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## **Decades of Demon Fighting in the Roman Catholic Church of Zimbabwe: Pioneers VIS-À-VIS Canon Law. Experiences of Father Augustine Urayai**

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### **Abstract:**

*Statistics seem to indicate that on the African continent, the ministry of healing and deliverance is growing everyday among African independent churches, Pentecostals and some charismatic communities. However, simultaneously, mainline churches, particularly the Roman Catholic Church of Zimbabwe continues in her mission to put the gospel into practice by also freeing people who are afflicted with evil spirits. This present article explores the ministry of healing and exorcism in the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. The article specifically examines the healing ministry of Father Augustine Urayai of Zimbabwe (1931) who has been famous in the ministry of healing and exorcism from as early as the late 60s. Fr. Urayai's extra-ordinary experiences with spirits were critical in two ways. Whilst on one hand the experiences made him develop new theories about healing and exorcism, on the other, they altered his entire metaphysical thought. The argument developed in this article is that, whilst African Independent Churches have dominated the area of exorcism in Zimbabwe for many years, the Roman Catholic Church also carries with it the legacy of decades of demon fighting. Apparently, as observed by Shoko (2006), healing in the mainline churches appears to relate significantly to independent churches and modern charismatic healing communities. The article also argues that even though Father Urayai to some extent departed from Jesus' healing methods and employed his own, his ministry of healing and deliverance is, however, still based on Christian orthodox and missiological ideology, namely, 'fulfillment of the Good News' to heal (Shoko 2006). In the light of this lingering assumption that the Roman Catholic Church's position on healing and deliverance has been 'distant and detached' (Akerboom 2002,) this article is opportune.*

### **1. Introduction**

Whilst Jesus was still on earth, he commissioned and empowered his apostles and disciples to cast out demons in his name (Matthew 10:1). The ability to cast out evil spirits was therefore, a sign of true discipleship among the apostles. The same power was also promised to believers (Mark 16:17). However, the efficacy of this delegated power depended greatly on prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:15). To both disciples and believers, conspicuous victory and success was promised. Since Jesus had commissioned and authorized his disciples to cast out demons and to heal in his name, the apostles continued the work of healing (Acts 3:7). Thus, exorcism became an important part of the tradition of the early Christian Church.

The New Bible Dictionary (1962) underlines that healing and exorcism was not only common in the apostolic era. Post apostolic writings from renowned theologians such as Justin Martyr (ca 100-165), Tertullian (ca160-230), Origen (185-284) and Cyril of Jerusalem (ca 315-386) support the claim that miracles of healing continued well into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and even after. Whilst Justin spoke of demons flying from the touch and breathing of Christians (*Second Apology 6*), Cyril of Jerusalem added the phrase 'as from a flame that burns them' (*Catechetical Lectures 20.3*).

Exorcism was not the only form of healing among the Christian communities of the early centuries. In addition to the practice of exorcism, making reference to the exhortation by James (5:13-17) the early Christian Church instituted the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and also institutionalized the health care system. As recorded by Cleary (1982), what people have come to appreciate and expect from modern health care is firmly rooted in the very beginnings of Christianity and the ministry of the first apostles. Thus, ever since Jesus' unequivocal mission to drive out evil spirits and to heal in his name, the establishment of the Sacrament of the Sick and founding of medical health care facilities, there has been an unbroken tradition of healing and exorcism in the Roman Catholic Church, save for some disturbances during the period of the enlightenment when spirit possession was relegated to the levels of superstition and the reality of God questioned.

The history of Christianity in Africa, like the history of many other religions carries with it the history of healing and health care. With the introduction of Christianity in Zimbabwe, the Roman Catholic Church has identified herself with the sick and suffering, giving them hope, consolation and spiritual healing. Following the same logic, it is not possible to speak of the ministry of healing and exorcism in Zimbabwe without mentioning the name of Father Augustine Urayai. Since Fr. Urayai's healing ministry dates back to the pre-independence era, it would be critical to know the context within which his healing ministry emerged.

## 2. Precipitating Factors

Whilst a number of factors could have contributed immensely to the birth and development of Urayai's healing ministry, Daneel (1970) observed that the failure or reluctance by pioneering white missionaries to address the existential needs of the African populace, particularly illness stands as one dominant factor. As a result of conventional medicine's failure to probe sufficiently into the spiritual causes of illness, in times of serious illnesses, a number of Christians (including Catholics) often sneaked out to seek medical assistance from other service providers such as the tried and tested African traditional practitioners or Independent churches.

Commenting on the affinity between Africans and their religion, Mbiti (1975:13) had this to say:

Since African religion belongs to the people, when Africans migrate in large numbers from one part of the continent to another, or from Africa to other continents, they take religion with them...Even if they are converted to another religion like Christianity or Islam, they do not completely abandon their traditional religion immediately: it remains with them for several generations and some centuries.

The same comment was also echoed by McLaughlin (1996) when she highlighted the critical role played by mediums in directing the operations of the freedom fighters in Zimbabwe's war of liberation. McLaughlin (1996:245) quoting from Kanyangarara (1979) underscores that 'as a matter of culture, we follow some of our cultural beliefs in our revolution...Instead of getting the operational rules and directives from the party, the comrades get them from the spirit mediums.' It was, therefore, the duty of Christianity to fight against such beliefs and practices in its effort to plant the seed of Christianity in Zimbabwe. As much as the early missionaries fought hard against traditional practices such as ancestral veneration, beer drinking, bringing home ceremony (*kurova guva*) and consulting diviners, there were always some subtle ways of resistance. For some time white missionaries tried to employ the system of expelling all those involved but the method did not deter the practice. As noted by Kumbirai (1977), the Shona people viewed the prohibitions by missionaries as a negation of their (Shona) understanding of the spiritual world. Consequently, a culture of double dealing Christians was created.

In addition to the problem of double dealing Christians who secretly consulted traditional medical practitioners, the ever increasing African independent churches also gave the white missionaries a hard time with their message of deliverance. Roman Catholics always accused African independent churches of stealing their sheep. Daneel (1970) reveals that since the last century, Christianity has been characterized by rapid growth in the membership of the independent African churches. Quoting from Barret (1968), Daneel (1970:9) reveals by 1970, there were more than 6,000 of these churches with a total membership of approximately 7 million to be found in more than 275 African tribes.' If by 1970, Daneel (1970) estimated around 7 million members of the African Independent churches, perhaps the number has risen to 10 million or more in 2014. The majority of these, if not all, use healing and deliverance as one of their key recruitment techniques. Daneel (1970) also referred to Mutendi's Zionist church<sup>1</sup> headquarters as Hospital (*Hospitara*).

