



Satanism on the rise: Pope Benedict has unveiled plans to set up specialist exorcism squads

[ENLARGE](#)

The Pope has ordered his bishops to set up exorcism squads to tackle the rise of Satanism.

Vatican chiefs are concerned at what they see as an increased interest in the occult.

They have introduced courses for priests to combat what they call the most extreme form of "Godlessness."

Each bishop is to be told to have in his diocese a number of priests trained to fight demonic possession.

The initiative was revealed by 82-year-old Father Gabriele Amorth, the Vatican "exorcist in chief," to the online Catholic news service Petrus.

"Thanks be to God, we have a Pope who has decided to fight the Devil head-on," he said.

"Too many bishops are not taking this seriously and are not delegating their priests in the fight against the Devil. You have to hunt high and low for a properly trained exorcist.

"Thankfully, Benedict XVI believes in the existence and danger of evil - going back to the time he was in charge of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith." The CDF is the oldest Vatican department and was headed by Benedict from 1982, when he was Cardinal Ratzinger, until he became Pope in 2005.

Father Amorth said that during his time at the department Benedict had not lost the chance to warn humanity of the risk from the Devil.

He said the Pope wants to restore a prayer seen as protection against evil that was traditionally recited at the end of Catholic Masses. The prayer, to St Michael the Archangel, was dropped in the 1960s by Pope John XXIII.

Scroll down for more...



The 1973 film *The Exorcist* deals with the demonic possession of a young girl: Now the Pope wants specialist exorcism squads in every parish

"The prayer is useful not only for priests but also for lay people in helping to fight demons," he said.

Father Paolo Scarafoni, who lectures on the Vatican's exorcism course, said interest in Satanism and the occult has grown as people lost faith with the church.

He added: "People suffer and think that turning to the Devil can help solve their problems. We are being bombarded by requests for exorcisms."

The Vatican is particularly concerned that young people are being exposed to the influence of Satanic sects through rock music and the Internet.

In theory, under the Catholic Church's Canon Law 1172, all priests can perform exorcisms. But in reality only a select few are assigned the task.

Under the law, practitioners must have "piety, knowledge, prudence, and integrity of life."

The rite of exorcism involves a series of gestures and prayers to invoke the power of God and stop the "demon" influencing its victim.

Share this article:

[What is this?](#)

- [Digg it](#)
- |
- [Del.icio.us](#)
- |
- [Reddit](#)
- |
- [Newsvine](#)
- |

- [Nowpublic](#)

[Add your comment](#) Comments (8)

8 people have commented on this story so far. Tell us what you think below.

Ok matey get started in Westminster there's about 650 evil spirits that need vanquishing around there. Well in the absence of an election I will settle for anything.

- Peter, London

He might like to start on his newest recruit - Tony Blair. He's got a lot of devils in his closet!

- Maria, Scotland

Well.. what a brilliant idea. As if there's nothing wrong in the world.

- Jude, England

"Thankfully Pope Benedict XVI believes in the existence and danger of evil"

Why does he look so creepy ?

this guy has given me the chills ever since he became the pope..... nothing nice and warm about this guy at all....but then again, whatever.

- Linda, california, US

Maybe the exorcists could double-up with the Community Support Officers.

- Bob Grant, London

Are they getting a lottery grant to pay for this?

- Martin, Clacton, England

Dear God! The Pope has been spending too much time with Tony B'Liar I think.

- Ruth, Poole, UK

Do they put a job description with this post I wonder.

Maybe I could do it. Casting out demons. I worked as head barman in the Dog & Duck and I was forever casting out drunken devils on saturday night.

- Bren, London

Add your comment

Name: Your email address will not be published Email: Town and

country: [Terms and conditions](#) Your comment: