



MEDIUMS AND CHANNELING

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ISSUE

What does the Church teach about “mediums” and “channeling”? May Catholics participate in these practices, or function as “mediums”?

RESPONSE

The Holy Scriptures speak strongly against such activities, and the Church strongly condemns these and all related practices in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC). A Catholic may not participate in these practices without gravely sinning.

DISCUSSION

A 2003 inter-dicasterial study of the Holy See, *Jesus Christ, the Bearer of the Water of Life: a Christian Reflection on the New Age*, describes the phenomenon of “mediums” and “channeling”:

*One of the most common elements in New Age “spirituality” is a fascination with extraordinary manifestations, and in particular with paranormal entities. People recognised as “mediums” claim that their personality is taken over by another entity during trances in a New Age phenomenon known as “channeling”, during which the medium may lose control over his or her body and faculties. Some people who have witnessed these events would willingly acknowledge that **the manifestations are indeed spiritual, but are not from God, despite the language of love and light** which is almost always used.... It is probably **more correct to refer to this as a contemporary form of spiritualism, rather than spirituality in a strict sense.** ...These spiritual entities are*

often invoked ‘non-religiously’ to help in relaxation aimed at better decision-making and control of one’s life and career (2.2.1, citations omitted, emphasis added).¹

The study calls “mediums” and “channeling” a “contemporary form of spiritualism.” It later defines this “spiritualism” as “attempts to contact the spirits of the dead... a new kind of religion” (7.2). This document is quite extensive, and includes detailed reflections on the opposing visions of God and the Human Person, between the Catholic Faith and the various parts of the “New Age” movement. It is highly recommended for further reading.

The stance of the Church regarding “mediums” and “channeling” is that participation in these things is gravely sinful and must be rejected. This teaching is rooted first in the Sacred Scripture:

*When you come into the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. **There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD;** and because of these abominable practices the LORD your God is driving them out before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. **For these nations, which you are about to dispossess, give heed to soothsayers and to diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you so to***

¹ This document is available online at https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20030203_new-

[age_en.html#2.2.4.%20Wholeness:%20A%20Magical%20Mystery%20Tour](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20030203_new-age_en.html#2.2.4.%20Wholeness:%20A%20Magical%20Mystery%20Tour). It was accessed for this FAITH FACT on 29 February 2024.

do (Deuteronomy 8:9-14, RSVCE, emphasis added).

For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream, for it is a lie which they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the LORD (Jeremiah 28:8-9, emphasis added).

In the Church's Teaching, "mediums" and "channeling" are rejected because they are a form of *divination*, which is a way of seeking to have knowledge or power which only God really has. It thus offends Him very deeply, as well as makes us vulnerable to deception and attack from Satan and the fallen angels. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) says:

All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honor, respect and loving fear that we owe to God alone.

All practices of magic, or sorcery, by which one attempts to tame occult powers, so as to place them at one's service and have a supernatural power over others—even if this were for the sake of restoring their health—are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion. These practices are even more to be condemned when accompanied by the intention of harming someone, or when they have recourse to the intervention of demons. Wearing charms is also reprehensible. Spiritism often implies divination or magical practices; ***the Church for her part warns the faithful against it.*** Recourse to so-called traditional cures does not justify either the invocation of powers or the exploitation of

another's credulity (CCC 2116-2117, emphasis added).

Such practices, in addition to being "gravely contrary to the virtue of religion," also show a distrust of God and His ability to care for us. As the previous paragraph of the *Catechism* explains:

God can reveal the future to his prophets or to other saints. Still, a sound Christian attitude consists in putting oneself confidently into the hands of Providence for whatever concerns the future, and giving up all unhealthy curiosity about it... (2115).

One American Bishop, John O. Barres, summarizes the problem of "mediums" and the Church's solution this way:

Very few would claim that they are purposely seeking out the demonic in a medium, and most mediums themselves would heartily deny an association with the demonic. And yet, when we look at the history of our faith, it is only in exceptional circumstances that God allows the dead to speak to the living, and then it is generally not because the living sought them out....

So, who are mediums speaking to?... While God and His angels are protecting us and trying to bring us to heaven, Satan and the other fallen angels are seeking to do the opposite. ...while Christ has already won the victory in His Cross and Resurrection, the devil can still win souls, as we all still have the freedom to choose our eternal destiny. There are powers then, so far beyond us, waiting for us to freely invite them into our lives, and we do exactly that by reaching out blindly into the supernatural. Moreover, in using methods that attempt to circumvent God and His Church, we make it all the more likely that we will find only insidious forces... Countless exorcists... warn that mediums, Ouija boards, and the like are an open invitation to demonic influences and a primary means through which they enter the world.

Upon turning to mediums... we truly attempt to "divinize" ourselves, taking into our hands that which belongs to God alone.... Our first

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instinct then should be to make amends for these sins against Faith, which the Church calls us to do primarily through the Sacrament of Confession.... All are encouraged to make frequent use of this Sacrament of the Divine Mercy. (From a 2020 Pastoral Letter, pp. 3-4, emphasis added.)²

It is clear from the foregoing that the Church condemns the practices of “mediums” and

“channeling.” Persons involved in these practices should confess them, stop the activities, and destroy or get rid of any paraphernalia associated with these practices. It is also recommended to have a priest bless the persons and houses involved, after one has gone to Confession. This is so that the person may be freed from any demonic influence that may have occurred, by bestowing God’s grace upon the person and their surroundings. It is also so that the persons involved may give back *to God* an important outward sign of returning to worship Him alone.

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² This letter is available online at https://www.drvc.org/wp-content/uploads/Formatted_Mediums_and_the_Catholi
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