability of human acts

A human act is imputable when the person who performs it can, in good law, be declared to be the free author of that act and what follows from it. The imputability of an action means that the person who performs it is responsible for it. However, there are differences to be taken into account, depending on whether the act with what



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follows is intended in itself (voluntary in itself) or a side effect (voluntary in question).

2.1. With regard to the imputability of a willed act itself, one must consider that what is willed itself must always be attributed to the agent, whether it is a good deed or a bad deed.

2.2. As for the imputability of a side effect (voluntary in question), if it is a good effect, it is never attributed to the agent (if with the sole intention of saving my life, I perform an action from which derives, along with the salvation of my life, the salvation of other people, under the moral aspect I have no merit for this happy outcome); if instead, it is a bad side effect, in many cases it is attributed to the agent. Indeed, for it to be lawful to perform an action from which one expects, at least in confusion, the following of a bad side effect, is necessary:

- That the action itself is good in itself, or at least morally indifferent;
- that from the action, along with the bad effect, a good effect simultaneously derives (and here great attention is needed, for if the good effect derives from the bad effect, the latter would be previously desired as a means, which is never legitimate, because bad means cannot be used for good ends);
- that the intention with which one acts is directed solely to the good effect;
- that there is a good enough reason to allow the bad effect.

3. The impediments to human acts



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After recalling the notions concerning human acts and their imputability, it remains to consider what can hinder the intellect in relation to cognition (awareness, warning) and the will in relation to free consent (assent, approval).

Anything that can hinder a human act in either of the two aspects that qualify it as such is called an impediment. An impediment affects the imputability of the act, even reducing or even removing it. Without going into the details of each of these on purpose, impediments in the sphere of moral theology can be classified in the following order.

3.1. *Ignorance, to be understood, in this context, as the lack of the necessary knowledge. To this concept, ignorance must be equated with both error (false judgment about something) and inadvertence (when even knowing something very well, one does not reflect on the act of acting).*

Among the various distinctions in the matter of ignorance, we recall here the one between conquerable ignorance (ignorance that can and therefore must be eliminated by applying that awareness corresponding to one's abilities and the circumstances in which one finds oneself) and invincible ignorance (ignorance that, even if applied with the awareness corresponding to one's abilities and the circumstances in which one finds oneself, cannot be removed). In the case where a person intentionally wishes to remain in ignorance that is inherently conquerable, that ignorance is said to be affected.



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As for imputability, invincible ignorance, by removing the voluntary, also removes liability.

On the other hand, diminishing willful ignorance also diminishes responsibility, but not to the extent that a sin, serious as to matter, becomes a venial sin as to warning and deliberate consent, except in the case where the negligence shown in the application to overcome ignorance was insignificant.

Affected ignorance, in turn, not only does not diminish responsibility but in some cases may increase it.

3.2. *Violence, to be understood in this context, is an external influence that leads a person to act against his will.*

We speak of absolute violence when the human will oppose all resistance that it is capable of producing. Instead, we speak of relative violence when the human will have the possibility, by opposing further resistance, to overcome the violence, but refrains from doing so; or when, while opposing sufficient external resistance, inwardly it agrees.

In absolute violence, freedom is taken away, and therefore what happens under its influence is not attributable to the victim.

In relative violence, freedom is only diminished and therefore what happens under its influence is partly attributable to the victim.



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3.3. *Fear, to be understood, in this context, as a restlessness (disturbance, trepidation) of the soul caused by the worry of impending evil.*

Fear, whether severe or mild, depending on the evil to the soul, never takes away voluntariness, even if it generally diminishes responsibility, because it leads one to want what one would not otherwise want.

However, if the fear of the soul's restlessness comes to affect the sensitive (passionate) sphere of the person, the influence it exerts on imputability may be analogous to that exerted by passion.