Although the catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) clearly condemned traditional practices such as consulting traditional healers, the early missionaries thought the practice would just die a natural death. However, to their dismay, the practice of consulting traditional practitioners and healers from the more vibrant African independent churches continued unabated and Roman Catholics also joined the bandwagon. Probably the underlying reason for joining the then fashionable was the fact that the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe had not yet read the signs of times then. It had not started putting the Gospel into practice, particularly, the unequivocal mission to drive out evil spirits and to heal in the name of Jesus as was already common among the spirit-type churches. Thus, in a bid to address the anomaly within the Roman Catholic Church Father Augustine Urayai stepped in to fill that gap, becoming the first black exorcist in Zimbabwe's Roman Catholic Church to wrestle demons with holy water and incense. Since the healing ministry of Fr. Urayai may not be properly understood without first exploring his vocation to priesthood, it is therefore, critical that we first but briefly zero in on the exorcist's biography.

## 3. Father Augustine Urayai<sup>2</sup>

Fr. Augustine Paradza Urayai is perhaps the best known exorcist in the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe today. Augustine Urayai Madyauta was born on 10 August 1931 at Holy Cross Mission in Homera village under chief Chirumanzu. In January 1948, Augustine and six other local seminarians began their priestly training at Saint Joseph's Hama in the Midlands province,<sup>3</sup> becoming one of the first black seminarians to train for priesthood in Gwelo (now Gweru) Diocese.<sup>4</sup>

Initially, Augustine's father did not want him to become a Roman Catholic priest. However, against all odds, Augustine later enrolled at Chishawasha Major Seminary<sup>5</sup> in Harare in 1956 to study philosophy and theology. Even though seminary training did not provide lessons for exorcism, Augustine sometimes occupied himself with reading magazines and watching films on exorcism, a practice that could have fanned his desire for exorcism. As he rose through the orders to priesthood, Augustine

<sup>1</sup> Mutendi is the founder and Bishop of the Zionist Church whose headquarters is in the Bikita District

<sup>2</sup> The section on Fr. Urayai draws much of its narrative information from the author's Master of Philosophy (Mphil) thesis on the impact of Super Roma phenomenon in Zimbabwe. Super Roma is a new religious movement formed in 1970, currently operating on the fringes of a number of mainline denominations. The movement uses the name The Light of Life Christian Group as its official name. Its formation is highly linked with Fr. Urayai's healing ministry. The name Super Roma is only a nickname.

<sup>3</sup> Midlands Province is one of the ten provinces in Zimbabwe. It has an area of 49 166 square kilometers and a population of 1, 614, 941 million people. It is the third largest city in Zimbabwe after Harare and Bulawayo.

<sup>4</sup> Gweru Diocese is one of the eight Roman Catholic Dioceses in Zimbabwe. It was third in the order of creation, created after Harare and Bulawayo.

<sup>5</sup> Chishawasha Seminary was founded in 1939 by Bishop Chichester.

received the order of exorcism. By virtue of this order, any Catholic priest was made an exorcist. Today things have, however, changed because bishops may give particular priests the authority to do the exorcism. What used to be part of the general priestly vocation before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) has now become a particular work of a few officially appointed priests. In 1960, Urayai and his other seminarians were sent for one year of probation to seriously reflect on the vocation. He resumed in 1961 to study theology. Upon the completion of their four year theological studies, on 12 December 1964, Francis Mugadzi, Kizito Mavima and Augustine Urayai were ordained Roman Catholic priests for Gweru Diocese at Gokomere Mission. A few weeks before Augustine's ordination to priesthood, his father also got baptized in the Roman Catholic Church (Sibanda 1999). Whilst Fr. Urayai worked at several Roman Catholic Mission stations after his ordination to priesthood, only two critical mission stations are directly connected with his healing ministry. He was first at Mutero mission in Gutu for a period covering 1967 to 71. He was once again assigned to the same mission between 1980 and 1990 after a hiatus of about nine years. It is important to mention that it is at Mutero that Fr. Urayai performed his inaugural case of faith healing. In addition to his long stints at Mutero mission he was also assigned to Chinyuni parish, which is a mission outstation under the authority of St. Joseph's Mission, located in the Chirumanzu district. At Chinyuni, he spent the last 13 years of his healing ministry before meeting his death in August 2003.

#### 4. Healing Ministry

It took Father Urayai some time to realize that he had the gift of healing. However, as a young priest, he confessed that he had cultivated a culture of praying for the sick every Sunday after the celebration of Mass by simply laying his hands on them. He also was passionate about administering the sacrament of the sick. Miraculously, some of his patients got better after the administration of the sacrament of healing. However, in 1969 he had his inaugural case of healing after only four years in the priestly ministry.

Fr. Urayai's inaugural case of healing went as follows. In 1967, he was transferred from Serima to be assistant priest at Mutero Mission. In 1969 he was invited to give a retreat to some Catholic women at Mutero Mission. During one of his talks he encouraged those with personal problems to come and see him in his office during break time. A certain woman then came to his office during break time and first cried in front of him for several minutes. Fr. Urayai did not stop her. The woman had a big problem which she thought Fr. Urayai could assist. Her husband, Mr. Ignatius Munyongani, who was a teacher of Catechism back at Machawira Centre was constantly attacked by alien spirits (*Mashavi*) that had been sent to him by his father who wanted him to become a *n'anga*. Mr. Ignatius and his wife, however, disliked this idea, knowing very well that their Catholic faith condemned all that. Traditional and medical doctors had failed to cure him. On her knees, Mrs. Munyongani then begged Fr. Urayai to come to her aid. After giving it a second thought, Fr. Urayai agreed and the two settled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1969 as the day for the exorcism. However, before he attempted to exorcise the evil spirits from Mr. Ignatius Munyongani, Fr. Urayai first sought the Bishop's approval as required by Canons 1151<sup>6</sup> and 1152.<sup>7</sup> Bishop Haene allowed him and gave him a Latin prayer for exorcism. Narrating how the exorcism took place, Fr. Urayai (1994) had this to say:

I visited the Munyongani homestead on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1969. On that day, Sylvester my Catechist, Mr. Ignatius Munyongani and I were in one of the huts eating roasted groundnuts. In no time Mr. Munyongani was attacked by evil spirits and he began to shout and shake profoundly. Out of fear, my Catechist dashed out for dear life. For sometime I also thought of dashing out of the room... However, I gathered courage and called for my priestly cassock.<sup>8</sup> After vesting in my black cassock, I blessed holy water and started the battle. That day I saw a mystery. As I was pouring holy water on Mr. Munyongani, his head could become as small as the size of a tennis ball and his neck would stretch to a point where his head touched the roof of the grass thatched hut in which the exorcism was taking place. The head would then pierce then through the roof, only to be held back and prevented from escaping by the shoulders. It took me almost seven hours to drive out these spirits, from 7pm to 1:00am. It was this incident that made me understand and realize without any doubt that I had the gift of healing... At once I realized that God was calling me to another mission.

