

Guidelines

for the

Preparation and Celebration

of the

Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

for the

Diocese of Fort Worth

The Sacrament of Anointing

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<p style="text-align: center;">GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK</p>
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I. Doctrinal Overview

A. HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

1. Beginnings to 751 A.D. [*]
 - a. Lay and priestly anointings, with lay anointing the more common.
 - b. All baptized (with the exception of those who had been admitted to the order of penitents) could be anointed.
 - c. Any sickness, except minor inconveniences, was the focus or center of the sacrament.
 - d. The major effect of the sacrament is clearly stated as bodily health. Spiritual effects are clearly subordinated.

[*] Ed. – The date of Pepin’s ascension to the throne and the time of the so-called Carolingian reform.

2. 751 A.D. – 1100 A.D

The time from 751 into the 12th century should be understood as a time of gradual transition from the broad understanding and use of the sacrament of the sick to a much restricted understanding and limited use of what became known as the sacrament of extreme unction or final anointing.

3. 1100 A.D. Onward

- a. Only priestly anointing was allowed.
- b. Small children and some mentally disturbed people could not be anointed. The order of penitents had disappeared.
- c. The moment of dying centralizes the entire theological interpretation of the sacrament.
- d. The major effect is spiritualized, that is, spiritual health, and the statement of James 5, 14ff, is exegeted on this spiritual basis.

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4. Vatican II on. . .
 - a. Only priestly anointing allowed.
 - b. The sacrament is open to those who can benefit from it.
 - c. The focus is on illness rather than on death.
 - d. The spiritual profit still is primary, but the rite speaks of physical health, if it is God's will.
 - e. Some types of mental illness are now recognized as serious, and those who would be strengthened by the sacrament may be anointed.

B. THEOLOGY OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK, CORRELATION WITH *THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH* AND *THE RITE OF THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK*, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

1. Suffering and pain are part of the human condition. (*Pastoral Care of the Sick* [hereafter PCS] 1)

- Human suffering is a consequence of original sin.
- Suffering and pain should not be regarded as punishment for individual sins. (*PCS* 2)
- Suffering and pain can lead people to either turn toward God or away from God.

Correlation with *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *The Rite of the Pastoral Care of the Sick*

PCS 1: Suffering and illness have always been among the greatest problems that trouble the human spirit. Christians feel and experience pain as do all other people; yet their faith helps them to grasp more deeply the mystery of suffering and to bear their pain with greater courage. From Christ's words they know that sickness has meaning and value for their own salvation and for the salvation of the world. They also know that Christ, who during his life often visited and healed the sick, loves them in their illness.

PCS 2: Although closely linked with the human condition, sickness cannot as a general rule be regarded as a punishment inflicted on each individual for personal sins (see John 9:3). Christ himself, who is without sin, in fulfilling the words of Isaiah took on all the wounds of his passion and shared in all human pain (see Isaiah 53:4-5). Christ is still pained and tormented in his members, made like him. Still, our afflictions seem but momentary and slight when compared to the greatness of the eternal glory for which they prepare us (see 2 Corinthians 4:17).

CCC 1500: Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life. In illness, man experiences his powerlessness, his limitations, and his finitude. Every illness can make us glimpse death.

Implications:

We need to understand that God intended an ordered universe. Human sin disrupted this order and brought suffering, war, division... The prophetic tradition recognized a certain connection between Israel's lack of fidelity to the Covenant and human suffering, but Jesus refused to recognize that suffering and illness are caused by personal sin (John 9:3).

2. In Christ, human suffering is redemptive for the world. (PCS 3)

- Faith helps Christians grasp more deeply the mystery of suffering. (PCS 1)
- Christ suffered, and suffers still in his members. (PCS 3)
- The sick can witness to the higher things of God. (PCS 3)
- Yet it is God's will that humans fight against suffering and sickness. (PCS 3)

Correlation with *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *The Rite of the Pastoral Care of the Sick*

PCS 1: See above, under 1.

