



THE TRUE PRESENCE

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THE EXORCISM OF NICOLA AUBREY

NOV. 1565 — FEB. 1566

A TRUE STORY



**THE ONLY WAY TO DRIVE THE DEVIL OUT FOR GOOD
IS WITH**

THE TRUE PRESENCE

THE EXORCISM OF NICOLA AUBREY

By Father Michael Muller, C.S.S.R.

It is indeed a remarkable fact that, as the devil made use of Luther, an apostate monk, to abolish the Mass and deny the Real Presence; in like manner, God made use of His arch-enemy, the devil, to prove the Real Presence. He repeatedly forced him publicly to profess his firm belief in it, to confound the heretics for their disbelief, and acknowledge himself vanquished by Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. For this purpose, God allowed a certain Mme. Nicola Aubrey, an innocent person, to become possessed by Beelzebub and twenty-nine other evil spirits. The possession took place on the eighth of November, 1565, and lasted until the eighth of February, 1566.

Her parents took her to Father de Motta, a pious priest of Vervins, in order that he might expel the demon by exorcisms of the Church. Father de Motta tried several times to expel the evil spirit by applying the sacred relics of the holy cross, but he could not succeed; Satan would not depart. At last, inspired by the Holy Ghost, he resolved to expel the devil by means of the sacrament of Our Lord's Body and Blood. Whilst Nicola was lying in a state of unnatural lethargy, Father de Motta placed the Blessed Sacrament upon her lips, and instantly the infernal spell was broken; Nicola was restored to consciousness, and received Holy Communion with every mark of devotion. As soon as Nicola had received the sacred Body of Our Lord, her face became bright and beautiful as the face of an angel, and all who saw her were filled with joy and wonder, and they blessed God from their inmost hearts. With the permission of God, Satan returned and again took possession of Nicola.

As the strange circumstances of Nicola's possession became known everywhere, several Calvinist preachers came with their followers, to "expose this popish cheat," as they said. On their entrance, the devil saluted them mockingly, called them by name, and told them that they had come in *obedience to him*. One of the preachers took his Protestant prayer book, and began to read it with a very solemn face. The devil laughed at him, and putting on a most comical look, he said: "Ho! Ho! My good friend; do you intend to expel *me* with your prayers and hymns? Do you think that they will cause me any pain? Don't you know that they are mine? I helped to compose them!"

"I will expel thee in the name of God," said the preacher, solemnly.

"You!" said the devil mockingly. "You will *not* expel me either in the name of *God*, or in the name of the *devil*. Did you ever hear of one devil driving out another?"

"I am not a devil," said the preacher, angrily, "I am a servant of Christ."



The bishop continued to urge Satan. At last the evil spirit departed, and Nicola fell back senseless into the arms of her keepers. She still, however, remained shockingly distorted. In this state she was shown to the judges, and to all the people present; she was rolled up like a ball. The bishop now fell on his knees, in order to give her the Blessed Sacrament as usual. But see! Suddenly the demon returns, wild with rage, endeavors to seize the hand of the bishop, and even tries to grasp the Blessed Sacrament itself. The bishop starts back; Nicola is carried into the air and the bishop rises from his knees, trembling with terror and pale as death.

The good bishop takes courage again; he pursues the demon, holding the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, till at length the demon, overcome by the power of Our Lord's sacred body, goes forth amidst smoke, and lightning, and thunder. Thus was the demon at length expelled forever, on Friday afternoon, at three o'clock, the same day and hour on which Our Lord triumphed over hell by His ever-blessed death.

Nicola was now completely cured; she could move her left arm with the greatest ease. She fell on her knees and thanked God, as well as the good bishop, for all he had done for her. The people wept for joy, and sang hymns of praise and thanksgiving in honor of our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. On all sides were heard the exclamations: "Oh, what a great miracle! Oh, thank God that I witnessed it! Who is there now that can doubt of the real presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar!" Many a Protestant also said: "I believe now in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; I have seen with my eyes! I will remain a Calvinist no longer. Accursed be those who have hitherto kept me in error! Oh, now I can understand what a good thing is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!"

A solemn *Te Deum* was intoned; the organ pealed forth and the bells rung forth a merry chime. The whole city was filled with joy.

This great triumph of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament over Satan occurred in the presence of more than 150,000 people, in the presence of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of the city, of Protestants and Catholics alike. I have published a lengthy account of this extraordinary affair in a little volume entitled "Triumph of the Blessed Sacrament." These facts are well authenticated by the accounts published in various languages – French, Italian, Spanish, and German, as I have shown on pages 13, 14, and 15 of the above-mentioned little volume.

The above was taken from Chapter 5 of the book *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* by Fr. Michael Muller, C.Ss.R. (Imprimatur: Archbishop McClosky, New York - 1884).

