

Bishop's Advisory Group on Deliverance Ministry

Deliverance Ministry

1. About the problem

Many people believe they are troubled by ghosts, spirits, poltergeists, hauntings or other supernatural phenomena. The bishop has established a group in the diocese to advise him on such matters, and to try to help people who are troubled in these ways.

There is no one simple explanation for experiences of this kind. Even the most sane and sober can suddenly and unexpectedly come across them, and their roots may lie in someone's personal or family history, in the history of the location, in some emotional disturbance or in some unwise involvement with the occult or other activities. Or the root of the matter may lie in a physical illness or a social problem.

It follows that in trying to help we would talk through the experience, and try to understand its source, before praying with the troubled person, or in the unquiet place, and possibly suggesting other courses of action. We aim to help in as calm and quiet a way as is appropriate. The high drama usually belongs with the special effects men in the film studios!

2. Contact us?

The bishop's group does not aim to work as an independent "flying squad". We prefer to work alongside local clergy in the local, parish setting ~ so if you think you might need the help of the group, talk first with the clergy at your local parish church. If you cannot contact them, the bishop's office or the diocesan office can take brief contact details from you, and we will get back in touch with you, or you could send a brief email to gfsf@stwilfridsnorthenden.org.uk

3. Pray-it-Yourself! ~ Self-help?

We would not encourage people to get involved in this kind of experience casually or by themselves. Still less would we want people to think of it as a kind of in-house entertainment! As suggested above, the solution may not be the obvious, the easy, or the interesting one. We do believe, however, that within the love of God, who is Lord of the physical world and the spiritual realms, an answer will lie.

However, some simple prayer will not go amiss in any circumstances. Here are some prayers and thoughts around that line in our Lord's own prayer

~ **“Deliver us from evil.”**

(Some prayers and readings for people who feel troubled or ill at ease)

+ **Jesus' own prayer asks for protection from sin and evil.**

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever, Amen.

+ **An evening prayer.**

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray,
and in your great mercy
defend us from all the perils and dangers of this night,
for the love of your only Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

+ **Or these evening prayers:**

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from it the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us and guard us in peace
and may your blessing be always upon us;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

+ Preserve us, O Lord, while we are awake,
and guard us while we are asleep,
so that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep we may rest in peace
through Jesus Christ our redeemer. Amen.

+ **St. Patrick's prayer for God's Protection.**

I bind this day to me for ever
By power of faith Christ's incarnation;
His baptism in the Jordan river,
His death on cross for my salvation;
His bursting from the spiced tomb,
His riding up the heavenly way
His coming at the day of doom

I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead;
His eye to watch, his might to stay
His ear to hearken to my need;
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, his shield to ward,
The word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me ,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me;
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Amen.

This prayer, translated as a hymn by Mrs. C. F. Alexander, was reputedly used by St. Patrick, one of the first Christian missionaries in the then pagan Ireland, to ask for God's protection and help as he faced attacks and challenges on both a spiritual and a practical and political level. It claims all the stages of Jesus' life as an inspiration and example; Patrick could sense that Jesus had faced and overcome similar challenges. And he claimed the victory Jesus had won over death and evil through his death on the cross, and resurrection and ascension to heaven. We too can pray for Jesus' presence and power.

Christ's Authority.

During his time on earth Jesus freed people whom he met from the grip of evil forces. His followers knew that this authority over evil – the lower powers - was not something which stopped when he returned to heaven. They could still claim his help and protection – but they knew too that he would expect them to follow his pattern of life. Here is how St.Paul puts it.

If you find any support in Christ, any encouragement to love, any comradeship of spirit ... fill up my cup of happiness by showing the same way of thinking, the same love ... doing nothing from self-seeking or self-importance, but in humility treat other people as worth more than yourselves.

You should not each be looking after your own interests, but each others'. Hold this attitude among yourselves which you find in Christ Jesus, who did not reckon he should grasp after equality with God, though he truly is in God's image.

Rather he emptied himself and took a slave's likeness, taking on human identity. He was revealed in human form, and abased himself, even becoming obedient to death – a criminal's death on a cross.

For this reason God has raised him to the heights and endowed him with a title greater than any name or title, such that at the name of Jesus everyone shall bow the knee, whether they come from heaven, or earth, or the nether regions, and every tongue shall acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord – a fact that gives glory to God the father. Philippians, ch.2 vv 1-11.

And Christ's supportive love...

Jesus, the carpenter turned wordsmith and teacher, invited people to get to know him, and find encouragement and peace from his teaching and presence. He spoke of how he was revealing God to them - like father, like son – and then said:

Come to me, all of you who are struggling and overburdened, and I will unburden you. Take on my yoke, and learn from me, for I am considerate and gentle-minded, and you will find relief for your inner selves. My yoke, you see, fits snugly and my burdens sit easy. Matthew's Gospel, ch.11 vv28-30.

An uneasy place?

Almighty God, you create and uphold all that is, and you promise us in your Son, "My peace I give to you," grant in this place, and to all who live and work here,

that peace which passes human understanding,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, Amen.

Heavenly Father,
you brought order out of chaos in creation,
and love out of bitterness on the cross,
be with us in all that we do, so that this place may be filled
with the joy and peace of your presence,
through the reconciling power and love
of Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord,
to know you is eternal life, to serve you is perfect freedom.
Defend us your servants from all assaults of the evil one,
so that trusting in your defence
we may not fear the power of any adversary,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And uneasy memories ...

Eternal God, Lord of time and eternity,
we have said and done things we regret,
and have failed to say what we should have liked to.

We cannot roll back the past,
but we come to you for forgiveness;
as your Son has made peace through his blood, shed on the cross,
so may we be reconciled through him
with those whom we love but see no longer,
for he is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A blessing.

May the Lord bless us and keep us,
the Lord look upon us and be gracious to us,
may the Lord lift up the light of his face on us
and give us his peace, now and always. Amen