PCS 3: Part of the plan laid out by God's providence is that we should fight strenuously against all sickness and carefully seek the blessings of good health, so that we may fulfill our role in human society and in the Church. Yet we should always be prepared to fill up what is lacking in Christ's sufferings for the salvation of the world as we look forward to creation's being set free in the glory of the Children of God. (see Colossians 1:24; Romans 8:19-21)

CCC 1506: Christ invites his disciples to follow him by taking up their cross in their turn. By following him they acquire a new outlook on illness and the sick. Jesus associates them with his own life of poverty and service. He makes them share in his ministry of compassion and healing: "So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them." (Mk 6:12-13)

CCC 1508: The Holy Spirit gives to some a special charism of healing (Cf. 1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30) so as to make manifest the power of the grace of the risen Lord. But even the most intense prayers do not always obtain the healing of all illnesses. Thus St. Paul must learn from the Lord that "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," and that the sufferings to be endured can mean that "in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church." (2 Cor 12:9; Col 1:24)

CCC 1522: *An ecclesial grace. The sick who receive this sacrament, “by freely uniting themselves to the passion and death of Christ,” “contribute to the good of the people of God.” (LG II 2) By celebrating this sacrament the Church, in the communion of saints, intercedes for the benefit of the sick person, and he, for his part, through the grace of this sacrament, contributes to the sanctification of the Church and to the good of all men for whom the Church suffers and offers herself through Christ to God the Father.*

Implications:

Although not good in itself, suffering can lead one to a deeper understanding of the paschal mystery – the dying and rising of Christ – and its manifestation in one’s own life – one’s dying and rising with Christ. The Church in both its ministers and in the community at large should do what is possible to support those who suffer, but all must go further: as a matter of justice, Christians have a responsibility to fight against disease and illness. The medical profession has a particular role in healing. All are called to sensitivity toward the sick, offering them hope of healing; realizing that the ultimate goal is whatever will lead to salvation.

3. Christ heals the sick through the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

- Through his healing, the Kingdom of God breaks into the world.
- Jesus healed the sick throughout his public ministry. (PCS 5)
- The Church continues the healing ministry, as evidenced in the Letter of James (see James 5:14-16). (PCS 5)
- The foundation for the sacrament is Christ’s Paschal Mystery. (PCS 5)
- The celebration of the sacrament consists in the laying on of hands by the priests of the Church, the prayer of faith, and anointing with blessed oil. (PCS 5)

Correlation with *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *The Rite of the Pastoral Care of the Sick*

PCS 5: *The Lord himself showed great concern for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick and commanded his followers to do likewise. This is clear from the gospels, and above all from the existence of the sacrament of anointing, which he instituted and which is made known in the Letter of James. Since then the Church has never ceased to celebrate this sacrament for its members by the anointing and the prayer of its priests, commending those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them (see James 5:14-16). Moreover, the Church exhorts them to associate themselves willingly with the passion and death of Christ (see Romans 8:17), (See also Colossians 1:24; 2 Timothy 2:11-12; 1 Peter 4:13.) and thus contribute to the welfare of the people of God. (See Council of Trent, sess. 14, De Extrema Unctione, cap.1: Denz.-Schön. 1695; Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 11: AAS 57 (1965) 15.)*

CCC 1503: Christ's compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that "God has visited his people" (Lk 7:16; cf Mt 4:24) and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins (Cf. Mk 2:5-12); he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician the sick have need of. (Cf. Mk 2:17) His compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them: "I was sick and you visited me." (Mt 25:36) His preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them.

CCC 1504: Often Jesus asks the sick to believe. (Cf Mk 5:34, 36; 9:32) He makes use of signs to heal: spittle and the laying on of hands, (Cf Mk 7:32 – 36; 8:22 - 25) mud and washing. (Cf Jn 9:6-7) The sick try to touch him, "for power came forth from him and healed them all." (Lk 6:19; cf Mk 1:41; 3:10; 6:56) And so in the sacraments Christ continues to "touch" us in order to heal us.

CCC 1505: Moved by so much suffering, Christ not only allows himself to be touched by the sick, but he makes their miseries his own: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases." (Mt 8:17; cf Isa 53:4) But he did not heal all the sick. His healings were signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God. They announced a more radical healing: the victory over sin and death through the Passover. On the cross Christ took upon himself the whole weight of evil and took away the "sin of the world" (Jn 1:29; cf Isa 53:4-6) of which illness is only a consequence. By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering: it can henceforth configure us to him and unite us with his redemptive passion.

CCC 1507: The risen Lord renews this mission ("in my name ... they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." (Mk 16:17-18)) and confirms it through signs that the church performs by invoking his name. (Cf Acts 9:34; 14:3) These signs demonstrate in a special way that Jesus is truly "God who saves." (Cf Mt 1:21; Acts)

CCC 1520: A particular gift of the Holy Spirit. The first grace of this sacrament is one of strengthening, peace and courage to overcome the difficulties that go with the condition of serious illness or the frailty of old age. This grace is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who renews trust and faith in God and strengthens against the temptations of the evil one, the temptation to discouragement and anguish in the face of death. (Cf. Heb 2:15) This assistance from the Lord by the power of his Spirit is meant to lead the sick person to healing of the soul, but also of the body if such is God's will. (Cf. Council of Florence (1439); DS 1325) Furthermore, "if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." (Jas 5:15; cf. Council of Trent (1551); DS 1717.)