Realizing that he was being called to another vocation, another ministry, the ministry of healing and exorcism, Father Urayai later asked Bishop Haene for the permission to continuously assist the sick in a similar way. The Bishop agreed and advised him to use the Latin prayer of exorcism when ever he carried out his onslaughts against the devil. Most importantly, the Bishop warned him against the dangers of exorcism and the need for a sound moral life on the part of the exorcist. Most importantly, the Bishop advised him to take up fasting and praying as the patron tools to use in the ministry of healing and deliverance. Through interaction with spirits of all types and levels Fr. Urayai with time developed a unique healing method which Shoko (2006) referred to as electric.

#### 5. Healing Method

From his inaugural case on 3 August 1969, Fr. Urayai conducted several other healing sessions throughout Gweru Diocese. Catholics and non-Catholics flocked to him day and night for spiritual help. Fr. Urayai often used the veranda of his Church at Chinyika parish under Mutero Mission or his garage for his healing sessions. He could also visit his patients' homesteads and

<sup>6</sup> Canon 1151 states that no-one who has received the power to exorcise can lawfully perform exorcisms on obsessed persons unless he has received particular and express permission from the bishop.

<sup>7</sup> Canon 1152 paragraph 2 further states that this permission is to be given by the Ordinary (Bishop) only to a priest who is pious, prudent and of good life.

<sup>8</sup> A Cassock or Soutine is the principle vestment used by ecclesiastics. It is a robe reaching down to the feet, and buttoned in front. For priests it is black, for bishops violet, for cardinals red, and for the pope white. In some countries priests go everywhere in their cassocks (Morrow, 1949:297).

carry out his healing sessions even in tubs or huts. The same was also confirmed by Sibanda (1999). Fr. Urayai's method usually consisted of six main stages explained below. The same stages were also noted by Sibanda (1999).

### 5.1. Stage One: Exhortation

Though Fr. Urayai slightly varied his stages depending on the condition of the victim, in most cases, before he could perform any exorcism, he would begin by giving a very short lesson either to the patient, the patient's relatives there present or both. He would always make sure that the exhortations were directed at enlightening those present about the nature, dangers, operations and symptoms of attacks by evil spirits.

He often underlined the fact that the condition of being possessed by evil spirits may be recognized by a number of outward signs. On signs and symptoms, Fr. Urayai concurred with Goodman (1998) who observed that there may be acute, devastating illness, chronic phases of depression and frightening visions, interspersed with episodes of violent possession, often described as attacks. These have a clearly marked onset, where the subject slips into a religious trance and the demon may take over the body of the victim. For Fr. Urayai (1994), common signs also include:

Speaking foreign or ancient languages of which the possessed person has no prior knowledge, supernatural abilities and strength not subject to that person's gender or age, knowledge of hidden or remote things which the possessed has no way of knowing, an aversion of anything holy and profuse blasphemy and/or sacrilege. Other signs include lack of appetite, cutting, scratching and biting of skin, unnatural bodily postures, loss of control of personality and entering into a frenzy or rage, attacking others, change in the person's voice, violent rejection of all religious objects or items, antipathy towards entering a church, speaking Jesus' name or hearing Scripture, among others.

Numerous other signs of attack or possession resemble so much the common symptoms of natural diseases that people are made to believe that their patients simply suffer from various diseases. However, there is one major difference, namely, whereas the usual and normal diseases are curable, the devil induced diseases are not even diagnosable medically (Urayai 1994). Davies (1994) has called them neurotic diseases. It can even happen that the conventional medical treatment increases the pains rather than reduce them. Many possessed people suffer severely from insomnia for days and weeks; nightmares, severe headaches (*musoro*), chest (*chifuva*) and abdomen (*mudumbu*), legs (*makumbo*), arms (*maoko*) compression of the chest, back and head as if a heavy weight was laid on them, frequent dizziness, weak or painful joints, heart problems and convulsions as if they were epileptic (Davies 1994). Urayai (1994) stressed that heart problems are usually a result of evil spirits that use the heart as their seat and discharge waste (*unye*) material into the victim's stomach.

### 5.2. Stage Two: Blessing of Salt and Water

The exhortations were normally followed by the blessing of buckets of cold water and salt using the memorized Latin prayers that Fr. Urayai had received from Bishop Haene. At this stage Fr. Urayai would make sure that he vested in his velvet stole<sup>9</sup> or cassock just as was the common practice in the Early and Middle Ages. The lower the temperature of the water the better for it quickly made evil spirits flee. For this reason, Fr. Urayai could even put some buckets of water into the refrigerator or made them stay outdoors overnight for use in the early hours of the following day (Chagwiza 2013).

During the blessing of water and salt, God is besought to endow the two elements (water and salt) with a supernatural power of protecting those who use them with faith against all the attacks of the devil. With his hands hovering above the water, the healer claimed that at that very moment he drew in energy and sends it into the water and the client's body. Fr. Urayai (1994) called this supernatural power or energy from God, High *Od*.<sup>10</sup> Supernatural power from Satan he referred to it as Low *Od*. At this stage, Fr. Urayai taught that when blessing water and salt, he only acted in the person of Christ, *in persona Christi*. He only acted as a channel, instrument or vehicle through which Christ operated. Hence highest concentration on the part of the exorcist during the actual blessing of water is highly called for.

### 5.3. Stage Three: Drinking of Blessed Water

After the vocal or silent prayer of exorcism, the victim was made to drink at least a litre of blessed salty water, or milk sometimes. The purpose of the salty water or milk was to provoke the waste (*Unye*) of the evil spirits that would have been deposited in the stomach of the victim. For one reason or another, if the victim is too weak to drink the holy water on his/her own due to the nature of attack, the victim is forced to do so or the stage is omitted. Cases of this nature were common especially when there was irrefutable evidence of a violent attack or possession that was threatening the life of the victim. In such cases Fr. Urayai would omit the stage and go straight to stage four and tie the victim with cords before splashing the same with blessed water, adjuring the spirit to leave in the name of Jesus the Lord.

### 5.4. Stage Four: Tying the Victim with Cords

Stage four was the tying of the patient with cords. Under normal cases and procedures, when the patient was through with the cup of salty water, Shoko (2006) noted that Fr. Urayai would then tie the patient's legs (together) and hands (at the back) with strong cords. Fr. Urayai always made sure that the patient is restrained. This prevented him/her from escaping or causing harm to

<sup>9</sup> A stole is a long silk band worn around the neck by priests during services and is crossed on the breast of the priest. It is the symbol of authority in the Roman Catholic Church, of all vestments the most blessed (Morrow: 1949:297).

<sup>10</sup> Good or high *od* comes from God. Bad or low *od* comes from Satan. Positive *odic* or vital force exists in and about all things created by God. It is found in every animal, in every plant, in every stone, in every metal, in all water, in every star, in every spirit and in all other existing things. It is nothing material, but spiritual (Greber, 1958:71)

him/herself and to others.

### 5.5. Stage Five: Challenging and Casting out the Evil Spirit(s)

When the safety of both the healer and the healed were guaranteed by tightly tying the hands and legs of the victim by cords, the exorcism would then begin. Of all the stages, this was always the longest. Using the same cup/mug that the patient had used to drink the water, Fr. Urayai would then pour holy water on the victim's body, beginning with the forehead, shoulders, hands, and legs until every part of patient's body was wet. At this stage, the patient was expected to inhale and exhale sharply. Soaking the victim in water was done to weaken the evil spirit with the power and energy of the blessed water (od). When every part of the patient's body was soaked, Fr. Urayai would then concentrate more on pouring water on the victim's forehead. When asked why he concentrated on the forehead, Fr. Urayai (1994) answered:

The forehead is where the physical body and the spirit are joined by a spiritual cord known as the silver cord (Ecclesiastes 11:6). For this reason, I pour holy water on the forehead so that the evil spirit may release the spirit of the victim that it has displaced.

For some stubborn evil spirits, Fr. Urayai (1994) sometimes used incense.<sup>11</sup> He would cover the victim in a blanket and make the victim inhale the burning incense. In addition to incense, he sometimes touched the victim's forehead with a cross, Holy Bible or stole. He could also anoint the victim with holy oil (chrism) especially on the forehead, ears, eyes, mouth, palms and feet. Sometimes a perpetual process of vomiting or diarrhea after the healing session was believed to wash the patient's stomach.

Fr. Urayai had a spectacular healing method of forcing the evil spirits to recite a Catholic prayer of contrition before leaving their host. Fr. Urayai claimed that such a method produced lasting results because any spirit that would have made a perfect act of contrition whilst in the body of its host would go straight to purgatory. Such spirits would later reincarnate on earth in another body after some thousands of years through the assistance of God's planning angels. Emmanuel Mupure (2014) referred to Fr. Urayai as a Super Priest and his method of re-cycling evil spirits as the highest form of exorcism. For Chagwiza (2014), the method was Super Roman Catholic, meaning that it is above and beyond what an ordinary and traditional Catholic Church or priest is capable of performing.

For more complicated cases that he felt required medical attention, Fr. Urayai would always refer them to hospitals and clinics. He strongly believed that God actively works through such human institutions (hospitals and clinics) through the aid of some healing angels. Following the same logic, Fr. Urayai discouraged his patients to seek medical assistance from African traditional practitioners whom he accused of operating as the devil's agents and embodiments of low od.

At stage five, Fr. Urayai often used his tape recorder to record all his conversations with evil spirits. He would later use such tapes during sermons on Sundays<sup>12</sup>, when doing catechetical instructions or during counseling. To some extent, his conversations with evil spirits made him fashion his own theology based on his experiences as an exorcist. At this stage, Fr. Urayai often conversed with demons and asked a number of questions that he felt were important. Below is an excerpt of one of Fr. Urayai's many conversations with evil spirits.

Spirit	I will not go! I will not go! Do not touch my head. You are just a child.
Fr. Urayai	Who are you and what do you want?
Spirit	I will not tell you my name because you know me. I was once your parishioner. I was on earth ten years ago.
Fr. Urayai	I said tell me your name! (Splashing with water)
Spirit	My name is (name supplied). I want to become a family ancestor but he is refusing me.
Fr. Urayai	Where do you come from?
Spirit	From hell, where our master Satan rules and controls...

The conversation went on until the evil spirit was forced to first confess before leaving its host. Through interacting and conversing with evil spirits, Fr. Urayai came to the understanding and realization that most illnesses and diseases that afflicted people were primarily caused by witchcraft and evil spirits that populated and continue to populate the traditional spiritual cosmos. Common among such evil spirits that have hell as their dwelling place included spirits such as ancestral spirits, (midzimu), alien spirits (mashavi), Lion spirits (mhondoro), avenging spirits (ngozi). In a similar manner he also encountered spirits associated with witchcraft such as zvidhoma, zvituxwani, and familiars (zvivanda), puppies (zvishiri). According to Shoko (2006), such spirits are a powerful cog in the Shona spiritual world and are capable of causing illnesses such as psychological, physical and psychic disorders.

Sibanda (1999) went further and reveal that these spirits do not just operate randomly. They have well organized committees with different office bearers such as chairpersons, vices, secretaries (*zvisekeretari*) and even committee members. It is the duty of secretaries to always record proceedings and report to their seniors when ever important meetings take place. Fr. Urayai (1994) also noted that in addition to monthly meetings, these evil spirits also hold annual meetings once per year in the month of November. According to African traditional religion and practices, no traditional function is held in the month of November because of that same reason. In the absence of ancestral spirits and lion spirits who are the spiritual authorities, protectors of the people and owners of the land, all family functions are, therefore suspended or postponed to later dates.

Like human beings, these spirits can also eat and drink. It was also revealed to Fr. Urayai that evil spirits can also have sex with

<sup>11</sup> Incense also contains the highest and purest of the ordic energies and vibrations

<sup>12</sup> Fr. Urayai's Masses or Sunday services often took more than 4 hours because he often punctuated his sermons with tape recordings.

human beings, animals or even amongst themselves. It was revealed that all female *n'angas* have their spiritual husbands and the same is true of male *n'angas*. Thus, stage five was so critical for Fr. Urayai for it revealed some shocking metaphysical secrets. That is why he always had his tape recorder close to him to record his conversations with evil spirits. The same revelations to a greater extent awakened him from the slumber of dogmatic patriotism and made him a free thinker and actor. In fact, he went against some stipulations of both the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Code of Canon law with regard to the practice of healing and exorcism.

#### 5.6. Stage Six: Counseling the Victim

After successfully challenging and liberating the victim from the bondage of demons, stage six centered on counseling the victim. However, in the event that the healing session had not been successful, the stage was postponed to a later date and time.

