

The Time the Devil Visited But the Blessed Sacrament was the victor [Msgr. Frank Chiodo](#)

It was a time I will never forget. The year was 1928, and while I was not born until many years later, on a yearly basis I was reminded of that horrific occurrence when the nuns at St. Anthony Grade School would read us the story in the book *Begone Satan!*

It occurred in Earling, Iowa, at St. Joseph Parish, in the Diocese of Des Moines. A young lady was possessed by the devil, and after obtaining permission from the bishop, a Franciscan by the name of Father Theophilus was assigned to perform the solemn exorcism.

The battle lines had been drawn. The engagement between the forces of good and evil were aligned for battle on the site of the convent on the grounds of St. Joseph Parish. After 23 days of battle, the victory which Christ had won on the cross was made manifest, freeing that young woman of the grip of the Evil One, and setting her free.

I visited the site of the battle between good and evil not long ago. I asked the pastor, Father Leto, if I could visit the convent — abandoned then and since razed. He gave me the key and I, with not a little trepidation, opened the back kitchen door of the former convent. It smelled of must and mold — no furniture remained. The pastor had instructed me to walk up the staircase from the kitchen to the second floor. There on the right would be the room where the exorcism took place. I had a cold strange feeling as I peered into that empty room. I have come to recognize it as a feeling similar to the one I felt at the civil war battle site in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

I sensed a great mortal, momentous conflict had taken place here, one that impacts a person's life dramatically. Suddenly, I stopped in my

tracks when I noticed that across from the room where the girl was exorcised there was the former chapel of the convent.

It was, I am sure, no coincidence that the site across from the Blessed Sacrament was chosen. The most strategic location was chosen for God's victory in battle. The Lord, in the Blessed Sacrament, was engaged in the conflict there — the Blessed Sacrament being brought close to the possessed girl, driving the enemy from the battlefield and freeing the girl at last from the grip of Satan.

The Blood of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament delivered her and set her free; the Blessed Sacrament once again won the day.

The words of the Book of Revelation echo an explanation and a word of consolation and hope for all: "Now have salvation and power come, / and the kingdom of our God / and the authority of his Anointed one.... They conquered him by the blood of the lamb.... Therefore, rejoice" (10-12).

The event touched me deeply, and reminds me often of the dramatic importance of the Blessed Sacrament in our personal struggles with evil. What priest does not have trials, temptations and struggles? While it may not be a physical demonic possession we face, we can nevertheless be oppressed by many dark spirits in our lives, waging a battle in our souls.

Where to go for the power to win the battle? Go to the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Does the spirit of abandonment or loneliness oppress you? Go to the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Over my many years in the priesthood I have become increasingly convinced that the offering of Mass every day, even on days off and vacation time, is indispensable. Daily Mass equips me for the often-arduous battle of daily ministry and keeps my heart oriented toward the Lord Jesus, whether at work or play. It turns drudgery into inner peace, knowing that I battle not alone, but with the power of the Blood of Jesus that I receive daily in the holy Eucharist. We

cannot afford to dispense with this critically important encounter with our Victor King.

A daily Holy Hour deepens the presence of Christ within us, empowering us throughout the day. Spend quiet time with the Victor King, the Captain of our Salvation, as he shares with you his battle plan for total victory over the enemy.

Are you oppressed by isolation, being misunderstood, ignored by many, filled with fear or dread, weighed down by administrative responsibilities, worried over financial and parochial matters? Are you battling a sinful tendency or habit? Go to the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament — that is, daily Mass or a Holy Hour. Let him equip you for battle with the armor of salvation.

Let the blood of the Lamb win the victory once more for you over the powers of Satan, sin and death. Go to the Blessed Sacrament. Don't let a day go by without meeting with the Victor King, Jesus Christ, in his battlefield tent — the altar and the tabernacle of your church. Pour out your needs before him, and let him pour out his mercy upon you.

The devil visited my diocese, but he didn't stay long. And yet, he tries often to return ... evil trying to return to my parish, or to me.

I needn't fear. I have the most powerful resource to employ for my freedom, healing and deliverance — the most precious blood of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Don't let the devil stay long. Keep close to the Blessed Sacrament.

“They conquered him by the blood of the lamb.... Therefore, rejoice”

(Rv 12:11-12).

Amen.

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