"A servant of Christ, indeed!" said Satan, with a sneer. "What! I tell you, you are worse than I am. I believe, and *you* do not want to believe. Do you suppose that *you* can expel me from the body of this miserable wretch? Ha! Go first and expel all the devils that are in your own heart!"

The preacher took his leave, somewhat discomfited. On going away, he said, turning up the whites of his eyes, "O Lord, I pray thee, assist this poor creature!"

"And I pray Lucifer," cried the evil spirit, "that he may never leave you, but may always keep you firmly in his power, as he does now. Go about your business, now. You are *all mine*, and I am your master."

On the arrival of the priest, several of the Protestants went away – they had seen and heard more than they wanted. Others, however, remained; and great was their terror when they saw how the devil writhed and howled in agony, as soon as the Blessed Sacrament was brought near him. At last the evil spirit departed, leaving Nicola in a state of unnatural trance. While she was in this state, several of the preachers tried to open her eyes, but they found it impossible to do so. The priest then placed the Blessed Sacrament on Nicola's lips, and instantly she was restored to consciousness. Rev. Father de Motta then turned to the astonished preachers, and said: "Go now, ye preachers of the new Gospel; go and relate everywhere what you have seen and heard. Do not deny any longer that Our Lord Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. Go now, and let not human respect hinder you from confessing the truth."

During the exorcisms of the following days, the devil was forced to confess that he was not to be expelled at Vervins, and that he had with him twenty-nine devils, among whom were three powerful demons: Cerberus, Astaroth, and Legio. On the third of January, 1566, the bishop arrived at Vervins, and began the exorcism in the church, in the presence of an immense multitude.

"I command thee, in the name and by power of the real presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, to depart instantly," said the bishop to Satan in a solemn voice.

Satan was, at last, expelled the second time by means of the Blessed Sacrament. On leaving, he paralyzed the left arm and right foot of Nicola, and also made her left arm longer than her right; and no power on earth could cure this strange infirmity, until some weeks after, when the devil was at last completely and irrevocably expelled. Nicola was now taken to the celebrated pilgrimage of Our Lady at Liesse, especially since the devil seemed to fear that place so much. Next day Father de Motta began the exorcism in the church of Our Lady at Liesse, in the presence of an immense multitude. He took the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, and, showing it to the demon, he said: "I command thee, in the name of the living God, the great Emmanuel Whom thou seest here present, and in Whom thou believest."

"Ah, yes!" shrieked the demon, "*I believe in Him.*" And the devil howled again as he made this confession, for it was wrung from him by the power of Almighty God.

"I command thee, then, in His Name," said the priest, "to quit this body instantly."

At these words, and especially at the sight of the Blessed Sacrament, the devil suffered the most frightful torture. At one moment the body of Nicola was rolled up like a ball; then again she became fearfully swollen. At one time her face was unnaturally lengthened, then excessively widened, and sometimes it was as red as scarlet. Her eyes, at times, protruded horribly, and then again sunk deeply into her skull. Her tongue hung down to her chin; it was sometimes black, sometimes red, and sometimes spotted like a toad. The priest still continued to urge and torture Satan. "Accursed spirit!" he cried, "I command thee, in the Name and by the real presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ here in the Blessed Sacrament, to depart instantly from the body of this poor creature.

"Ah, yes!" cried Satan, howling wildly, "twenty-six of my companions shall leave this instant, for they are forced to do so."

The people in the church now began to pray with great fervor. Suddenly Nicola's limbs began to crack, as if every bone in her body were breaking; a pestilential vapor came forth from her mouth, and twenty-six devils departed from her, never more to return. Nicola then fell into an unnatural swoon, from which she was aroused only by the Blessed Sacrament. On recovering her senses, and receiving holy communion, Nicola's face shone like the face of an angel. The priest still continued to urge the demon, and used every means to expel him.

"I will not leave, unless commanded by the bishop of Leon," answered the demon, angrily.

Nicola was now taken to Pierrepont, where one of the demons, name Legio, was expelled by means of the Blessed Sacrament. Next morning Nicola was brought to the church. Scarcely had she quitted the house, when the devil again took possession of her. The bishop who was requested to exorcise Nicola, prepared himself for this terrible task by prayer and fasting, and other works of penance. On arrival of Nicola in the Church, the exorcism began. "How many are you in this body?" asked the bishop.

The bishop now held the Blessed Sacrament close to the face of the possessed woman. The demon writhed in fearful agony. He tried in every way to escape from the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. At length a black smoke was seen issuing from the mouth of Nicola. She fell into a swoon, and was restored to consciousness only by means of the Blessed Sacrament. The eighth of February, the day appointed by God on which Satan was to leave Nicola forever, arrived at last. After the solemn procession, the bishop began the last exorcism.