In the case of a successful exorcism, the counseling session took several directions. Basically, the counseling session was based on the outcome of the healing session. When deemed necessary, Fr. Urayai would play the tape he would have recorded so that the victim would know what transpired during the healing sessions because most victims slipped into a trance when the exercise started.

During his counseling sessions Fr. Urayai always discouraged his patients from mixing Christianity with African traditional practices or seek assistance from *n'angas* and prophets (*vaporofita*) an advice that was revealed by some spirits who had failed to make it to heaven.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Fr. Urayai, labeled both *n'angas* and prophets 'wolves in sheep's clothing.' He also accused them of having links and alliances with witches, wizards or even the devil himself. Thus, he encouraged his patients and Christians to desist from ancestor veneration, beer drinking, smoking and traditional dancing among other prohibitions based on African spiritualism. Above all, he would encourage his patients to lead a holy life, a life of prayer and fasting.

Fr. Urayai's healing method made him very popular within and beyond the Catholic borders. Where ever he went, scores of people asked for his prayers and blessing. Chagwiza (2013) confirms that Fr. Urayai's clientele included not just Catholics of all ages but also members of other churches who visited his parish when all other forms of healing failed. Apparently, Fr. Urayai's much awaited 'new therapy' impacted positively upon Roman Catholics in Zimbabwe. Instead of sick Catholics seeking assistance from quarters such as African traditional exorcists, African Independent Churches and some Charismatic communities, the Roman Catholic Church had demonstrated that she had enough ammunition<sup>14</sup> to deal with problems affecting its people on the level of health. After a protracted time of waiting and hesitation, the Roman Catholic Church had finally read the signs of times. Many who had lost faith in the Roman Catholic Church and accused it of taking a distant and detached position with regard to healing and exorcism began to gain some confidence in their Church's ability to address fundamental African problems such as spirit possession.

The popularity of Fr. Urayai continued to grow, both in Zimbabwe and beyond the Zimbabwean borders. However, as if to confirm the words of Jesus that a prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house (Mark 6:4), for Fr. Urayai, the ministry of healing and deliverance was not a walk in the park. Whilst Fr. Urayai faced quite a number of challenges from his healing ministry, particularly from some stubborn high ranking spirits, such as *midzimu*, *zvikwambo* and *ngozi*, perhaps greater challenges came from none other than his fellow clergy men and his superiors, particularly his own bishops. Through a protracted interaction with spirits, he did not just develop a unique healing method but also a new theology of healing and exorcism based on his experience. However, before examining his challenges as an exorcist, let us explore some of his theories about healing and exorcism.

### 6. Theology of Healing

For over three decades, Fr. Urayai has made an effort to come to grips with the problem of sickness and disease, employing both physical and spiritual means to cure and heal. Consequently, to a greater extent, he has developed his own views and insights with regard to the concept of healing and exorcism.

Fr. Urayai defines healing the same way it is defined in The New Bible Dictionary (1996). The New Bible Dictionary (1996:452) defines healing simply as the restoration of one to full health who has been ill in body or mind or both. The key word in this definition is restoration. A person who is restored to good health means he/she was either physically or psychologically unbalanced, diseased or damaged. With respect to physical damage or disease, the New Bible Dictionary further states that healing often involves the repair or the reconstruction of living tissue or organs and the resumption of normal functioning of one's body. In psychological disorders the term healing is normally used to describe an improved mental state. Thus, when a physically or psychologically unbalanced person is healed, people often say restoration has been effected.

With regard to healing, Fr. Urayai stipulates that for any healing to take place, the fundamental requirement is God (Fr. Urayai 1994). God as the fountain of all God's energy is, therefore, the summit and source of all healing. Thus, He addressed Himself as 'Yahweh your Healer' (Exodus 15:26, 23:25). As source and summit of all healing, God mostly heals by using parts of His creation as healing instruments (ZCBC Pastoral Study Paper 1999:20). If God is the primary source of all healings, it therefore, logically follows that all His instruments are secondary sources. In this case, parts of God's creation include both medical and faith healing practitioners. When practitioners carry out their healing duties, they do so in the person of Jesus Christ (*in persona Christi*), the premier exorcist of all times who healed both physical and spiritual disorders.

<sup>13</sup> Most spirits who failed to make it to heaven often revealed to Fr. Urayai reasons for their failure. In turn Fr. Urayai would warn his Christians against such practices during counseling sessions and homilies.

<sup>14</sup> With the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, health institutions and the ministry of healing and deliverance, the Catholic Church was more than ready to provide holistic healing to its members.

Like most Christians, Fr. Urayai strongly believes in the power of conventional medicine. Thus, during his hey days as an exorcist, he often advised patients with cases that he felt did not require exorcism to first visit their nearest clinics or hospitals for medical attention before coming for exorcism. He believes that all health delivery systems are God's instruments to effect healing upon His people. In fact, Fr. Urayai strongly believes that all conventional medicine contains high od. Just as Porter (2001) classifies angels into a large number of different groups, according to their areas of responsibility, so also does Fr. Urayai. Whilst in the bible an angel is primarily a messenger, the meaning of the Greek *aggelos*, according to Fr. Urayai angels have much more varied and extensive roles. In addition to angels who control natural phenomena, there is also a whole range of celestial beings whose primary function is to dispense high od and heal the sick either directly or indirectly through nurses and doctors. Fr. Urayai refers to these as healing angels and they operate under the leadership of Archangel Raphael. These always direct medical practitioners in their researches and clinical operations (Muzuva 2013). Thus, in the light of this, Fr. Urayai encouraged his youths to train as doctors and nurses for purposes of participating in God's economy of salvation through working as God's healing instruments. Most importantly, he often prayed every day at 6pm underlying that at that particular time, healing angels visit the earth to bless families and patients in hospitals and clinics.

In addition to a strong belief in conventional medicine and healing angels, Fr. Urayai also mixes conventional medicine with the use of plants for medical purposes (Ticharwa 2013). As part of God's creation, all plants are believed to be therapeutic and as such are to be used as alternative medicine. The two are said to be complementary. Each herbal prescription is, therefore, a cocktail of many substances, usually tailored to the individual patient. Any herb or plant part is used for its scent, flavor, or therapeutic properties. Thus, Fr. Urayai always discouraged his patients from seeking herbal medication from quarters they are not in league with. Herbs from quarters such as *n'angas*, medicine men and women, diviners and seers among others, in spite of them being also therapeutic by nature are believed to have low od from the devil. In addition to that, such medicine would have passed through the hands Satan's agents.

