

New Age Practices: Yoga, Reiki, Ouija Boards, Fortune Tellers, Tarot Cards, Dream Catchers, Horoscopes

The four D's of the devil are: *deception, division, diversion and discouragement*.

Catholics are often stereotyped as being gullible. Oh, you will believe anything. You believe that craziness that Jesus is in a piece of bread. Non-religious people are always seen as scientific and rational.

A 2007 study from Baylor University debunked this. It showed that non-religious people were more likely to believe in paranoia phenomena (ghosts, seances, etc.), more than religious people. Only 8% of church going religious people had high levels of belief in things like ghosts and demons and psychic psychics. But 31% of people who never attend church believe in such things.

New Age practices is so popular because the unchurched embrace it.

Astrology (non-science) versus astronomy (science).

Astrology, the mother of astronomy (the study of the universe) came first is not a true science, it's superstition. It claims that the location of the stars and the planets can affect your personality and your future.

Horoscope. Astrology relies on interpreting the position of the zodiac, the belt of 12 constellations of stars.

The Church teaches that astrology takes away your freewill. If you're determined by the stars, then everything the Bible teaches about freewill would be wrong. That doesn't mean the stars and the moon don't affect us (such as gravity, but that's physical). Ask any hospital ER about a full moon.

In ancient times, many thought the stars ruled their fate. Early Christians knew better they were the first ones to say no, this is not compatible with freewill which determines your fate. Stars may affect things like your mood, but not your future, that's superstition.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

Divination and magic

2115 God can reveal the future to his prophets or to other saints. Still, a sound Christian attitude consists in putting oneself confidently into the hands of Providence for whatever concerns the future, and giving up all unhealthy curiosity about it. Improvidence, however, can constitute a lack of responsibility.

2116 All forms of divination [not divinization] are to be rejected: **recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future. 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.**

2117 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.

Irreligion

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

Be careful about this. Astrology isn't necessarily sinful if one looks at it out of interest or fun, but if it becomes your guiding principle rather than the will of God, the church says it is sinful.

Horoscopes are usually vague. "A new relationship will be forged for you today." Did the horoscope determine your future? However, for detailed predictions about the future, people will seek out professional (often for a lot of money).

When someone asks, "What's your sign?" I answer, "The Sign of the Cross."

The International Astronomical Association: "Astrological practice is by no means scientific." Ironically, the church embraces science, not superstition, yet the Church is attacked the church for being superstitious and not scientific.

Many say astrology is harmless fun and entertaining like professional wrestling, so there's no reason to be worried about it. Be careful. The belief in or the practice of astrology can be a sin, and it doesn't work, so, why would you risk the sin?

St. Augustine said (in multiple places) that heresy and astrology were the two things from the devil.

That St. Augustine said two things come from the devil. Here, see, and astrology. Very interesting. Now let's look at this quote up on your slide.

Séance – communicating with the dead through a medium. Jesus is the only mediator between God men. One can be a mediator when one prays for somebody, but that's **intercession**. A séance claims one can obtain secret knowledge by contacting the spirits of dead. Hitler often used séances.

A séance can sometimes reveal the truth through demonic wisdom or demonic intelligence. Psychics can be aided by demonic forces. Remember Moses and Pharaoh's priests in Exodus. This is where Satan chooses somebody that he knows will be in his service and gives incredible knowledge him or her.

Most psychics are frauds and fakes. For fun, ask a psychic to tell you your name.

But don't Catholics summon the dead every time you pray to a saint? No. To summon the dead it is to have a two-way communication, like a séance, to know the future. That is not the same as us asking a saint to pray to God for us. We are presenting our petition to the saint and asking them to please present it to God because you they there at his throne. This is Biblical. See Revelation 5:8-9.

The church is condemned because some say we are guilty of **necromancy**, conjuring the dead through magic. Recall 1 Samuel 28 where Saul summons the ghost of Samuel by going to the witch of Endor to know the future so he could use it for bad purposes. That's not what we do with the saints.

A contemporary form of necromancy is the Ouija board which is used to summon spirits. Fundamentalists often criticize Catholics claiming that praying to saints is necromancy. The key difference between saintly **intercession**, and necromancy, invoking the spirit of the dead to get information, is different. Intercession involves asking the saints to present our petitions to God, an ability God has granted them having the beatific vision. Necromancy involves two-way communication that summons the dead through magic, in order to extract information from them. a desire is to circumvent God and to exchange information with them for my benefit and avoid going to God to help.

