

# What the church says about: Anointing the Sick

## WHAT THE CHURCH SAYS ABOUT THE SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

CCC 1499 "By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them. And indeed she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the Passion and death of Christ."

CCC 1514 The Anointing of the Sick "is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived."

CCC 1517 Like all the sacraments the Anointing of the Sick is a liturgical and communal celebration, whether it takes place in the family home, a hospital or church, for a single sick person or a whole group of sick persons. It is very fitting to celebrate it within the Eucharist, the memorial of the Lord's Passover. If circumstances suggest it, the celebration of the sacrament can be preceded by the sacrament of Penance and followed by the sacrament of the Eucharist. As the sacrament of Christ's Passover the Eucharist should always be the last sacrament of the earthly journey, the "viaticum" for "passing over" to eternal life

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." 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

CCC 1531 The celebration of the Anointing of the Sick consists essentially in the anointing of the forehead and hands of the sick person (in the Roman Rite) or of other parts of the body (in the Eastern rite), the anointing being accompanied by the liturgical prayer of the celebrant asking for the special grace of this sacrament.

### What Is It?

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is exactly what it says. It is a prayerful celebration for someone or for a group of people who are ill and are blessed by the priest with Holy Oil. It is not a sign that someone is dying as it was perceived in olden times. It is not a magical ritual; the person doesn't automatically get better immediately after an anointing. God's healing and loving presence are called upon that the sick person might be raised up and restored to health.

### Symbolism

The words of blessing over the oil say it all. It is "oil intended to ease the sufferings of your people". Oil soothes and heals. Oil blessed for the sick is a sign of the Anointed One (Messiah) of God. The person so anointed receives the healing, saving power of the One who saves (Messiah).

### Oil

The oil that is used is Olive Oil. The Bishop and priests bless it at the 'Chrism Mass' on Holy Thursday in the Cathedral. The holy oils are then taken each year to each parish and hospital for use throughout the year in the Sacrament of the Sick.

How?

A person is anointed on the forehead and the palms of the hands while the priest says: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you by the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who heals you, save you and raise you up."

Who Can Be Anointed?

Anyone in 'serious illness', those who are infirm, in advanced years, or anyone prior to surgery. (It is not only for when a person is in 'danger of death')