"I shall not ask thee any longer," said the bishop to Satan, "when thou intendest to leave, I will expel thee instantly by the power of the living God, and by the precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, His beloved Son, here present in the Sacrament of the Altar."

"Ha, yes!" shrieked the demon. "I confess that the Son of God is here really and truly present. He is my Lord and Master. It tortures me to confess it, but I am forced to do so." Then he repeated several times, with a wild, unearthly howl: "Yes, it is true. I must confess it. I am forced to leave, by the power of God's body here present. I must – I must depart. It torments me that I must go so soon, and that I must confess this truth. But this truth is not from me; it comes from my Lord and Master, who has sent me hither, and who commands and compels me to confess the truth publicly."

The bishop then took the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, and, holding it on high, he said, with a solemn voice: "O thou wicked, unclean spirit, Beelzebub! Thou arch-enemy of the eternal God! Behold, here present, the precious Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Lord and Master! I adjure thee, in the name and by the power of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who is here present; I command thee to depart instantly and forever from this creature of God. Depart to the deepest depth of hell, there to be tormented forever. Go forth, unclean spirit, go forth – behold here thy Lord and Master!"

At these solemn words, and at the sight of our sacramental Lord, the poor possessed woman writhed fearfully. Her limbs cracked as if every bone in her body were breaking. The fifteen strong men who held her, could scarcely keep her back. They staggered from side to side; they were covered with perspiration. Satan tried to escape from the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The mouth of Nicola was wide open, her tongue hung down below her chin, her face was shockingly swollen and distorted. Her color changed from yellow to green, and became even gray and blue, so that she no longer looked like a human being; it was rather the face of a hideous, incarnate demon. All present trembled with terror, especially when they heard the wild cry of the demon, which sounded like the loud roar of a wild bull. They fell on their knees, and with tears in their eyes, began to cry out: "Jesus, have mercy!"

"Yes, I shall depart, but not today. I know full well that I must depart. My sentence is passed; I am compelled to leave."

"I care not for thy jabbering," said the bishop, "I shall expel thee by the power of God: by the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Yes, I must yield to you," shrieked the demon wildly. "It tortures me that I must give you this honor."

The bishop now took the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, and held it close to the face of the possessed woman. At last, Satan was compelled to flee once more. The next morning, after the procession was ended, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered up as usual. During the consecration, the possessed woman was twice raised over six feet into the air, and then fell back heavily upon the platform. As the bishop, just before the *Pater Noster*, took the Sacred Host once more in his hand, and raised it with the chalice, the possessed woman was again whisked into the air, carrying with her the keepers, fifteen in number, at least six feet above the platform; and, after a while, she fell heavily back on the ground.

At this sight, all present were filled with amazement and terror. A German Protestant named Voske fell on his knees; he burst into tears; he was converted. "Ah!" cried he, "I now believe firmly that the devil really possesses this poor creature. I believe that it is really the body and blood of Jesus Christ which expels him. I believe firmly. I will no longer remain a Protestant." After Mass, the exorcism began as usual.

"Now, at last," said the bishop, "thou must depart. Away with thee, evil spirit!"

"Yes," said Satan, "it is true that I must depart, but not yet. I will not go before the hour is come in which I first took possession of this wretched creature."

At last the bishop took the Sacred Host in his hand, and said: "In the name of the adorable Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost – in the name of the sacred body of Jesus Christ here present – I command thee, wicked spirit, to depart."

"Yes, yes, it is true!" shrieked the demon wildly; "It is true. It is the body of God. I must confess it, for I am forced to do so. Ha! It tortures me that I must confess this, but I must. I speak the truth only when I am forced to do it. The truth is not from me. It comes from my Lord and Master. I have entered this body by the permission of God."

"There are three of us," answered the evil spirit.

"What are your names?"

"Beelzebub, Cerberus, and Astaroth."

"What has become of the others?" asked the bishop.

"They have been expelled," answered Satan.

"Who expelled them?"

"Ha!" cried the devil, gnashing his teeth, "it was *He* whom you hold in your hand, there on the paten." The devil meant our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

The bishop then held the Blessed Sacrament near the face of Nicola. The demon writhed and howled in agony. "Ah, yes! I will go, I will go!" he shrieked, "but I shall return."

Suddenly Nicola became stiff and motionless as marble. The bishop then touched her lips with the Blessed Sacrament, and in an instant she was fully restored to consciousness. She received holy communion, and her countenance now shone with a wondrous, supernatural beauty. Next day Nicola was brought again to the Church, and the exorcism began as usual. The bishop took the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, held it near the face of Nicola, and said:

"I command thee in the name of the living God, and by the real presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ here in the sacrament of the altar, to depart instantly from the body of this creature of God, and never more to return."

"No! No!" shrieked the devil, "I will not go. My hour is not yet come."