CCC 1521: *Union with the passion of Christ. By the grace of this sacrament the sick person receives the strength and the gift of uniting himself more closely to Christ's Passion: in a certain way he is consecrated to bear fruit by configuration to the Savior's redemptive Passion. Suffering, a consequence of original sin, acquires a new meaning; it becomes a participation in the saving work of Jesus.*

CCC 1532: *The special grace of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has as its effects:*

- *The uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church;*
- *the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church*
- *the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age*
- *the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance;*
- *the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul;*
- *the preparation for passing over to eternal life.*

Implications:

The Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament of the Kingdom of God. Jesus' healings were an in-breaking of the Kingdom. The Church serves the Kingdom of God in various ways, including the practice of the healing sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick. Instruction on the Anointing of the Sick should include the difference between cures and healing. The purpose of the sacrament is not to cure one from one's illness (physical or mental). Even if one does not recover from one's physical infirmity after anointing, the purpose of the sacrament is healing. Healing is spiritual, follows the pattern of the paschal mystery, and includes in a broad sense, reconciliation. Instruction on the Anointing of the Sick also needs to insist that it is a sacrament of the living and therefore should be sought as soon as one is aware of serious illness or is facing critical medical procedures.

4. The proper sacrament for the dying is Viaticum (Holy Communion).

Correlation with The Catechism of the Catholic Church and The Rite of the Pastoral Care of the Sick

PCS 26: *When in their passage from this life Christians are strengthened by the body and blood of Christ in viaticum, they have the pledge of the resurrection that the Lord promised "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day" (John 6:54).*

(PCS 26 cont.) : *When possible, viaticum should be received within Mass so that the sick person may receive communion under both kinds. Communion received*

as viaticum should be considered a special sign of participation in the mystery which is celebrated in the eucharist: the mystery of the death of the Lord and his passage to the Father.¹

PCS 27: *All baptized Christians who are able to receive communion are bound to receive viaticum by reason of the precept to receive communion when in danger of death from any cause. Priests with pastoral responsibility must see that the celebration of this sacrament is not delayed, but that the faithful are nourished by it while still in full possession of their faculties.*

CCC 1524: *In addition to the Anointing of the Sick, the Church offers those who are about to leave this life the Eucharist as viaticum. Communion in the body and blood of Christ, received at this moment of “passing over” to the Father, has a particular significance and importance. It is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection, according to the words of the Lord: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (Jn 6:54) The sacrament of Christ once dead and now risen, the Eucharist is here the sacrament of passing over from death to life, from this world to the Father. (Cf. Jn 13:1)*

Implications:

The Church offers this special moment of comfort and reassurance to those facing death with the added text “May the Lord Jesus protect you and lead you to eternal life”. If a priest administers viaticum, he may add the apostolic pardon for the dying. Hence, viaticum should be requested when one is in full possession of one’s faculties.

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¹ See Congregation of Rites, Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium*, May 25, 1967, nos. 336, 39, 41[DOL 179, nos. 1265, 1268, 1270].

II. Pastoral and Catechetical Principles

A. GENERAL PASTORAL AND CATECHETICAL PRINCIPLES

Effective sacramental preparation:

1. Raises as few obstacles as possible to the reception of the sacraments. It seeks to balance the value of adequate preparation and proper disposition, with the recognition of sacraments as free gifts from God.
2. Includes candidates, their families, and the larger parish community.
3. Adapts to the needs, ages and circumstances of the candidates.
4. Focuses on the meaning of the sacrament, including scripture, historical development, and the sacramental rite itself.
5. Fosters discipleship and mission.
6. Promotes lifelong learning and participation in the sacramental life.

B. PRINCIPLES FOR THE PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

1. The person who is seriously ill or facing serious surgery or treatment may ask for the sacrament of the anointing of the sick. The rite specifically includes serious mental illness as appropriate for the reception of the sacrament.
2. All that is involved in the celebration of this sacrament must take into account the physical condition of the one requesting it.
3. The pastoral concern of the celebrant, the texts of the Church's prayers and scriptures, the use of music where appropriate, all contribute to the catechesis of the person.
4. As much as is feasible, the community of faith should be represented during the anointing; however, as always, the physical condition of the sick person is the determining factor.

