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Msgr. Stephen Rossetti, then a clinical associate professor at the Catholic University of America

Msgr. Stephen Rossetti, then a clinical associate professor at the Catholic University of America in Washington, talks during a press conference in Rome Feb. 7, 2012. (OSV News/Reuters/Tony Gentile)

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A priest who was removed as an Archdiocese of Washington exorcist is relaunching his nonprofit deliverance ministry, while remaining a priest in good standing in his home diocese.

Msgr. Stephen Rossetti announced July 13 that his [St. Michael Center for Spiritual Renewal](#) will resume its activities with a Sept. 28 online deliverance prayer session.

He shared the news across several social media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube, and reiterated the message in an Aug. 3 email sent by the center — which is based within the Archdiocese of Washington — to subscribers.

In June, Cardinal Robert McElroy had [removed Rossetti as an exorcist for the Archdiocese of Washington](#), citing concerns over a May 29 Facebook video in which

the cleric had mused as to whether aliens are real or demons, stating he personally believed the latter.

The Catholic Church has no defined position on the possible existence of extraterrestrial life, which has been a subject of theological speculation and debate over time.

McElroy subsequently [told](#) Catholic News Service Rome that his decision "wasn't touching on the question of UFOs," but instead reflected the cardinal's view that "the traditional role of an exorcist is a very private one. ... a sacred one."

Rossetti, who has over 158,000 followers on Instagram, is a prominent psychologist. He served as president of the St. Luke Institute, a treatment center in Silver Spring, Maryland, for priests and religious with addictions or psychological problems, from 1997 to 2009. He was a consultant to the U.S. Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse that drafted the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People."

In a June 3 Facebook message following McElroy's move, Rossetti said, "I ask forgiveness for any ways that I have not been faithful to the teachings of the Church's Magisterium."

In a July 13 YouTube video, Rossetti again stressed the need to "stay in the boat" of the church, saying obedience to its teachings is "critical."

He remains a priest in good standing in his home Diocese of Syracuse, New York, according to that diocese's vicar for clergy, Fr. John Manno.

Rossetti said in his July 13 YouTube video that he has "faculties as a priest" in "several dioceses," as well as "faculties as an exorcist in a couple of dioceses."

"My own bishop" — an apparent reference to Bishop Douglas Lucia of Syracuse — "has encouraged me and supported me in continuing this ministry," said Rossetti in the video.

OSV News is awaiting clarification from the Diocese of Syracuse as to whether Rossetti possesses exorcism faculties there.

The Archdiocese of Washington declined to answer OSV News' questions regarding the status of Rossetti and the St. Michael Center. A spokesperson pointed to McElroy's June 3 statement and advised that "if there is any additional information to

share," such details would be passed along.

OSV News has so far been unable to contact the center directly for comment. A phone number included in the organization's 2024 Form 990, the last tax filing publicly available, is no longer in service. The center's website does not provide contact information beyond an email signup form.

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According to its website, the St. Michael Center for Spiritual Renewal "prays with people who are spiritually suffering and in need of healing and deliverance," while also conducting "spiritual education workshops" and training clergy, religious and laypeople.

The Catholic Church specifies that major exorcisms — as distinct from the simple exorcism that is part of the sacrament of baptism — can only be performed by a priest explicitly designated by the local bishop, and with the bishop's "special and express permission."

A thorough physical and psychological or psychiatric evaluation is required before a major exorcism can be performed.

A 2026 [journal article published by the Catholic Psychotherapy Association](#) noted that deliverance "is a broad term that refers to being freed from a difficulty, usually including the assumption that the problem is caused by some influence of an evil spirit."

"Forms of deliverance ministry and exorcism are also practiced among those who are not Catholic," with similar terminology, but varying approaches, that reflect theological differences, said the article.

The authors — a group of Catholic scholars mental health professionals — added that "several models of inner healing or deliverance prayer are known to be practiced and offered within Catholic parishes in the United States," with deliverance typically taking "the form of prayers to God requesting that God free a person from a problem or heal them in some way."

Such prayer "can be done by a priest or deacon but can also be facilitated by trained prayer teams of lay people," said the article, which also observed that "the

challenge is to differentiate the demonic/spiritual from the psychological/medical, understanding that they may coincide."