3.4. *Passion, to be understood in this context is an intense and violent feeling (of attraction or repulsion) that comes from the representation of a good or evil.*

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, numbers 1763-1765, we read: "By feelings or passions we mean the emotions or movements of the sensibility, which impel us to act or not to act according to what is felt or imagined as good or bad. The passions are natural components of human psychology; they act as intermediaries and ensure the link between the sensitive life and the life of the spirit [...]. My passions are many. The fundamental one is love caused by the attraction of the good. Love arouses the desire for the good that one does not have and the hope of attaining it. This movement ends in the pleasure and joy of the good possessed. Fear of evil causes hatred, aversion, and fear of future evil. This movement ends in the sadness of the present evil or the anger that opposes it."



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As far as passion is concerned, a distinction is usually made between antecedent passion and consequent passion.

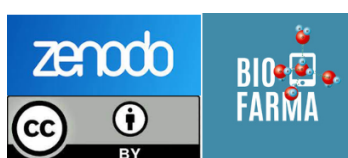
The antecedent passion is that which precedes the decision of the will, acting only as a stimulus to its assent. These are the so-called involuntary movements of vain complacency, anger, hatred, gluttony, sensual pleasure, etc.

Consequent passion, on the other hand, is that which proceeds from the free decision of the will, either because it is voluntarily admitted (which happens when one consciously lingers and feeds on movements that arise spontaneously), or because it is aroused on purpose. (Which occurs when passionate movements are intentionally aroused, for example, ruminating over errors received, watching obscene shows, etc.).

As for imputability, the preceding passion, insofar as it hinders the use of reason, diminishes responsibility, even removing it if it totally prevents its use. The consequent passion, on the other hand, not only never diminishes imputability, but generally increases it.

3.5. Habit, to be understood, in this context, as facility (readiness) to act in a certain way, acquired by repetition of the same acts.

With regard to imputability, voluntary habit, i.e., caused by free acts and not yet seriously portrayed, increases responsibility.



Involuntary habit, i.e. caused by free acts, but sincerely portrayed, diminishes or even takes away responsibility. It diminishes it if the warning that occurs during the act performed by habit is imperfect. It removes it if the warning is completely absent.

3.6. *Mental disorders, to be understood, in this context, as pathological changes that affect the cognitive functions in various ways (thinking, ideation, concentration, attention, ability to face and solve problems), the affective sphere (the mood, emotions, feelings, anxiety) and behavior of a person.*

Speaking very broadly, people with mental disorders are not responsible for their actions to the extent that the imaginations of fantasy affect reason to such an extent that it can in no way or only with difficulty apply itself to something else, with the consequence that free will is totally impeded or at the very least very limited.

Without going into further detail about the impediments mentioned and how each of them can affect the imputability of an act, it is now worth asking whether extraordinary diabolical action can be counted among the impediments to human acts, coming to diminish or even remove their imputability.

The answer, which must take into account what can certainly be said about demons and their influence on man in a state of viability, is necessarily articulate, for there are different kinds of extraordinary diabolical action. Moreover, it must be kept in mind that each kind of extraordinary diabolical action implies, in individual cases, elements or factors that make each case unique from the others.



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Fundamental notions of demonology and basic concepts of extraordinary diabolical action

4. The influence of demons on man's senses and, in particular, on his intellect and will

Taking the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas as a reference point, let us, first of all, recall some basic notions of demonology.

In the Quaestiones disputatae de malo (q. 16 a. 12 co.) St. Thomas states that in relation to the work of the devil, there are two things to consider: the first is what the devil can in virtue of his own nature; the second, how the devil, according to the malice of his own will, makes use of his natural capacity.

As to the capacity of his nature, Thomas Aquinas states that demons can do the same things as good angels, having the same nature in common. There is, however, a difference in the use of this ability, according to the goodness and malice of their will. For clarity, the good angels do indeed tend to be useful to man in view of the perfect knowledge of the truth; by contrast, the devil tends to prevent this, as indeed he does with all other human goods.

4.1. As for man's external senses, as St. Thomas explains in Summa Theologiae (cf. I^a q. 111 a. 4 co.), they can be moved in two ways. First, from without, through the sensible objects perceived; second, from within, which happens when the senses



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are altered (as happens, for example, with the palate of the patient who feels everything bitter).

