

# Italian exorcist says society risks collapse due to ‘aggressive Satanism’

By [Elise Harris](#) - Dec 22, 2019

ROME – One long-time Catholic exorcist has sounded an alarm over what he called an uptick in “aggressive Satanism,” especially among young people, which he insists is due in part to the rapid growth of cultural secularism and a lack of strong role models.

Among other things, Dominican Father Francois Dermine said, exposure to the demonic at a young age encourages violence, ranging from bullying to more serious manifestations.

“There are many groups of satanism,” Dermine said, noting that internet exposure has also increased, and references to the demonic are increasingly prevalent in videogames and school games such as the “Charlie Charlie challenge,” in which players cross two pencils on a grid with sectors marking ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and ask a supernatural being, “Charlie,” to answer the questions they ask.

“Satanism is getting much more aggressive and also diffused,” Dermine said. Speaking to *Crux*, he faulted growth in secularism, which he said retired pontiff Benedict XVI dedicated much of his papacy to fighting, as one of the main causes.

An exorcist for the Archdiocese of Ancona-Osimo in Italy, Dermine says he’s been dealing with the demonic a quarter of a century, since 1994.

“Secularization leaves a void,” he said, explaining that alongside it is a “sort of spiritual, ideological and also cultural void. Young people do not have anything to satisfy their spiritual and profound needs. They are thirsting for something, and the Church is not attractive anymore.”

With an ever-aging church-going population in Western society and a growing list of scandals, the Church is no longer seen as a valid resource for youth looking for answers, Dermine said, “so they try to find something elsewhere. This something is, many times, the demonic world.”

One example of the normalization of Satanism, he said, is the recent book, *A Children’s Book of Demons*, which was published in May and is directed to children aged 5-10 years of age. Penned by Aaron Leighton, an award-winning illustrator and known fan of occult practices, the book contains colorful images of some 20 different demons and teaches kids the *sigil*, or magical symbol, for the demons and how to summon them.

“Satanism is not always so explicit, but it is becoming more and more so, and the publication of this book is a sign of this,” Dermine said, noting that just a few years ago a book like this would have been inconceivable, “but now it’s not.”

Pointing to the dangers of getting involved with the demonic at a young age, Dermine said the risk is acquiring “a Satanist mentality” in which youth slowly become familiar with the demonic world,

which, at a certain point, becomes normal. And when it does, “they risk passing from the culture to the acts. They can become evil themselves very easily.”

Part of the fault, he said, is due to the breakdown of the family structure, which often leaves children insecure, in unstable environments and without trustworthy points of reference.

“Education of young people is poorer and poorer,” he said. “Couples are collapsing. Children are left alone; they are destabilized, and they don’t have any defenses,” so when they face pressure from peers to join in an occult activity, especially with the promise that the devil will give them power in exchange for loyalty, it’s hard to resist.

“If (children) have received love in their own families, it would be much more difficult to follow these kinds of ideologies. It would be much more difficult to penetrate their minds,” he said, adding that, “If the adult world does not offer alternatives, it is more difficult for younger generations to adopt a stable way of life. It’s very difficult, it’s almost a miracle.”

In his own analysis, Dermine said he believes young people, especially those without a stable background, are drawn to Satanic activity in part out of a desire to overcome fears, and also as a means of breaking away from the “old ways” of how things were done in the past.

“If the adult world does not offer alternatives, it is more difficult for younger generations to adopt a stable way of life. It’s very difficult, it’s almost a miracle,” he said, adding that prayer is needed now “more than ever.”

As Satanism and occult practices become increasingly normal among young people, they also face pressure not to feel out of the loop if friends and peers are involved, Dermine said, adding that the “real danger” comes when someone becomes personally involved in these activities.

“It’s not only a vague fear, it’s a very concrete risk. We must not underestimate this, because violence among young people is becoming more and more diffused,” he said.

“A violent mentality is very dangerous for our society, very, very dangerous,” he said, adding, “Our society risks collapse if it continues like this.”

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