

**The Occult**

**Readings :** CCC 2083-2141

Patella, Michael: **Angels and Demons, chapter 10**

Nowell, Irene, OSB: **101 Questions & Answers on Angels and Devils**

Kreeft, Peter: **Angels and Demons**

The Catholic Study Bible

Bishop Barron on Idolatry: <https://youtu.be/fWiEoZhyrQc>

Catholic Teaching on Horoscopes, Astrology, Palm Reading, Mediums etc.:

<https://youtu.be/2t8-6voRR0g>

Pope Francis on fortune tellers: <https://youtu.be/znZINUMDa04>

***“You shall not have other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:2-6)***

**2**

***I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.***

**3**

***You shall not have other gods beside me.\****

**4**

***You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything\* in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth;***

**5**

***you shall not bow down before them or serve them. For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation\*;***

**6**

***but showing love down to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.***

***This commandment forbids:***

- Polytheism & idolatry
- Superstition
- Irreligion
- Atheism
- Agnosticism

***Irreligion***

- God's first commandment condemns the main sins of irreligion: tempting God in words or deeds, sacrilege, and simony. (CCC 2118)

**Idolatry**

***“Idolatry, then, is always polytheism, an aimless passing from one lord to another. Idolatry does not offer a journey but rather a plethora of paths leading nowhere and forming a vast labyrinth.”***  
— ***Pope Francis, Lumen Fidei: Enciclica sulla Fede***

- not only refers to false pagan worship.
- a constant temptation to faith.
- divinizing what is not God.
- honoring and revering a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons (for example, satanism), power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money, etc. (CCC2113)

**Superstition**

- the deviation of religious feeling and of the practices this feeling imposes.
- can affect the worship we offer the true God, e.g., To attribute the efficacy of prayers or of sacramental signs to their mere external performance, apart from the interior dispositions that they demand, is to fall into superstition.<sup>41</sup> (CCC2111)
- magic, fortune telling, Tarot cards, Ouija boards, chain letters

**Spiritual Manipulation**

Comparing prayer and worship within the Christian context to the spells and incantations of the occult can help to clarify this discussion. ( Patella, p. 127).

- Christian:
  - Angels and saints willingly subordinate to the triune God.
  - Prayer to the saints leads to ultimate union with God.
- Occult: a walk on the dark side; *occultus* = Hidden
  - Usually refers to secret knowledge to access a spiritual world with harm ultimately coming to all participants.
  - At best: a scam that bilks thousands of dollars from overly credulous and unsuspecting persons.
  - At worst: ensnares the unaware into the clutches of demonic activity, and even full demonic possession.

**Fortunetelling**

- Tarot cards, astrology, palm reading, crystal balls, etc.
- Back door to diabolical world

***Spiritualism or necromancy***

- In league with dark forces of universe; supernatural world uses natural means to achieve its ends
- Aim to communicate with spiritual world to achieve power and control
- The spirit you contact most likely is not the one you seek, but an imposter
- The dead whom we love are part of the communion of saints; they won't put our lives and salvation in jeopardy by following anyone other than God.
- Ouija Boards: appear to be harmless parlor game; people who play with them end up inviting some bad houseguests into their lives whom they cannot get rid of. (Patella, p.131)

***Satanism***

- Extreme opposite of all good and holy
- Negative image of Christianity
- Cultic ceremonies which ape the sacraments, e.g. "Black Mass"
  - Prayers backwards, crosses upside down, black candles, petitions for destruction of others
- Worship Satan, Beelzebul, Lucifer, Asmodeus, Molech, etc.

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**CCC2116** All forms of *divination* are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future.<sup>48</sup> Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone.

**CCC2117** All practices of *magic* or *sorcery*, by which one attempts to tame occult powers, so as to place them at one's service and have a supernatural power over others - even if this were for the sake of restoring their health - are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion. These practices are even more to be condemned when accompanied by the intention of harming someone, or when they have recourse to the intervention of demons. Wearing charms is also reprehensible. *Spiritism* often implies divination or magical practices; the Church for her part warns the faithful against it. Recourse to so-called traditional cures does not justify either the invocation of evil powers or the exploitation of another's credulity.

## Scripture

*From the biblical tradition of both Jews and Christians, sorcery, magical spells, and necromancy...are bad and dangerous...occult goes beyond ordinary demonic activity of temptation...establishes direct communication with malicious beings.  
(Patella, p. 127)*

## Old Testament

### Exodus

22:17 You shall not let a woman who practices sorcery live.<sup>c</sup>

### Leviticus

20: A man or a woman who acts as a medium or clairvoyant<sup>v</sup> shall be put to death. They shall be stoned to death; their bloodguilt is upon them.

19:31 Do not turn to ghosts or consult spirits, by which you will be defiled; I, the LORD, am your God.

### Deuteronomy

18:9 When you come into the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you, you shall not learn to imitate the abominations of the nations there.<sup>e</sup>10<sup>f</sup> Let there not be found among you anyone who causes their son or daughter to pass through the fire,<sup>\*</sup> or practices divination, or is a soothsayer, augur, or sorcerer,<sup>11</sup> or who casts spells, consults ghosts and spirits, or seeks oracles from the dead.<sup>12</sup> Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the LORD, and because of such abominations the LORD, your God, is dispossessing them before you.<sup>g</sup>

## New Testament

### Galatians

5:19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness,<sup>o</sup>20 **idolatry, sorcery**, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions,<sup>p</sup>21 occasions of envy,<sup>\*</sup> drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

### Revelation

21:8 But as for cowards,<sup>\*</sup> the unfaithful, the depraved, murderers, the unchaste, sorcerers, idol-worshippers, and deceivers of every sort, their lot is in the burning pool of fire and sulfur, which is the second death.