

Catholic Church's Top Exorcist Claims He Sent 160,000 Demons to Hell

The Catholic Church's top exorcist is calling for all priests to be allowed to conduct the ritual after Pope Francis performed what many called an exorcism in St. Peter's Square on May 19.

Father Gabriele Amorth, 88, claims to have sent 160,000 demons to hell. Also the head of the International Association of Exorcists, Amorth is urging the pope to relax the current rules on exorcisms, which require all priests to obtain permission from their bishops before performing exorcisms.

"I will ask the pope to give all priests the power to carry out exorcisms and to ensure priests are properly trained for these starting with the seminary. There's a huge demand for them," he told *The Sunday Times*.

"Today, unfortunately, bishops don't appoint sufficient exorcists," Amorth said. "We need many more. I hope that Rome will send out directives to bishops around the world calling on them to appoint more exorcists."

His comments come nearly two weeks after Pope Francis was caught on video laying hands on a young, wheelchair-bound man.

"The young man heaved deeply a half-dozen times, shook, then slumped in his wheelchair as Francis prayed over him," the Associated Press reported. "The television station of the Italian bishops' conference reported Monday that it had surveyed exorcists, who agreed there was 'no doubt' that Francis either performed an exorcism or a prayer to free the man from the devil."

The Vatican appeared more cautious, saying in a statement that Francis “didn’t intend to perform any exorcism. But as he often does for the sick or suffering, he simply intended to pray for someone who was suffering who was presented to him.”

Amorth disagrees. “The pope is also the Bishop of Rome, and like any bishop he is also an exorcist,” he reportedly told *La Repubblica* newspaper.

“It was a real exorcism,” Amorth continued. “If the Vatican has denied this, it shows that they understand nothing.”

In the same report, Amorth insisted that those who believe exorcisms are superstition are wrong. “There was now, more than ever, a need for exorcists to combat people possessed by ‘sorcerers’ and ‘Satanists,’” he said.