Whilst Fr. Urayai believes that most illnesses may be healed through either conventional medicine or the use of herbs, save for some physically or psychologically unbalanced conditions, he is aware that some illnesses may require other forms of healing such as exorcism.

### 7. Theology of Exorcism

For a very long time, exorcism acted as Fr. Urayai's critical recruitment technique in the Roman Catholic Church. Just as od is critical in effecting healing in conventional medicine, Fr. Urayai taught that od is also of fundamental and timeless importance in carrying out any form of exorcism. God as the source of od, is the possessor of ultimate power to drive out evil spirits. Fr. Urayai believes that humanity fully possesses the ultimate weapon against the inroads of Satan.

Even though God is said to be the ultimate healer, Fr. Urayai teaches that the moral life of the exorcist plays a very critical role. The Roman Catholic Church is also concerned about the piety, knowledge and integrity of the life of the priest exorcist (Canon 1173). For Fr. Urayai, a good moral life helps the exorcist accumulate as much high od as possible which enables him/her to properly and effectively dispense his/her spiritual duties. With od everything good is possible. The exorcist can heal or protect himself/herself the same way Job was protected by a spiritual wall/armor around him and his house and all his domain (Job 1:10). With a spiritual wall around the exorcist, he/she can also heal and protect others with his/her spiritual magnetic field in a similar manner Peter's shadow healed those tormented by evil spirits (Acts 5:15). With enough od, the exorcist can also perform distant healings, the same way Jesus healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:22) and many others. Just as healing angels always direct the operations of medical practitioners, Fr. Urayai taught that angels under the leadership of Archangel Michael<sup>15</sup> the commander of God's celestial army are responsible for directing and assisting exorcists.

Prayer and fasting are said to be critical in the life of the exorcist especially when he/she is preparing for a healing session. Jesus also emphasised the need to fast and pray (Mark 9:29). The same point was also echoed by Milingo (1991). For Milingo (1991) preparation for healing sessions is very critical. Exorcists can only ignore it at their own peril. It is basically centered on the exorcist himself. Before an exorcist attempts any exorcism, Milingo (1991) emphasizes that he needs to examine himself. The exorcist needs to examine himself in order to find out whether or not he is worthy representing Christ, the premier exorcist of all time. He must examine his conscience. In that case, the spiritual condition of the exorcist is fundamental. In fact, a good moral and sinless life is demanded of every exorcist who has been granted express permission by his Bishop<sup>16</sup> as highlighted by Canon 1152, the Roman Catholic governing code.<sup>17</sup> The exorcist has to put on integrity as his breastplate before attempting to drive out evil spirits (Milingo 1991).

Thus for Fr. Urayai, through regular periods of seclusion, meditation and prayer, good conduct, balanced behavior and good character, exorcists accumulate the required od. For the same reason Jesus often went out into mountains and valleys to pray and ask God for such power (Matthew 14:23, Luke 6:12). He was constantly in search of the most important requirement (od) in his healing ministry as the premier exorcist of all times.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect in Father Urayai's theology of exorcism is the idea of re-cycling of souls and re-directing repentant evil spirits to heaven or paradise. He teaches that when an evil spirit (in the victim) is either forced or persuaded by the

<sup>15</sup> The book of Revelations states that Archangel Michael was responsible for driving out the rebel angels out of heaven (Revelations 12:7-12)

<sup>16</sup> Whilst Fr. Urayai believed that it is important for exorcists to get permission from the Bishop, his Super Roma exorcists strongly argue that there is no need for any bishops' permission to carry out any exorcism.

<sup>17</sup> Canon 1152 paragraph 2 states that permission to exorcise can only be given by the Local Ordinary (Bishop) only to a priest who is pious, prudent and of good moral life

exorcist to repent and make a perfect act of contrition, the spirit is then taken by God's planning angels. Consequently, another life is later planned for the same spirit. Failure to repent or make a perfect act of contrition, the evil spirit wanders around and may later pound on the same victim with re-doubled energy especially when the victim lapses in prayer.

With such a controversial theology of healing and exorcism, opposition was swift in making its voices heard. Whilst on hand a certain section of the Catholic Church commended Fr. Urayai for introducing a new ministry in the Catholic Church, on the other hand, there were complaints that he had time for nothing else.

### 8. Challenges

Fr. Urayai's challenges were manifold. To begin with, his charismatic ministry of healing and exorcism of evil spirits brought him into conflict with others in the hierarchy. His challenges did not only come from the lay faithful but from fellow black priests who, as early as the mid 70s became so nervous and uncomfortable with his healing sessions. They first accused him of spreading division and confusion. Nyatsanza (1995) accused him of failing to marry smoothly and balance his special gift and the church demands of availability in his own assigned parish. For that reason, deliberate efforts were made to try and stop Fr. Urayai's controversial healing ministry.

One of the efforts employed by the Diocese of Gweru to silence Fr. Urayai and perhaps force him to stop his controversial healing sessions was to relegate him to peripheral rural dilapidating parishes. Not only was he relegated to rural parishes, for his entire priestly ministry, Fr. Urayai was never appointed parish priest of any parish or mission despite the fact that he was among the first three to have been ordained in Gweru Diocese. He only worked as an assistant priest for the greater part of his priestly ministry. At these peripheral parishes, he experienced acute food challenges to feed himself and his patients. He also had transport problems to move around doing pastoral work, particularly visiting the sick. However, against all odds, Fr. Urayai's healing ministry continued unabated for he often borrowed vehicles from his secret admirers or visited his patients by public transport. Through his sermons, prayerful life and commitment to duty, he challenged and converted many to the Roman Catholic Church. According to interviews conducted, due to his tight schedule, Fr. Urayai did not enter names of the newly baptised into the baptismal register as Canon Law demands. As such there are no records to substantiate the claim that he used his healing method as a recruitment technique.

Fr. Urayai was also accused of championing the formation of Super Roma<sup>18</sup>, an inter-denominational new religious movement that emerged in the early 70s whose main mission is to 'reform the various denominations from within.' A few years after the formation of the movement, the opposition voice was swift in making itself heard. Outrageous stories and comments were fabricated about him and his movement. Although most of them were disapproved, they left a legacy of mistrust. Within the Roman Catholic circles, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (2005) views the Super Roma movement as a heretical splinter sect or break-away movement, founded by a non-competent ecclesiastical authority<sup>19</sup> and based on unorthodox theology. It is viewed as anti-Roman Catholic, unconstitutional, targeted at misleading the Zimbabwean Christian community Chipangura (2006). Kugwa (2005) also views Super Roma as not just controversial and suspicious, but also strange and satanic. Chagwiza (2013), however, comments that whilst Fr. Urayai has been at the centre of a bitter controversy affecting Christianity in Zimbabwe, attempting to silence him or his ecumenical movement has in fact popularized him, thereby creating partisans for his beliefs.