The church does not condemn stage magic or prestidigitation, like pulling a rabbit out of a hat. In prestidigitation, the audience knows that the source of the illusion is the magician's ability and talent, not some supernatural demon.

Caution is always required. Harry Potter, for example, uses spells, and witchcraft, not stage magic.

While there is nothing wrong with invoking God, good angels, and the saints, but other spirits that might respond when you are involved with New Age practices and your intentions are to avoid God. A demon is a fallen angel.

[“For even Satan masquerades as an angel of light.” \(2 Cor 11:14\)](#)

So when you invoke any kind of spiritual being, a demon can respond. Both the good and the bad angels could respond because they take forms and take physical forms. The spirits of the departed humans could also manifest themselves those are **ghosts**. The church does believe this. According to St. Thomas:

[Even the damn souls in hell might appear, sometimes against their will, to scare the living back onto the right path.](#)

Sometimes souls in purgatory appear to ask for prayers.

But those in the New Age Movement promote angel encounters as a way to enter into the spiritual world, and these good angels will come to help you. Be careful who answers your call. People call upon angels to help them achieve their goals. The danger is if what you ask is not of God, a demon can help you achieve your goals, but in Satan's way, not God's way.

Many rock stars will tell you that to achieve fame and fortune they gave up their soul and accepted a life of debauchery. Before he died, Jim Morrison of *The Doors* is quoted as saying that before he went on that stage it was not him. A spirit took over, and the words that came out were of a spirit. I would guess this was probably not the Holy Spirit.

Don't think that any mystic appears at your door is sent by God. Be wary. Let's look at our next slide.

Ouija Boards. The Ouija Board is not harmless. It is a form of divination, seeking information from the supernatural. Oui means “yes” in French, and ja means “yes” in German. The only “yes” we should give is to God. A Ouija Board works, it's a portal, but the only spirits that are contacted through it are evil ones. The movie *The Exorcist* from 1973 is based on a true story of a young boy who used as Ouija board with his aunt, and it resulted in his possession. Such things are real whether one believe it or not.

[Let there not be found among you anyone who causes their son or daughter to pass through the fire, or practices divination, or is a soothsayer, augur, or sorcerer, or who casts spells, consults ghosts and](#)

spirits, or seeks oracles from the dead. 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. You must be altogether sincere with the LORD, your God. (Deut 18:10-13)

Priests exorcists say 90% of the worst cases involving demonic possession are linked to the Ouija board. The Ouija board became popular in the 1960s (When did this world begin to fall apart?) and it even outsold monopoly.

For many **spiritualism** was used with good intentions. It seemed to extend hope and erase or ease the pain of like losing a loved one, so they did it with good intentions. It gave the allure of immortality or to have a spirit counsel as a way to cope with anxiety or having security about the future or to get advice about health or love or money. This is a strong draw for many. But God will reveal to you what you need to know, not a Ouija board. Our attitude should be that **I may not know what my future holds, but I know who hold my future.**

As Catholics, we can be superstitious. Have ever seen one of those novenas that guarantee your prayer will be answered, but you must leave nine copies of it somewhere? Novenas that are guaranteed to grant your prayer intention are false. There are Catholic prophets, even Catholic priests who claim to know the future based on God's revelation to them. This is superstition.

We are to judge beliefs in light of public revelation and approved private revelation. That's why God gives us the church. Some say, "Oh, I don't need to church." That's exactly why you need to church. Superstition occurs when we put efficacy of our prayers or the sacramental signs just to the fact that we do them having nothing to do with your disposition or your true heart. "I'm going to go embezzle, cheat on my taxes, have my affair, but I'm going to say this novena nine times. The prayer says that it's guaranteed to work." No! The church warns against this in the Catechism (2111):

Superstition is the deviation of religious feeling and of the practices this feeling imposes. It can even affect the worship we offer the true God, e.g., when one attributes an importance in some way magical to certain practices otherwise lawful or necessary. 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.

A prayer that will grant any petition that you desire is a spiritual vending machine.

