News



Cardinal Robert McElroy of Washington attends a press conference at the North American College in Rome, Friday, May 9, 2025. (AP File/Gregorio Borgia)

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The Catholic archbishop of Washington, D.C., Cardinal Robert McElroy, on Wednesday removed a well-known priest as an exorcist of the archdiocese after he made public comments suggesting that UFO sightings were the work of demons.

McElroy said the archdiocese also was cutting ties with the St. Michael Center for Spiritual Renewal, a Washington-based nonprofit headed by the priest, Monsignor Stephen Rossetti.

The archbishop said Rossetti's statements "linking UFOs to demonic presence and the Center's recent use of social media gravely undermine the Church's very precise teaching on the devil, demons and exorcism."

"There's a danger here," Rossetti said in a May 29 video posted on his Facebook page addressing UFO sightings and the existence of aliens. "As an exorcist I wanted to raise that danger. And that is that demons like to hide. ... They don't want us to know what they're doing because they're more effective when we don't realize it."

"They can kind of get into your head, you know, and manipulate things in the world to influence us to do evil."

"It's my personal belief that probably many if not most of these UFO sightings are in fact demons," Rossetti added.

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Rossetti also said that people can be good Catholics and believe there's life on other planets, though he does not personally believe life exists elsewhere.

In a statement posted on the St. Michael Center website, Rossetti said he was saddened by the action of the archdiocese.

"I ask forgiveness for any ways that I have not been faithful to the teachings of the Church's Magisterium, particularly in the cited video on 'aliens and the demonic,'" he said. "I believe it is of the utmost importance to be obedient to the Church and I will continue to endeavor to subject all that I do and the Center to be thus obedient."

Rossetti, who has over 148,000 followers on Instagram, is a prominent psychologist as well as an exorcist. His center has specialized in offering spiritual healing for

priests troubled by various difficulties.

In 2023, he told The Associated Press there was increasing and renewed appetite for information about demonic possession and exorcism.