Perhaps the worst challenge that Fr. Urayai faced came in the late nineties when he was diagnosed with diabetes (Madanhire 2014). Doctors had advised that he required proper medical attention, diet and enough time to rest. The doctors had also advised that he should slow down his operations but he continued to overwork himself. Consequently, his situation worsened. When the situation deteriorated, he collapsed during one of his many healing sessions at his Chinyuni parish and got admitted at St. Joseph's, a nearby Roman Catholic rural hospital in the Chirumanzu district. Thereafter, he was often in and out of hospital, thereby putting an abrupt end to his healing ministry. After battling with diabetes for over five years, Fr. Urayai died in August 2003 at the age of 72, having spent close to four decades in the healing ministry. He was buried at Driefontein Mission in Chirumanzu District as a sign that he was still a legitimate son of the Roman Catholic Church. Having been founded in 1970, Super Roma had been in operation for more than three decades when Fr. Urayai died. From 1970-2003, the movement has since navigated its way through thick and thin and to-date, Super Roma which has a large following in Zimbabwe has been a subject of serious sustained study, particularly at the University of Zimbabwe.<sup>20</sup>

One other challenge to Fr. Urayai's healing ministry is his theology of healing, particularly the issue of re-cycling of spirits and the doctrine of reincarnation. Whilst religious experiences are beyond the verification principle and not subject to empirical evidence, Fr. Urayai's method seems to be devoid of scriptural basis since nowhere in the Bible did Jesus or his disciples re-cycle evil spirits either to paradise or heaven. Instead, when Jesus drove a whole legion of evil spirits, 2000 in number, out of a maniac living in a cemetery, he made them enter a herd of swine upon their request (Luke 8:26-39). The concept of re-cycling of spirits, therefore, may need further investigation and study because the Roman Catholic Church does not subscribe to the idea of

<sup>18</sup> The name Super Roma is a nickname, often used as an incriminating label. The official name for the movement is The Light of Life Christian Group. From 1970 when the movement was formed, to date, Super Roma has not yet stood as a separate entity but continues to believe in the power of 'stay and reform from within' strategy. With its ecumenical composition, the movement has demonstrated its intention to survive and thrive.

<sup>19</sup> Canon 321 states that the competent authority to establish public associations is the Holy See, the Episcopal Conference or Diocesan Bishop.

<sup>20</sup> The author's other article that is being considered for publication in the Oral Journal History of South Africa is based on challenges of Super Roma as a new religious movement in Zimbabwe.



recycling of souls and of reincarnation.

The Roman Catholic Church is, however, clear on the doctrine of reincarnation. Regarding the same belief, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) teaches:

Death is the end of man's earthly pilgrimage, of the time of grace and mercy which God offers him as to work out his earthly life in keeping with the divine plan, and to decide his ultimate destiny. When the single course of earthly life is completed, we shall not return to another. It is appointed for men to die once. Hence, there is no reincarnation. Hell is the abode of the eternally damned.

Hence, with such a controversial theology of re-cycling of spirits and reincarnation, Fr. Urayai was always treated as a renegade Roman Catholic exorcist. However, reincarnation that is denied by Christianity is central to the teachings of Buddhism, Hinduism and Taoism. More still, Origen (ca 185-215), a controversial Catholic theologian had earlier taught that there is reincarnation. He was, however, labeled a heretic by the Catholic Church.

### **9. Catholic Position on Exorcism**

The Roman Catholic position on exorcism is firmly anchored on the sacred Scriptures, particularly on Jesus Christ, the premier exorcist of all time. He is the one who commissioned his disciples and believers to heal and cast out demons in his name and he is the one who promised them conspicuous victory and success (Mark 16:17).

During his ministry, Jesus did not follow one healing method but a variety of methods. The most common methods that Jesus used was the laying on of hands along with speaking the word as with the cure of peter's mother in law (Matthew 8:14). Sometimes, as with the daughter of the Canaanite woman, the exorcism took place from a distance (Matthew 15:22). Jesus drove a whole legion of evil spirits out of a maniac living in a cemetery and made them enter a herd of swine (Luke 8:26-39). As with the man born blind, Jesus used both physical conduct and other means such as the use of clay made from spittle, which was a popular remedy of blindness and deafness during that time (John 9:6). He could also use the faith of the receiver as with the case of the Centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5) or by faith of another as in the case of the paralytic (Matthew 9:2-7). In more or less similar fashion, Jesus' disciples furthered their Master's healing ministry. The same legacy continued in the early Church and beyond, save for some disturbances during the period of the enlightenment.<sup>21</sup> However, the period of the late Middle Ages witnessed a revival of the Church's practice on healing and exorcism though the practice declined again in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In such a turbulent environment, the Roman Catholic Church has always maintained a traditional attitude towards exorcism. Canon 1172 stipulates that no one may lawfully exorcise the possessed without the special and express permission of the Local Ordinary. The Law further stipulates that the permission is to be granted by the Bishop only to a priest who is endowed with piety, knowledge, prudence and integrity of life. Thus, in the light of the mind of the Fathers of Trent and Canon 1172, Father Urayai's healing ministry, has both a Biblical and traditional basis.

From a Roman Catholic point of view, there are several forms of exorcisms. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) exorcism of the possessed person is called a major exorcism and can only be performed by a priest who has received a special and express permission from his bishop. Baptismal exorcism is a simple form of exorcism administered to those preparing for the Sacrament of Baptism and for this, the priest does not need any permission from the bishop. There are also various other minor exorcisms whereby a priest can exorcise an infested place or object. Such would include: water, salt, and oil among others. Having been duly blessed, these would then be used in the blessing and/or consecration of churches, alters, sacred vessels, church bells and all places connected with public or intended for private devotion. In this case, a simple prayer and/or a profession of faith is enough to mitigate and restrain the diabolical power. The Church has been using this kind of indirect exorcism by means of exorcised objects from as early as the first century. The Roman Catholic Church, however, reserved other forms of illnesses other than diabolic possession to the area of medical science. Thus, according to the Code of Canon Law (1983), before a major exorcism could be performed, it was therefore a pre-requisite that the exorcist should ascertain that one is dealing with the presence of the evil one, and not an illness.