You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. (James 4:3)

Belief that the act of saying a prayer just for the act of saying it and leaving nine copies of it somewhere will guarantee a certain outcome defeats the entire purpose of prayer. Prayer is to have faith that God's will be done, not our will.

The same holds for burying a state of St. Joseph in your yard one foot away from your house upside down will get you house sold quickly. This is superstition. Asking for St. Joseph's intercession in selling your house is not. Be careful your intent.

God may reveal sacred truths to people in some ways, like Fatima, in approved private revelation. However, these private revelations **never** add to or correct public revelation, which is why you're not required to believe

them. So even if one is invoking God and His angels and his saints, it's not automatically legitimate because it's possible to fall into superstition.

The Hispanic Santa Muerta is superstition.

Gangsters and drug runners wear or carry rosaries because they believe it'll protect them is superstition.

Improper use of a scapular is superstition.

Expecting an image or symbol to have power is superstition.

Relying only on the powers of God built into nature, like herbal remedies, are fine. You're relying on the healing power of God through His nature, and that's different from thinking the plant by its own power healed you.

Honor physicians for their services, for the Lord created them; for their gift of healing comes from the Most High. (Sirach 38:1-2)

Yoga. The church does not specifically promote or condemn yoga, mainly because it has many forms. The Orthodox Church, however, forbids Orthodox Christians from practicing yoga, so some clarification is necessary.

For greater depth, go to *The Institute for Catholic Culture*: <https://instituteofcatholicculture.org/>

Search for: **Searching for Emptiness - Problems with Yoga and Its Spirituality**, by Rev. Ezra Sullivan, O.P.:
<https://instituteofcatholicculture.org/events/searching-for-emptiness>

If the breathing and the body positions are simply done for exercise and your health, then it **may** be okay. Spiritually, Yoga is more than just exercise. Yoga comes from Hindu gods who gave yoga to mankind as a way to free themselves from the material world and find divine enlightenment, and this is against the first commandment. There is no such thing as divine Hindu enlightenment. It's a false god. We do not ostracize Hindu people, but there's only one true God. The original purpose of yoga, to become one with all that is in the universe, to draw tht energy. You cannot make yoga holy because it is a Hindu scripture practice.

What if one does it for exercise? Is that okay? Exercise is only one branch of eight main branches of yoga, and it's just a small part of it and it's the least important. So just doing exercise is not really doing yoga. All right, it wasn't even part of the original yoga. Exercises were added much later. If you want this, just call it exercise, don't call it yoga. You're just sexercising and stretching, so call it that. Don't get into the yoga part. Just do the exercise and stretching part call it what it is – exercise and stretching.

To call exercise and stretching yoga is like calling the brick the house. Don't confuse the whole with the part. The real work of yoga is meditation and concentration, which is dangerous when God is not at the center.

It's like **Centering Prayer**, which we know was used by ancient Christians, but Jesus was the center of that centering prayer, not the individual. If meditation includes centering yourself in the universe, that centering prayer is not Christ-centered, it's you-centered.

So, if the exercise is not really linked to yoga, can we do them? Mostly yes, but some Catholic theologians say no because some of the exercise positions are Hindu worship positions. Others (like Brian Mercer from

Catholic Answers) say this isn't actually true. He says modern yoga positions did not exist as part of yoga until the 1930s and came from other exercise programs in Scandinavian countries well before becoming part of yoga, so these exercises were not designed to worship Hindu gods, but that doesn't make it automatically good if you're using it for the wrong reasons. If you're trying to put yourself as the god then that's even worse than the Hindu god.

So yes, you can do the exercises, but the church says it's better to do them at home, then you have no spirituality attached to them, because if these positions are done in a class that is linked to yoga, then it's wrong. One should not do these exercises as part of a yoga class, because that brings in true yoga spirituality. Hindu beliefs are part of yoga meditation are not a part of Catholicism.

Meditation and centering prayer that calls upon some kind of energy form in the universe to fill me, empty me, so that I'm filled with this energy is wrong. The only thing that should fill is the Holy Spirit, not some feeling of some kind of energy or some force. That's the problem here, and this is what the Church is warning against.

Meditation and centering prayer – to call upon this energy is some kind of oneness with the universe, that's all part of yoga. Trying to breathe better so that your heart beats better is fine, but breathing in the karma of a Hindu god, then there is a problem.

