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Interview with an Exorcist Father Jose Antonio Fortea

In an exclusive Spero News interview, theologian and exorcist Father Jose Antonio Fortea speaks of the dangers of the occult arts but also the Harry Potter series of books. He is travelling to the US for a series of conferences in August 2007.

By Martin Barillas

([Spero News](#)) Trained by Vatican exorcist Gabriele Amorth, Father Jose Antonio Fortea is not only an exorcist, but also a writer, calligrapher and parish priest. He once thought he would lead what he has termed ordinary life as an attorney in Madrid, much as his father did before him, but sensed instead a vocation to the priesthood in his adolescent years.

A theology graduate of Navarre University in Spain, Father Fortea wrote a thesis there on exorcism. He has been a practicing exorcist for some twenty years. One of his cases, recounted in [Spero News as "Marta: the possessed"](#) in 2005, was of a seemingly normal young woman could go into a trance while possessed and writhe like a snake on the floor of chapel near Madrid. A session of her continuing exorcism was witnessed by skeptical Spanish journalists who came away shocked, shaken, and mystified.



Father Fortea's efforts, with help from other professionals, have yet to bear fruit in her case. But others have been successfully relieved of demonic possession, while many have benefited from Father Fortea's book and learned about the practice of exorcism. "Interview With an Exorcist: An Insider's Look at the Devil, Demonic Possession, and the Path to Deliverance" is available in English, while Father Fortea's several novels and manuscripts are yet to be translated from Spanish.

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Spero News Religion editor Martin Barillas conducted an interview with Father Fortea in which he answered questions about possession and ways to avoid it.

MB: *May a possessed person receive communion? Why or why not?*

FORTEA: Yes, it is not only licit but also quite necessary. In moments of crisis, the demon moves the body of the possessed even while possession does not diminish liberty. It is therefore that a possessed person may confess and be in God's grace.

MB: *What difference is there between a possessed person and a sinner who receives Holy Communion even when he is not well disposed? Are there cases when an ill-disposed person can or should communicate?*

FORTEA: The difference lies in that a sinner has besmirched his soul. A possessed person may have a demon's chains about his body, but his soul may be clean.

One must never communicate without having a clean soul. We must strive to purify our souls when we receive Jesus. Even in the final moments, in the queue of people who will receive communion, we can purify our souls a little more by making acts of repentance. People who communicate without having confessed grave sins are not conscious of what they receive. If they were, they would not do so.

MB: *Father Fortea, with your long experience with exorcisms, can you give us a few specific details about some of those you have observed?*

FORTEA: That is like asking a sailor who has made many voyages over the ocean to say something about what he has observed. There are so many things... But I can say that the power of the demon is much less spectacular than what people may think. Screams, writhing on the ground, insults, vomiting, physical assaults upon the priest, spewing thick sputum – these are what the exorcist sees habitually. More spectacular things are rare. Even so, I have heard screams impossible for a human being, surprising convulsions in the air, and knowledge of hidden things of which I alone and no one else knew.

MB: *With reference to pornography, what danger do pornography addicts incur? And fans of black magic or the occult arts?*

FORTEA: Pornography debilitates the spiritual strength of the soul but does not provoke possession. Black magic does provoke possession because it involves invoking the devil. The occult arts are quite varied; in my books, I analyze each one as to their harmfulness. For example, divination is a sin but does not provoke

possession. However, voodoo is indeed a cause of possession for those who practice it.

MB: *Is there evidence or observable signs of the possessed in terms of their behaviour or morale? Or do they appear to be “normal”?*

FORTEA: What is specific to possession is that the person enters into a trance and it is another spirit that moves that body.

MB: *What importance do you attach to the August 2007 meeting in Poland of exorcists? Is there a greater interest in the practice of exorcism on the part of the clergy or is there a greater number of possessed?*

FORTEA: The ministry of exorcism has spread widely over the last twenty years because the practice of magic has grown in the United States and Europe. This is true even though magic may bear attractive names such as “New Age”.

MB: *Father Fortea, would you tell us where you will go in the United States this year? Will you be giving conferences?*

FORTEA: I will be going to two conferences, one in Pennsylvania and the other in Illinois, but they will be solely for priests who work in this ministry.

MB: What is the meaning of the fascination or obsession among some young people for the series of books by J.K. Rowling about Harry Potter the magician? Are they a danger to children? Can you present your ideas about the origins and effects of the Harry Potter phenomenon?

FORTEA: The books in themselves are not bad. They are merely literary fantasies in the manner of stories that have existed in Europe since the Middle Ages. I am neither in favour of condemning nor prohibiting them. To me, they are just unobjectionable stories. However, children are imitators by nature and tend to imitate what they read and what they see. It is therefore worrisome that reading these books may lead them to attempt the practice of magic or to believe that magic is not as dangerous as their instincts might tell them. It is therefore necessary for parents to warn their children of the dangers of magic.

MB: *In closing, what prayer do you think is the most effective in combating demons, possession, and temptation?*

FORTEA: People ask me which prayers are the most effective, but all of them are equally effective. There are prayers in which we beg God expressly to protect us from the snare of the Malignant One. But in reality, every prayer has the same power since in the end it is a petition to God, not a formula that has a power in

itself. There are people who slowly repeat, over and over, the name of Jesus as an ejaculatory prayer in which is found everything they might ask. This is an example of how a single repeated word (as in the marvelous book "[The Way of a Pilgrim](#)" by an anonymous Russian author) can be better heeded than a long prayer; everything depends on the faith and the love that is directed to God. Sometimes we say long prayers, sometimes short ones, sometimes oral prayers, and sometimes mental prayers. But all of them protect us equally from the devil.

Martin Barillas is a former US diplomat and human rights observer who served in Latin America, Europe, and the US. He is Religion News editor for Spero News (<http://www.speronews.com>) and blogs at [HispanoBizantino](#) .

[Interview with an Exorcist](#)



In today's culture of scientific enlightenment, many consider belief in demonic possession and exorcism to be superstitious remnants of the Dark Ages. Even many Christians, contrary to the clear words of Jesus in the Gospel, scoff at the notion that the Devil and demons really exist. Is demonic possession real? Are believers really in any danger from Satan and his crafty minions? What is the truth about exorcism?

[Way of a Pilgrim](#)

This classic work of Russian spirituality has charmed countless readers with its tale of a nineteenth-century peasant seeking the truth with simple humility, finding joy and plenty everywhere in life.