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (1999) underlines that, the Church has, however, learnt through historical experience that the imprudent use of exorcism may be counterproductive, and has done more harm than good. For her, the emphasis is rather not targeted at simply driving out evil spirits but bringing the spirit of faith, the Holy Spirit to the victim. Hence, justifiably, to some extent there was need to regulate the manner in which both Fr. Urayai and the Zambian exorcist archbishop Milingo conducted their exorcisms.

With regard to the same practice of exorcism, it should be underlined that the practice is not peculiar to Urayai but a shared ministry. In fact, the practice is as old as humanity. A cursory study of cultures and religions in the pre-Christian era reveal that spirit possession and exorcism were common characteristic features of several ethnic societies of antiquity. Beliefs and practices of cultures such as Ancient Mesopotamia, Babylon, Assyrian Tablets, Hindu Scriptures, Ancient Persia and Judaism, , among others exhibit the practice of demon fighting well before the advent of Christianity. Thus, Withnall's (2014) article emphasizes that belief in spirit possession is widespread both geographically and historically and is far from rare even in modern western societies. And there appears to be many forms of exorcism to such an extent that every exorcist uses his/her own.

<sup>21</sup> The enlightenment period, with its emphasis on Scientific knowledge, mathematics, and Physics, threw off the shackles of religion and replaced theology with humanism. Demon possession was therefore relegated to the levels of superstition.

## 10. Dangers of Exorcism

Whilst exorcism may appear to be a noble and crowd pooling ministry, it has a number of challenges and is considered an incredibly dangerous spiritual task. From as early as the era of the New Testament, the ministry of healing and deliverance has always been a risky undertaking. This often happens when one is not ordained or not qualified for the job.

We read from the book of the Acts about sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest. Sons of Sceva made a giant error by attempting to borrow the authority of Jesus and Paul to cast out evil spirits even though they were not submitted to either (Acts 19:11-17). These fake exorcists were violently attacked by the same evil spirits they wanted to cast out. They fled from the house naked and badly mauled. The same can also happen to exorcists who engage in exorcism without full knowledge of the ministry or without proper preparation.

Having been in the healing ministry for more than two decades, Fr. Urayai got a shock of his life when a certain woman who had come for exorcism died at his Chinyuni parish in the early nineties. However, since the woman had been taken to Chinyuni in a very critical condition, both her relatives and the police gave Fr. Urayai the benefit of doubt Madanhire (2013). Day in, day out, the media cover numerous cases of dubious exorcisms and rape cases linked with exorcisms throughout the world, an indication that the devil is on the prowl like a roaring lion, seeking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). There are also reported and unreported cases of fake prophets raping juveniles in a bid to exorcise evil spirits. Marufu (2014) reported that a fake prophet alleged to have raped a teenager girl absconded trial in Harare on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2014. Kavele (2014) also covered a story in which a soldier was assaulted for foiling pastor's stage-managed exorcism on February 2014. Meya's (2014) article warns people against fake exorcists and is concerned and worried that people are at the mercy of false exorcists. Matambanadzo (2012) also reports that a total of 40 self-proclaimed exorcists had been deregistered in Zimbabwe. The Fathers of the Council of Trent commended that in spite of the fact that exorcism is considered to be an incredibly dangerous spiritual undertaking, humanity still possesses the ultimate weapon against the inroads of Satan (McBrien 1995). Hence, sacred scriptures underscores that, though rescued by Christ from the powers of darkness (Colossians 1:3) humanity has not been relieved of the necessity of struggling against the continuous attacks of that power (Ephesians 6:12).

## 11. Pope Francis on Exorcism

Withnall's (2014) article reveals that in July 2014, the reigning Roman Catholic Pontiff, Pope Francis has made exorcism official Catholic practice. Whilst the Roman Catholic Church has left the legacy of exorcism from its foundation in fulfillment of the missionary mandate, the same ministry has been bristled with a number of problems for many years. The aforementioned cases of Archbishop Milingo and Fr. Urayai are just a tip of the iceberg. Whilst on one hand some Bishops had long back appointed exorcists for their respective dioceses, on the other hand, a lot more bishops, particularly in Zimbabwe are still dragging their feet with regard to the same development.

By making exorcism official Catholic practice and recognizing demon fighting priests under Canon Law, Pope Francis has opened a new chapter in the Roman Catholic Church. Withnall (2014) underlines the point that the pope has formally recognized the International Association of exorcists, a group of 250 priests who had been battling the forces of evil across 30 countries for many years. Indeed, it was seen as a welcome development and a cause for great joy. The Pope himself was last year captured in astonishing footage placing his hands on the head of a boy in a wheelchair, reciting an intense prayer until the boy slumped down exhaling sharply (Withnall 2014). At long last, sanity and order has once again been restored by the Catholic Church in the ministry of healing and deliverance. The Catholic Church can now put the gospel of Jesus into practice by reviving the ministry of healing. Unfortunately, for people like Father Urayai of Zimbabwe who pioneered the ministry of exorcism in Zimbabwe amidst turbulent ecclesiastical environments, may not live to see the light of the day.

However, in spite of the challenges currently being faced by the ministry of healing and deliverance in Africa, Lagerwerf (1987) quoting from Igenoza (1985) continue to argue for the importance of the ministry of exorcism or deliverance, for a more dynamic contextualization of Christianity in Africa, particularly in the mainline Churches. One of his premises in the argument is the claim that exorcism has succeeded in bringing relief to some affected people whereas other methods have apparently failed. For that reason, the ministry of healing should occupy a central and critical role in all Christian churches in honour of Jesus' unequivocal mission to drive out evil spirits and to heal in his name.

## 12. Conclusion

This article has explored the healing ministry of Fr. Augustine Urayai. Whilst it may be true that African Independent Churches and some charismatic healing communities have dominated the area of exorcism in Zimbabwe for many years, the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe also carries with it the legacy of decades of demon fighting as demonstrated by Fr. Urayai's protracted healing ministry. He labored to introduce the ministry of healing and deliverance in Zimbabwe. And apparently, as observed by Shoko (2006), healing in the mainline churches appear to relate significantly to independent churches and modern charismatic healing communities, particularly when one takes into cognizance of the fact that in both mainline and African independent churches, the underlying truth is that, people are freed from evil spirits. One can also further conclude that even though Fr. Urayai to some extent departed from Jesus' healing methods and employed his own, his ministry of healing and deliverance is still based on Christian orthodox and missiological ideology, namely, 'fulfillment of the Good News' to heal. Whilst it is true that Fr. Urayai is a controversial figure in his own country, the fact that his courage and determination in putting the gospel into practice will forever be cherished. In fact, his breakthrough in the ministry of healing and deliverance (regardless of what Canon Law stipulates) is of overriding and overarching significance.

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