Also remember if you're Catholic and seen in a yoga class it can bring scandal to some by putting a Catholic stamp on your actions. So, you shouldn't be in these classes as a Catholic condoning it because that is a scandal.

Do exercises with no spirituality attached to it other than our true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yoga, focusing on your energy, putting yourself at the center of the universe, can open portals to the demonic. God doesn't work through these pagan practices. Be careful.

There are no other gods than our God of the Trinity. There are no other gods to invoke. There are no Hindu gods. If yoga is being presented in a manner that is free from religious elements, purely a system of physical exercise, then it can be okay, certainly if done at home. If it is coupled with elements of Hindu spirituality, even though they don't mention the word god or Hinduism but they talk about moving energy around your body, then it's not appropriate for us as Catholics. It's part of a deeper spirituality.

Most people who do yoga don't get into the spirituality of yoga, they just want to stretch so as to feel better. They want to work in their breathing, but I think there are some risks.

In 1918 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith wrote the document, "On Some Aspects of Christian Meditation."

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19891015_meditazione-cristiana_en.html

It says:

Christian prayer is always determined by the structure of the Christian faith, in which the very truth of God and creature shines forth. For this reason, it is defined, properly speaking, as a personal, intimate and profound dialogue between man and God. It expresses therefore the communion of redeemed

creatures with the intimate life of the Persons of the Trinity. This communion, based on Baptism and the Eucharist, source and summit of the life of the Church, implies an attitude of conversion, a flight from "self" to the "You" of God. Thus Christian prayer is at the same time always authentically personal and communitarian. It flees from impersonal techniques or from concentrating on oneself, which can create a kind of rut, imprisoning the person praying in a spiritual privatism which is incapable of a free openness to the transcendental God. Within the Church, in the legitimate search for new methods of meditation it must always be borne in mind that the essential element of authentic Christian prayer is the meeting of two freedoms, the infinite freedom of God with the finite freedom of man.

A very powerful video explaining Church teaching on yoga: "Is Yoga compatible with Catholicism?" by Fr. Michael Sliney, LC, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbObe_7q7mU

As Catholics have to stand for God and the one true God. We don't criticize the individuals, ut we love them, but we have to realize that there is only one true God.

Reiki. Reiki is a Japanese form of alternative healing technique based on Buddhist texts and is comparable to superstition and is therefore inappropriate. The practitioner places his or her hands in certain a position on the patient's body to facilitate the flow of reiki, the universal life energy from the practitioner to the patient. The USCCB, when asked the question, "can Catholics use reiki?" the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops said, "No." https://www.usccb.org/resources/evaluation-guidelines-finaltext-2009-03_0.pdf

Dream Catchers. Hanging them as a decoration is not a problem. Using them to capture the spirit in your dream, what the intent originally was, no.

Tarot Cards. Tarot cards came about in the 14th century in Italy. They're made up of 22 major enigmas that correspond to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the number of hieroglyphs that the ancient Jews used before the worship of the true God. Practitioners of tarot they believe represent the sum of the knowledge of all sciences in this deck of cards and are capable of revealing your future and solving all your problems. No!

God can choose to reveal the future to certain prophets and saints. Those are the ones approved by the Church. Until approved by the Church, must place our trust in divine providence alone. To try and discover the future through tarot cards, palm reading, Ouija boards, fortune telling, or try to control the future through black magic, witchcraft, or sorcery violates the First Commandment.

Fortune Telling:

A man or a woman who acts as a **medium or clairvoyant** shall be put to death. They shall be stoned to death; their bloodguilt is upon them. (Lev. 20:27)

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, **idolatry, sorcery**, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, 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. (Gal 5:19-21)

As we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl with an oracular spirit, who used to bring a large profit to her owners through her **fortune-telling**. She began to follow Paul and us, shouting, "These people are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." She did this

for many days. Paul became annoyed, turned, and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” Then it came out at that moment. (Acts 16:16-18)

So, is someone read their horoscope or read their fortune cookies at one point in their life are they damned to hell? Of course not. **The most powerful exorcism the Church offers are the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.**

1. Much of this was taken from: *New Age Yoga, Reiki, Ouija Boards, Horoscopes - Explaining the Faith* by Fr. Chris Alar, MIC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZqFJoDlnQk>