

What is Health?

Are you healthy? That's a tough question to answer because health can be rather nebulous. It's much easier to identify sickness. We know when we have a fever, aches and pains, an upset stomach, or a dry, hacking cough. Is health simply the absence of sickness? Too often, we define things by what they are not, such as defining peace as the absence of war. In the same way, health is much more than the absence of illness, injury, or pain... It is a harmony – a balance - of our physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. It is wholesome. Interestingly, the etymology of the word *health* reveals that it means not only wholeness but also holiness, and, of course, to be holy is to be like God, who alone is perfect harmony and balance.

Our faith teaches us that it is in our brokenness that we are most capable of recognizing the presence of God.

Through the Anointing of the Sick, we embrace a narrative that says Jesus is in our midst and we have nothing to fear because even death cannot separate us from his love.

*This section has been taken from Living the Sacraments by Joe Paprocki

Did you Know?

“Just as the overall care of the sick should involve other members of the parish, so the celebration of the sacrament of anointing also calls for the participation of other parishioners. Ideally, the anointing of the sick is celebrated in the midst of a gathering of the church around the sick person... The members of the church gather around the sick person(s) to offer the support of a shared faith and shared prayer. The priest presides, as he does normally when the church gathers for worship, but it is the whole gathered community that celebrates the sacrament with him around the sick person(s).

*Forming the Assembly to Celebrate Sacraments by Lawrence E. Mick



Scripture

Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the Lord delivers them in times of trouble.

The Lord protects and preserves them – they are counted among the blessed in the land – he does not give them over to the desire of their foes.

The Lord sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness.

(Psalm 41: 1-4)

The Sacrament of The Anointing of the Sick



“The care of the sick is to be placed above and before every other duty, as if indeed Christ were being directly served by waiting on them.”

*The Rule of St. Benedict



*Roman Catholic
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Liturgy Office*

Celebrate Christ! From Water to Life

The Ministry of Jesus



The healing ministry of Jesus was extensive, compassionate, and inclusive. As Jesus made his way across the land of Judea he brought the healing power of God into the lives of those he encountered wherever he found them – in the synagogue, in private homes, in the marketplace, and even as he was walking along from one place to another. In the four accounts of the Gospel there are over fifty recorded instances where Jesus heals someone of an illness, disability, or demonic possession. Although some of these are repeated accounts, the sheer number of recorded incidents by the four evangelists is clear testimony to Jesus' desire to fulfil the words of Isaiah addressed to the Suffering Servant: "Yet it was our pain that he bore, / our sufferings he endured"...

The healing ministry of Jesus was the restoration of wholeness and the manifestation of the intervention of God in human affairs; most especially in situations of illness, suffering, and brokenness. In many of the encounters between Jesus and those he healed, he broke through the social, religious, and economic barriers and conventions of his time.

*Guide for Celebrating The Pastoral Care of the Sick, published by Liturgy Training Publications

The Sacrament of

The Anointing of the Sick

The Catechism of the Catholic Church #1499-1501 talks about the Anointing of the Sick:

"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. (1499)

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. (1500)

Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God. It can also make a person more mature, helping him discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him. (1501)



Glossary of Terms

(The following terms have been taken from; Guide for Celebrating The Pastoral Care of the Sick, published by Liturgy Training Publications)

Anointing of the Sick: The sacrament of healing for seriously ill individuals. Those whose health is seriously impaired by physical or mental sickness or age and request this sacrament are anointed with the oil of the sick so that they may be spiritually strengthened in their afflictions by Christ, who throughout his ministry healed those with various afflictions. It finds its biblical basis in James 5:14, which describes priests of the Church praying over the sick and anointing them. Before the Second Vatican Council, this sacrament was known as Extreme Unction.

Commendation of the Dying: The prayers for a dying person, found in *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*. The prayers are meant to assist the dying to face death with faith and trust by being united to Jesus' own death, and to bring consolation to those who are present. They include Scripture passages, the Litany of the Saints, and the Prayer of Commendation. The rites may be led by a priest, deacon, or layperson.

Last Rites: Although more commonly used before the Second Vatican Council, this term refers to the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Anointing of the Sick, and Viaticum prior to one's death.

Oil of the Sick: One of the three holy oils. It is used to anoint the sick, usually on the forehead and on the palms of the hands, in the celebration of the Anointing of the Sick. It is stored in a decanter or oil stock labeled OI, for *oleum infirmorum*, "oil of the sick."