III. Polices

A. THE CANDIDATE

1. The Sacrament of Anointing is appropriate for those whose health is seriously impaired by sickness or advanced age. This includes persons who are seriously ill whether at home, in hospitals or in nursing homes, as well as children who are old enough to experience benefit from the Sacrament.
2. The nature of this sacrament demands the earliest possible celebration at the beginning of a serious illness or in the face of serious surgery. To postpone anointing can only convey the faulty impression that this is a sacrament for the dying.
3. Although frequency of anointing is a matter of pastoral judgment, a person may request the sacrament again if the sickness recurs or if the condition becomes more serious.
4. Persons who are already dead are not to be anointed. The Order of Christian Funerals has prayers for the dead which are more appropriate.

B. THE PARISH

1. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick should be part of the overall care and concern of the church for the sick of the community. This care includes visits to the sick, taking communion when requested, and prayer for their well-being.
2. The Sacrament of Anointing is often preceded by the Sacrament of Penance and, in cases of danger of death, followed by Viaticum.
3. The actual time of the anointing should be chosen in consultation with the family and the sick person so that a convenient time may be chosen for all to participate. If done early in an illness, a greater selection of days and times will be possible.
4. The Sacrament of Anointing may be celebrated in the sick person's room, at home or in the hospital. It may also be celebrated in the parish church or hospital chapel. Consideration should be given to the condition of the patient, others in the room, the space available and the needs of a real celebration.
5. If the sick person wishes (or asks) to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance, provision for this is made prior to the celebration of Anointing.
6. Frequency of anointing is a matter of pastoral judgment. The Sacrament of Anointing may be repeated if the sickness recurs or if the condition becomes more serious.
7. It is recommended that the priest be prepared to celebrate the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick when visiting the sick in a hospital or a nursing home.

8. Anointing of the Sick should be celebrated in parishes at least once or twice annually during Mass after appropriate preparation of the congregation. This celebration may occur during any Sunday Mass, although it does not seem appropriate during the Easter or Christmas seasons. Care must be taken not to overburden the Mass at any time.
9. Appropriate readings are found in the Lectionary and in the Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum. The Ordo will indicate any restrictions on the choice of texts from the Rite itself.

IV. Norms For Readiness

1. The only requirement for this sacrament is the awareness of serious illness or danger of death.
2. For the parish community, when the scriptures assigned lend themselves to the topic, there should be occasional preaching on the healing ministry of Jesus, his compassion for the sick, the Church's concern for their well being, and a connection of these with the Church's celebration of the sacrament of the sick.

V. The Rite Of The Anointing Of The Sick

A. GENERAL LITURGICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Liturgical celebrations, especially those involving first reception of sacraments, should be undertaken with special care and preparation:
 - a. All the sacraments engage the whole community of faith, even though particular sacraments may be celebrated individually.
 - b. The symbols—words, gestures, objects, movements, etc.—of the sacraments should always be lavish.
 - c. Candidates should be involved in the celebration as actively as possible.
2. Liturgical celebrations catechize through the experience.
3. The way sacraments are celebrated should offer welcome and hospitality to all, including those who are not members of the faith community.

B. LITURGICAL PRINCIPLES FOR CELEBRATING THE RITE OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

If The Sacrament of Penance Has Been Requested, It Takes Place Before The Anointing

Opening Rite

Greeting

Sprinkling with Holy Water – optional

Instruction

Penitential Rite

Liturgy of the Word

Scripture

Brief homily

Liturgy of Anointing

Litany

Laying on of Hands

Prayer over the Oil (or Blessing of the Oil)

Anointing (forehead and hands are anointed)

Prayer after Anointing

Lord's Prayer

Liturgy of Holy Communion

Communion

Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rite

Blessing

C. COMMENTARY ON IMPORTANT LITURGICAL ELEMENTS

1. Oil of the Sick – Care must be taken that the oil is fresh, not rancid. In case of necessity, the celebrant may bless the oil himself but only within the celebration of the sacrament. Any vegetable oil may be used.
2. Communal Celebration - Every means must be used to involve the community with the individual who is sick or homebound, without allowing this concern and care to become burdensome for the one it is supposed to strengthen.

D. SELECTION OF MUSIC

Music for the celebration of the Anointing of the Sick should be peaceful, meaningful, comforting and helpful to bring one to faith.