

***Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time (English)***  
***Quinquagesima Sunday (Latin)***  
***March 2, 2025***  
***Year of the Holy Spirit***

*“In order to finish His work He sent us the Holy Ghost. This Divine Spirit, who is none other than the substantial love of the Father and the Son, was not satisfied with instilling grace into our souls together with the infused virtues, especially divine charity, but gave Himself to us in order that we might not only enjoy His presence and possess His gifts, but even His very person.” (Very Reverend Adolphe Tanquerey, The Spiritual Life, p.41)*

In 1971 William Peter Blatty wrote a novel which would be based upon a real event. In 1973, the novel would become a feature film. The movie would fall under the horror genre and carry with it the same title as the novel. The name of the book and movie — The Exorcist.

Before I continue, our reflection this day will not focus upon either the true event, the novel or the movie. Our reflection will be based upon one word. This word has seen a resurgence of its use in recent times. The word — Possession.

The word “possession” has too long been associated with evil, intelligent beings we name “fallen angels.” Today, I want to change that and help you realize that we are already under another’s possession.

On the day of our Baptism we were “consecrated” to God. Saint Paul, in his first letter to the church in Corinth, wrote these words: “*Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*” (1 Corinthians 3:16). This was once emphasized in the Rite of Baptism, prior to the most recent changes, when the priest would offer multiple exorcisms over the child to be baptized. The last of these would occur as the child was brought into the baptistery. The priest would recite these words (English translation of the Latin):

*I expel thee, every unclean spirit, in the name of God, the Father (priest makes sign of the cross) almighty, in the name of Jesus (sign of cross) Christ, His Son, our Lord and Judge, and by the power of the Holy (sign of cross) Spirit. Depart from this handwork of God, (Name of child), whom our Lord has deigned to call to His holy temple, that he (she) may be made a temple of the living God, and the Holy Spirit may dwell within him (her).*

Each of you became a consecrated temple of the Holy Spirit at your Baptism. And, what action is performed in God’s temple? Praise to His Name. No action should take place within this hallowed temple (your soul) which does not seek to give full, complete and total praise to God. Allow me to present it to you this way — perfect, pure Love (Holy Spirit) has been poured into your soul to abide there. This must be a total offering, a complete commitment on our part. Why? Because the Divine Love of God cannot share Itself half-heartedly. Love is given to the full. And, offering a final thought, in much the same way as a home owner cares for and maintains their home, the Holy Spirit seeks to do the same with our souls. The fire of Love seeks to make visible those imperfections, blemishes or dirty, cobwebbed corners which need to

be cleaned before they weaken our wills, diminishing our intellects and causing us to drive God's Love (Holy Spirit) from His rightful home.