

MANY DIMENSIONS TO JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY

- ◆ SPIRITUAL/FORGIVENESS
- ◆ BODILY/PHYSICAL
- ◆ EMOTIONAL
- ◆ SOCIAL

SHARING IN JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY

- ◆ CARING FOR FAMILY MEMBER
- ◆ VISITING THE SICK
- ◆ TAKING CARE OF ONE'S OWN HEALTH THROUGH DIET AND EXERCISE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
- ◆ WORKING IN HEALTH CARE
- ◆ COUNSELING
- ◆ FRIENDS' LISTENING
- ◆ PROPER LAWS FOR DISABLED AND OTHERS
- ◆ SOCIAL WORKERS
- ◆ ADVOCATE FOR BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS
- ◆ PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING
- ◆ TAKING TIME TO BE WITH THOSE IN TROUBLE
- ◆ LETTING ONE'S OWN ILLNESSES AND SUFFERING BE CONNECTED TO JESUS'
- ◆ AND ON AND ON, MANY MORE DIFFERENT WAYS

“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...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.”

[General Introduction, Pastoral Care of the Sick. Rites of Anointing and Viaticum]

“Although closely linked with the human condition, sickness cannot as a general rule be regarded as punishment inflicted on each individual for personal sins.”

[General Introduction, Pastoral Care of the Sick. Rites of Anointing and Viaticum]

“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...Moreover, the role of the sick in the Church is to be a reminder to others of the essential or higher things. By their witness the sick show that our mortal life must be redeemed through the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection.”

[General Introduction, Pastoral Care of the Sick. Rites of Anointing and Viaticum]

“The sick person is not the only one who should fight against illness. Doctors and all who are devoted in any way to caring for the sick should consider it their duty to use all the means which in their judgment may help the sick, both physically and spiritually.”

[General Introduction, Pastoral Care of the Sick. Rites of Anointing and Viaticum]

SYMBOLS USED IN THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

◆ OIL

- olive oil or other vegetable oil
- blessed by the bishop at Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday or by the priest at the time of the anointing
- stored in the Church in the ambry

◆ LAYING ON OF HANDS

- the significance of Jesus' touch in his ministry
- epiclesis: praying for the Holy Spirit
- Read James 5:15

◆ COMMUNITY OF FAITH GATHERED IN PRAYER

- often the overlooked symbol in every sacrament

◆ WORDS OF THE SACRAMENT

Letter of James 5:15

“Is anyone among you sick? They should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over them and anoint with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise them up. If they have committed any sins, they will be forgiven.”

Prayer Used during the Anointing

As the forehead is anointed:

Through this holy anointing
May the Lord in his love and mercy help you
with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

As the hands are anointed:

May the Lord who frees you from sin
Save you and raise you up.

All respond: Amen.

PRAYERS AFTER ANOINTING

“Father in heaven, through this holy anointing grant our brothers and sisters comfort in their suffering. When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, afford them hope, and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

PRAYERS AFTER ANOINTING

“Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, by the grace of your Holy Spirit cure the weakness of your servants. Heal their sickness and forgive their sins. Expel all afflictions of mind and body; mercifully restore them to full health, and enable them to resume their former duties, for you are our Lord, for ever and ever.
Amen.”

PRAYERS AFTER ANOINTING

“Lord Jesus Christ, you chose to share our human nature, to redeem all people, and to heal the sick. Look with compassion upon your servants, whom we have anointed in your name with this holy oil for the healing of their body and spirit. Support them with your power, comfort them with your protection, and give them the strength to fight against evil. Since you have given them a share in your own passion, help them to find hope in suffering, for you are Lord for ever and ever.
Amen.”

PRAYERS AFTER ANOINTING

“God of mercy, look kindly on your servants who have grown weak under the burden of years. In this holy anointing they ask for healing in body and soul. Fill them with the strength of your Holy Spirit. Keep them firm in faith and serene in hope, so that they may give us all an example of patience and joyfully witness to the power of your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.”

Amen.

WHEN SHOULD WE SEEK ANOINTING?

- serious illness
- do not delay
- before surgery (anesthesia)
- periodically with chronic illnesses
- including addictions
- serious emotional illness (depression, etc)
- during recovery from illness if not getting better as quickly as anticipated
- elderly with general bodily frailty

WHO CAN BE ANOINTED?

- Catholics who have reached the age of reason
 - active participation (this is not magical oil or a magic moment, active faith is called for)
 - since forgiveness of sins is part of the prayer, ordinarily should be old enough to need such forgiveness
- other Christians only if share same faith in the presence of the risen Lord in and through this sacrament. No “might as well try this, we’ve tried other things” approach.
- children under the age of reason if pastoral decision is made that it will be of spiritual benefit to them and family

WHO CAN ANOINT?

- bishops and priests
- not deacons or pastoral care workers
- issue of self-anointing, healing oils, other than sacramental anointing.

IS IT A NECESSARY SACRAMENT BEFORE DEATH?

- No, it is not considered necessary but it is greatly encouraged.
- usually would have been experienced long before the time of death, as part of the time of illness

FROM EXTREME UNCTION TO ANOINTING

—early on: a sacrament of anointing for those with serious physical illnesses

—because the forgiveness of sins in anointing is tied to sacrament of Penance, which is done just once and often near death, becomes connected to time of death

— “The last anointing”; “unction in extremis”

—shift from physical healing focus to spiritual preparation for death as way to distinguish it from sacrament of Penance; shift from integral healing to an inner spiritual healing.

WHAT IS VIATICUM?

- “Food for the journey”: communion brought to the person who is dying
- in that sense the true “last sacrament”
- implies enough consciousness to participate in the reception
- helps give a sense of when anointing ordinarily should occur: before this viaticum

OTHER QUESTIONS?

Sacraments do not exist for the sake of celebrating sacraments.

- Eucharist sends us out into the world to be the body of Christ.
- Reconciliation not complete until we become agents of reconciliation.
- Etc.

Anointing of the sick: we who celebrate anointing—the sick and the community gathered—are to be agents of Jesus' healing ministry in the world, wherever there is serious illness or suffering.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CONNECT OUR SUFFERING TO CHRIST'S "REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING"?

WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS FAITH IN TIME OF SUFFERING MADE IN YOUR LIFE?

CAUTIONS ABOUT ASSUMING WE KNOW WHY WE/OTHERS SUFFER