



DIOCESE OF LINCOLN

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

April 30, 2018

To the Clergy, Religious, and Lay Faithful of the Diocese of Lincoln:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The *Unbound* ministry in the Diocese of Lincoln is a lay apostolate that offers deliverance prayer for all those seeking freedom from past wounds, sins, and evils. Above all, the ministry focuses on personal freedom in Christ. One dimension of *Unbound* is Christian authority over evil spirits. This authority flows from a Catholic's baptism and confirmation in Christ and includes command over evil spirits or, as St. Alphonsus Liguori teaches, "private adjuration" (cf. *Theologia Moralis*, Appendix de Adjuratione, §193.4). This teaching comes from Jesus' words in the Gospel of Mark, "And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons..." (Mk 16:17).

"Private adjuration" is distinct from major exorcism or "solemn adjuration" (cf. Liguori, *Theologia*, §193.4). The authority to perform a major exorcism flows from the sacrament of holy orders and the expressed permission of the bishop. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus said to the seventy who were especially analogous to priests, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy..." (Lk 10:19).

This distinction is important for the safety of all the People of God. On the one hand, if a layperson or unauthorized priest or religious were to use prayers of "solemn adjuration," for example, from a Rite of Exorcism, they would put themselves in harm's way and be subject to additional retaliation from the enemy. On the other hand, in regard to *Unbound* and "private adjuration," the concern for the enemy's retaliation is at the same level as any other work of evangelization, and thus needs to be met with a generous response to the Church's "Universal Call to Holiness" (*Lumen Gentium* 39-42).

The proper understanding and required guidelines regarding command by the lay faithful are outlined in the ICCRS Doctrinal Commission document entitled *Deliverance Ministry* which was submitted to the CDF, who confirmed that the text contains no doctrinal problems.

I offer this letter, above all, to affirm the authority that Jesus exercises throughout His Mystical Body, the Church, and in a particular way, to encourage those in the *Unbound* ministry in the Lincoln Diocese, faithful to the guidance in the *Unbound* literature and the *Deliverance Ministry* document, to continue their growth in the authority they have received in their baptism and confirmation.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend James D. Conley
Bishop of Lincoln