Now angels, with their natural power, are able to move man's senses in both directions. So demons, like good angels, can from without present to the senses sensible objects, either already existing in nature, or formed by themselves, as they do when they take on a body. From within, then, they can act on the human organism by producing changes in the senses.

However, it must be emphasized that demons, like good angels, cannot act outside the order of the whole creation (cf. I^a q. 111 a. 4 ad 3). They can, however, act outside the order of a particular nature, since they are not subject to that order. Thus, they can move man's senses out of the ordinary.

4.2 With regard to man's inner imaginative sense (or phantasy), St. Thomas in the Summa Theologiae (cf. I^a q. 111 a. 3 co.) explains that both good and evil angels can, in virtue of the power of their nature, affect it.

Just as in a man, the interior agitation can be so strong as to produce hallucinations even in a waking state, as happens with the insane and other alienated, and as such phenomena can occur by a natural disturbance and sometimes by the very will of man, who voluntarily reproduces with the imagination what he has perceived with the senses, so these things can also occur under the influence of a good or evil angel,



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sometimes with abstraction from the bodily senses, sometimes without this abstraction.

4.3. With regard to the possible influence of angels on the human intellect, St. Thomas addresses the question in *Summa Theologiae* I^a q. 111 a. 1., arguing, in essence, that since the order established by divine providence wills that inferior beings be under the influence of superior beings, it follows that, as angels of a lower degree are enlightened by those of a higher degree, so men who are inferior to angels are enlightened by them.

The same arguments developed in the *Summa* are also set forth in the aforementioned *Quaestiones disputatae de malo* (cf. q. 16 a. 12 co.), where Thomas Aquinas gives particular attention to the work of demons in this regard. St. Thomas recalls, first of all, that the intellectual operation of men is carried out on the basis of two principles, that is, according to the intelligible light and the intelligible species, so that with these the apprehension of things is accomplished, and with the intelligible light, the judgment about the things learned is carried out.

Now in the human soul, there is a natural intelligible light, which certainly in the order of nature is below the angelic light. Therefore, just as in bodily things the higher faculties assist and strengthen the lower faculties, so by means of angelic light the light of the human intellect can be strengthened to judge more perfectly, which the good angel tends to do, certainly not the bad angel. So in this way, the good angels move the soul toward understanding, not the demons.



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On the other hand, apart from species, both good and bad angels can move man's intellect to understand something, not by insinuating species into the same intellect, but by using some external images with which the intellect is excited to learn something, which men can also do with other men.

Moreover, good and bad angels can also internally arrange and order imaginary species by which the intellect tends to understand something (something that has already been seen above in exposing the influence that good and bad angels they can exert on the internal sense of the imaginative).

In this kind of operation the good angels order it for man's good, while the demons for his evil, that is, to make him commit a sin (as when, for example, a man is moved to pride or some other sin by the things he has learned by imagination) or to prevent the very understanding of the truth, whereby, according to what he has learned by imagination, man is led into a doubt which he cannot resolve and is therefore deceived.

4.4. As for the possible influence on the human will, St. Thomas addresses the question in *Summa Theologiae* I^a q. 111 a. 2., arguing that the will can be moved in two ways: from within or from without.

As for the first way, that is, from within, since the movement of the will is nothing more than its inclination toward what is desired, moving the will in this way belongs solely to God, who endows the intellectual nature with the necessary capacity for this



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inclination. As in all things, the natural inclination comes only from God, who gives nature to things, so the inclination of the will comes only from God, who causes the will.

As for the second way, that is, from the outside, one can move the will of another by presenting to his intellect an object as a desirable good. Also in this second way, only God can irresistibly move the will; the angel and man instead only by doing a work of persuasion.

The human will, however, can also be moved from without in another way, that is, by the passion that arises in the sensitive appetite; thus the will is driven to want something by lust or anger. And since angels have the power to arouse such passions, they can also move the will in this way. However, it is not a necessary movement, because the will always remain free to consent or resist the passion.

In conclusion, demons cannot enter thoughts by causing them internally; because the use of intellectual power is subject to the will. When the devil is said to "kindle the thoughts," this means that the devil incites to think and desire the things thought, either by persuasion or by excitation of the passions.

5. Basics about extraordinary diabolical action

Taking as reference the "Guidelines for the ministry of exorcism in the light of the current ritual", published in a second edition by the Edizioni Messaggero Padova

(indicated with the initials Guidelines followed by the number to which it refers), recall below some fundamental concepts about the extraordinary diabolic action.

- In a generic sense, "extraordinary" diabolical action is to be understood, given divine permission, to exercise a form of diabolical power toward men (cf. Guidelines 49). The exercise of this form of diabolical power is called "extraordinary" not so much because of the "spectacularity" or abnormality that is detected in some cases, but because of the fact that only a limited number of men are victims of it (see Guidelines No. 33, b).
- Extraordinary diabolical action is indicated with the term "preternatural" to distinguish it from divine action (supernatural) and from human action or action attributable to realities which in the order of creation are below man (natural). Supernatural action is recognizable only by its effects on the natural world. Examining these effects and finding that they cannot be attributed to God or explained by natural causes, it is proved that it is the devil who causes them (Guidelines 210-211).
- According to the classification adopted by the International Association of Exorcists, extraordinary diabolical action is distinguished into possession, obsession, and vexation if the demonic action is exercised directly on the human person; infestation, if it is related to things given to humans (see Guidelines 46).
- If for various reasons a classification is necessary, it should be kept in mind that in reality the boundaries between the various species of extraordinary diabolical action are not always well defined; on the contrary, their



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intermingling or aggregation often occurs, so that in practice we find a wide range of disorders, of various forms and of different severity (see Guidelines 48).

The individual species of extraordinary diabolical action and how each one can influence the exercise of free will

6. The Devilish Anguish

By diabolical vexation, we mean the action of the devil intended to attack and physically torment man, without this itself implying possession of the body that is tormented, which consequently remains under the normal control of the human intellect and will (see Guidelines n. 66).

In diabolical oppression, aggression is therefore brought upon the person's body and can take various forms (see Guidelines n. 67-69). Situations in which an individual is fiercely, constantly, and unmotivated subjected to "persecution" by others with whom his life is intertwined can also be part of diabolical harassment, remaining prejudiced from a social, economic, emotional, etc. aspect.

Certainly, diabolical harassment can indirectly provoke natural reactions of understandable fear in those who are victims of it, as well as contribute to the ignition of passionate movements of various kinds. But in any case, in a normal subject and even more so in a Christian who lives oriented toward God and is seriously committed to a certain spiritual (cf. Orientations #216, note 15), the will itself always



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remains free to consent to or resist the passion, and this is also true in situations where the passional movements, occasioned by diabolical oppression, have been fed by the same demon.

What has been said thus far also applies to cases of persons suffering from a true diabolical infestation, where the aggression of the evil one is directed toward places or things given for the use of man, including animals (see Guidelines #70).

7. The diabolical obsession

By diabolic obsession, we understand the action, of the devil, destined to attack and torment man internally, in the psychic sphere. This aggression doesn't aim directly at the intellect and free will of the person, because these two faculties are impregnable to any creature. Instead, the passional sphere and the internal senses of the person being attacked and tormented, in particular the imagination, esteem, and sensitive memory. In man, the internal senses are by nature dependent on the intellect and will, and it is precisely by virtue of this bond that in diabolical obsession the intellect and will appear indirectly assaulted and tormented (cf. Guidelines n. 61).

As it is well said in the Guidelines, in diabolical obsession there is no possession of the body by itself, which implies putting the soul back in control and direction to be given. In this kind of extraordinary diabolical action, the devil's action is limited to communicating the insistent "species" (images, sounds, sensations) to the psychic sphere of man. Not infrequently, the "bombarded" species immediately seem rationally absurd to the intellect of the one who receives them, but they are of such



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magnitude and intensity that the victim is unable to reject them, or in any case finds it very difficult to get rid of them (cf. Guidelines nos. 62-63).

On this last point one must have clear ideas: whatever form the obsessive action of the devil takes, what the victim cannot avoid with the normal means of nature and grace (and therefore needs the ministry of the exorcist) is only being "bombarded" by the species (images, sounds, sensations) that the devil communicates to his internal senses and his passional sphere.

Everything, however, stops here, in the "bombardment", that is, to receive "suggestions" and impulses. As for putting them into action, in all cases where the victim is a normal subject (and even more so if he is a Christian who lives oriented toward God and is seriously committed to the spiritually oriented front) these "push" caused by the devil, they do not constitute needful motions and the will itself always remains free to consent or resist them.

8. The diabolic possession

By diabolic possession we mean the action by which an evil spirit is able to exercise despotic control over a human body, managing, at certain moments called "crisis", to move and/or speak through the body of the possessed person, without the victim. being able to do anything to prevent it, even in cases where she maintains awareness of what is happening to her (see Guidelines #52).



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The specificity of diabolical possession is represented, therefore, by the permanent presence of one or more demons in a human body over which, at certain moments called "crisis," the evil one exercises despotic control by moving and/or speaking through it as if it were his own (see Guidelines #54).

In these moments of crisis, the victim may experience altered states of consciousness that, in their extremes, range from total unawareness of what is happening inside and outside of themselves, to full knowledge of what the devil is saying and working through their body. There are many variations in the memory of what happened, and in the evaluation of what was experienced (see Guidelines #56).

It must be understood that diabolic possession constitutes in itself a mere physical condition, that is, concerning the body of a person whose dominion is temporarily removed from the human self. In moments of crisis, the will of the victim, insofar as he is aware of what the devil is doing or saying through his body, without being able to oppose the despotic action of the evil one, always remains inwardly free to consent to or resist that which the evil one says with his mouth and fulfills with the members of his body.

Certainly, the condition of being possessed can provoke natural reactions of understandable fear in those who are victims of it, as well as contribute to the ignition of passionate movements of various kinds. But even here, in normal subjects and even more so in Christians who live God-oriented and are seriously engaged on the



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spiritual right front, the will is always free to consent to or resist the passion, even in situations where the passionate movements have been fueled by the same devil.

Therefore, just as sickness of the body does not prevent the baptized from holiness, diabolical possession of the body does not by itself compromise the soul's ability to live the good life of the Gospel and to exercise the cardinal and theological virtues even to a heroic degree (see Guidelines #59).

Imputability is the only kind of extraordinary diabolical action

9. Imputability in diabolical harassment

As already stated, in diabolical oppression the evil one's aggression is directed at the person's body. Even when it takes the form of a "persecution" aimed at harming the victim from a social, economic, emotional, etc. point of view, it always remains something "external," in the sense that it does not address the victim's inner senses. person and his or her passionate sphere. Therefore, it does not in itself constitute an impediment to human acts, since it does not impede the intellect in relation to cognition (awareness, warning) and the will in relation to free assent (consent, approval).

The victim of true diabolical harassment always has the duty to observe the natural law and, if Christian, the evangelical one. Any reactions contrary to natural law and evangelical law caused by diabolical harassment, such as "venting" to God or your neighbor because of the suffering you inflict, are no more excusable than blasphemy



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or violence against others when you are the victim of an accident or any other harmful event. In all the favorable or adverse circumstances of life, man always has the duty to do good and to flee from evil, and God's commandments are not burdensome (cf. 1 Jn 5:3).

What has been said so far is even more true in cases of diabolical infestation.

10. Imputability in diabolical obsession

As already stated in diabolical obsession, the devil's aggression is directed at the person's psychic sphere, that is, at the person's inner senses and his passions. The "pressure" exerted by the devil does not, however, represent something of a necessity, because the human will is always free to consent or resist the suggestions of the imagination and the movements of the passion excited by the evil one. In other words, diabolical obsession never in any way amounts to a despotic control by the devil over man's intellect and free will.

Even the victim of a true diabolical obsession remains the duty to always observe the natural law and, if Christian, the evangelical one. Any reactions contrary to natural law and evangelical law caused by diabolical obsession must not, therefore, be attributed to the extraordinary diabolical action, but to the victim of such action himself and, as to their imputability, must be evaluated in the light of the moral orientation of the person and of his psychic equilibrium (see Guidelines n .n. 283). In this case, with regard to imputability, what was said above about impediments due to mental disorders applies.



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11. Imputability in diabolic possession

As already said in diabolic possession the devil, in the so-called "crisis" moments, exercises a despotic control over the body of the victim, who, even knowing what the evil one says and does through him, is not able to resist. In these situations, the action that the devil exerts using his body certainly cannot be attributed to the human person, because the subject of this action is precisely the evil one and not man.

However, it should be kept in mind that to the extent that the victim is aware of what happens in moments of "crisis", there can be a concurrence of guilt if the human will, which always remains free, instead of disagreeing, agrees to what the devil is saying and doing by means of the body he possesses.

This imputability then increases if the condition of diabolic possession is willed and even provoked by the one who is the victim of it, as happens in certain sectarian realities or in other similar situations, and that also in the case where in moments of "crisis" a person is in a state of complete trance.

We report, as an example, what was written by Dom Gabriele Amorth: "Giuseppe, 28 years old, came to me accompanied by his mother and sister. I realized immediately that he had come only to please his loved ones. He smelled strongly of smoke; he was using drugs, selling drugs, and swearing. It is useless to talk about prayer and sacraments. I tried to accommodate him as best I could so that he would accept my blessing willingly. That was too short: the devil immediately manifested himself violently, and I immediately cut him off. When I told Joseph what he had, he replied,



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"I already knew and I am very happy; I am fine with the devil. I did not see him again." (Report of an exorcist, EDB 2010 22, page 102).

Finally, from a moral point of view, the imputability of actions committed outside of "crisis" moments by a truly possessed person must be judged with the same criteria with which actions performed by non-possessed people are evaluated.

Conclusion

12. Generic evaluation of the facts stated in the introduction

Wanting, at the end of these lines, to offer an evaluation of the facts exposed in the premise that can serve as orientation in similar situations, first of all, we highlight that it is a generic evaluation, based on news data divulged by the mass media and, therefore, susceptible of change if new elements of justice demand it. Moreover, what is about to state about the reality or not of an extraordinary diabolic action occurring in the facts exposed in the introduction does not represent an apodictic judgment, as moral certainty about an extraordinary action of the evil one or its exclusion of the exorcist, can only be obtained by examining it personally, case by case.

The first element common to all the cases reported in the introduction is that the persons materially perpetrating criminal actions claim to have acted under orders/requests from the devil. From this follows:

- that these people were aware of what they were doing;



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- and, above all, that they wanted to do what they were really doing.

In fact, and this is the second common element, in none of the cases reported in the premise, according to media reports, did the perpetrator claim to have acted against his will, that is, forced to perform an action against which his will was opposed with all his might.

Moreover, as a third common element in all the cases reported in the introduction, the inability to feel empathy and guilt for the consequences of his actions is striking.

All this leads to the conclusion that the people, protagonists of the criminal actions reported in the introduction, are either abject, morally degenerated, and corrupt individuals, or people with very serious mental illnesses.

In all the cases reported in the introduction, extraordinary diabolical action seems, on the contrary, to be excluded for the following reasons:

- in diabolical possession the devil does not command the victim to act, but simply acts using the person's body as his own; if in such situations the person's consciousness remains alert, he remains inwardly free to disagree with what the devil does and says through the body he possesses;
- in diabolical obsession suffered in a frame of normal psychological equilibrium, the devil acts as an insolent instigator and brazen provocateur, but the victim is always free to agree or disagree, and in any case is never



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forced to act against his will, for there is no despotic control of the body by the devil.

In conclusion, no person, who is really a victim of an extraordinary devilish action and who is sane and morally well-oriented (even just from the point of view of natural law), can achieve, under the extraordinary influence of the devil, to perform abominable acts, such as those reported in the introduction.

Créditos de referências - International Association of Exorcists - A.I.E.

The International Exorcists Association was founded in 1994 by Fr. Gabriele Amorth and Fr. René Laurentin.



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