

Vatican Tightens Rules on Entertaining the Supernatural

The Catholic Church is tightening their rules about how to deal with the supernatural.

In a newly released document, the Vatican is advising bishops no longer act alone when dealing with supernatural phenomena such as blood-soaked crucifixes and apparitions of the Virgin Mary. Instead, bishops should consult with the Vatican.

The Vatican's announcement acknowledged that supernatural events "have led to a great richness of spiritual fruits, growth in faith, devotion, fraternity and service." However, they believe there are times when the supernatural can act as a deterrent away from faithfully following God.

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"In some events of alleged supernatural origin, there are serious critical issues that are detrimental to the faithful; in these situations, the Church must respond with utmost pastoral solicitude," the statement reads.

Vatican News reported how this change in rules about the supernatural means "the Church's authority will no longer be engaged to officially define the supernatural nature of a phenomenon."

The reason for these new changes is because of an explosion of events that were believed to be of the supernatural origin in the Catholic Church. However, many of these experiences were later determined not to be of this nature. With a rapid advancement of technology, the Vatican worried its guidelines from 1978 were insufficient to deal with internet hoaxes.

These new guidelines have not changed Vatican officials' views on the power of God to do miraculous wonders.

As American Magazine reported, Vatican Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández spoke at a press conference stating, "The Holy Spirit, who flows from the hearts of the risen Christ, works in the Church with divine freedom and offers us many valuable gifts that aid us on the path of life and encourage our spiritual growth in fidelity to the Gospel."

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Unfortunately, the concern over abuse of the gifts has led to these cautionary guidelines.

"The use of such phenomenon to gain profit, power, fame, social recognition or other personal interest," Fernández says, "[acts] as a means of or pretext for exerting control over people or carrying out abuses."

Fernández also fears "the possibility of doctrinal errors, an oversimplification of the Gospel message, or the spread of a sectarian mentality."

For years the Catholic Church has been known for supernatural phenomena like visions and exorcisms. Time will tell how these new guidelines shift the atmosphere in a denomination known for the unexplainable.

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Abby Trivett is a marketing copywriter and coordinator for Charisma Media.