"I command thee to depart. Go forth, impure, accursed spirit! Go forth!" and the bishop held the Blessed Sacrament close to Nicola's face.

"Stop! stop!", shrieked Satan; "let me go! I will depart – but I shall return." And instantly Nicola fell into the most frightful convulsions. A black smoke was seen issuing from her mouth, and she fell again into a swoon.

During her stay in Leon, Nicola was carefully examined by Catholic and Protestant physicians. Her left arm, which had been paralyzed by the devil, was found entirely without feeling. The doctors cut into the arm with a sharp knife; they burnt it with fire; they drove pins and needles under the nails of the fingers; but Nicola felt not pain; her arm was utterly insensible. Once, while Nicola was lying in a state of unnatural lethargy, the doctors gave her some bread soaked in wine (it was what the Protestants call their communion, or Lord's Supper); they rubbed her limbs briskly; they threw water in her face; they pierced her tongue until the blood flowed; they tried every possible means to arouse her, but in vain! Nicola remained cold and motionless as marble. At last, the priest touched the lips of Nicola with the Blessed Sacrament, and instantly she was restored to consciousness, and began to praise God.

The miracle was so clear, so palpable, that one of the doctors, who was a bigoted Calvinist, immediately renounced his errors, and became a Catholic. Several times, also, the Protestants touched Nicola's face with a host which was not consecrated, and which, consequently, was only bread, but Satan was not the least tormented by this. He only ridiculed their efforts.

On the twenty-seventh of January, the bishop, after having walked in solemn procession with the clergy and the faithful, began the exorcism in church, in the presence of a vast multitude of Protestants and Catholics. The bishop now held the Blessed Sacrament close to the face of Nicola. Suddenly a wild, unearthly yell rings through the air -- a black, heavy smoke issues from the mouth of Nicola. The demon Astaroth is expelled forever. During the exorcism which took place on the first of February, the bishop said:

"O accursed spirit! Since neither prayer, nor the holy gospels, neither the exorcisms of the Church, nor the holy relics, can compel thee to depart, I will now show thee thy Lord and Master, and by His power I command thee."

During the exorcism, which took place after Mass, the bishop held the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, and said: "O accursed spirit, arch-enemy of the ever-blessed God! I command thee, by the precious blood of Jesus Christ here present, to depart from this poor woman! Depart accursed, into the everlasting flames of hell!"

At these words, and especially at the sight of the Blessed Sacrament, the demon was so fearfully tormented, and the appearance of Nicola was so hideous and revolting, that the people turned away their eyes in horror. At last a heavy sigh was heard, and a cloud of black smoke issued from the mouth of Nicola. Cerberus was expelled. Again Nicola fell into a death-like swoon, and again she was brought to consciousness only by means of the Blessed Sacrament. During the exorcism which took place on the seventh day of February, the bishop said to Satan:

"Tell me. Why hast thou taken possession of this honest and virtuous Catholic woman?"

"I have done so by permission of God. I have taken possession of her on account of the sins of the people. I have done it to show my Calvinists that there are devils who can take possession of man whenever God permits it. I know they do not want to believe this, but I will show them that I am the devil. I have taken possession of this creature in order to convert them, or to harden them in their sins; and, by the Sacred Blood, I will *perform* my task."

This answer filled all who heard it with horror. "Yes," answered the bishop, solemnly, "God desires to unite all men in the only holy faith. As there is but one God, so there can be but one true religion. A religion like that which the Protestants have invented, is but a hollow mockery. It must fall. The religion established by Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only true one; it alone shall last forever. It is destined to unite all men within its sacred embrace, so that there shall be but one sheepfold and one shepherd. This divine Shepherd is Our Lord Jesus Christ, the invisible head of the holy Roman Catholic Church, whose visible head is our holy Father the Pope, successor of St. Peter."

The devil was silent -- he was put to shame before the entire multitude. He was expelled once more by means of the Blessed Sacrament. In the afternoon of the same day the devil began to cry: "Ah! Ha! You think that you can expel me in this way. You have not the proper attendance of a bishop. Where are the dean and the archdean? Where are the royal judges? Where is the chief magistrate, who was frightened out of his wits that night, in the prison? Where is the procurator of the king? Where are his attorneys and counselors? Where is the clerk of the court?" (The devil mentioned each of these by name.) "I will not depart until all are assembled. Were I to depart now, what proof could you give to the king of all that has happened? Do you think that people will believe you so easily? No! No! There are many who would make objections. The testimony of these common country-people here will have but little weight. It is a torment to me that I must tell you what you have to do. I am forced to do it. Ha! Cursed be the hour in which I first took possession of this vile wretch.

"I find little pleasure in thy prating," answered the bishop. "There are witnesses enough here. Those whom you have mentioned are not necessary. Depart! then; give glory to God. Depart -- go to the flames of hell!"