

Top Psychiatrist: Demonic Possession Is Very Real and on the Rise

Although many scientists say demonic possession is a myth, one psychiatrist says it is very real and may be on the rise.

Dr. Richard Gallagher is a leading psychiatrist and professor of clinical psychiatry at New York Medical College. Unlike most of his colleagues in the scientific arena, he believes there is a spiritual world with a very dark side that goes beyond just our physical world.

Gallagher's work with the demonic world began decades ago when he had one client who was a self-proclaimed witch.

"She called herself a witch and dressed the part, with flowing dark clothes and black eye shadow around to her temples," Gallagher describes in an article in *The Washington Post*.

As a man of science, he was skeptical about her claims until he experienced the unexplainable.

"My subject's behavior exceeded what I could explain with my training," he recalls. "She could tell some people their secret weaknesses, such as undue pride. She knew how individuals she'd never known had died, including my mother and her fatal case of ovarian cancer."

But that was not the only thing that convinced Gallagher this was more than just a hoax.

"Six people later vouched to me that, during her exorcisms, they heard her speaking multiple languages, including Latin, completely unfamiliar to her outside of her trances," he said. "This was not psychosis; it was what I can only describe as paranormal ability. I concluded that she was possessed."

From then on Gallagher began working with priests to help distinguish which clients were possessed from those who suffered from serious mental illness.

“For the past two-and-a-half decades and over several hundred consultations, I’ve helped clergy from multiple denominations and faiths to filter episodes of mental illness—which represent the overwhelming majority of cases—from, literally, the devil’s work,” he explained.

Looking back on more than 20 years of experience in identifying demonic possession, Gallagher suggests demonic possession is more frequent than what many believe.

“The Vatican does not track global or countrywide exorcism, but in my experience and according to the priests I meet, the demand is rising,” he said.

“The United States is home to about 50 ‘stable’ exorcists—those who have been designated by bishops to combat demonic activity on a semi-regular basis—up from just 12 a decade ago,” Gallagher added.

Still, many in Gallagher’s field do not believe doctors can reconcile their work with belief in the spiritual world. But Gallagher says he has a simple answer to that objection.

“I’ve been asked and have a simple answer. I honestly weigh the evidence,” he said. “As I see it, the evidence for possession is like the evidence for George Washington’s crossing of the Delaware. In both cases, written historical accounts with numerous sound witnesses testify to their accuracy.”

Gallagher also says it is more illogical to outright reject the existence of a spiritual world.

“As a psychoanalyst, a blanket rejection of the possibility of demonic attacks seems less logical, and often wishful in

nature, than a careful appraisal of the facts.” {eoa}

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