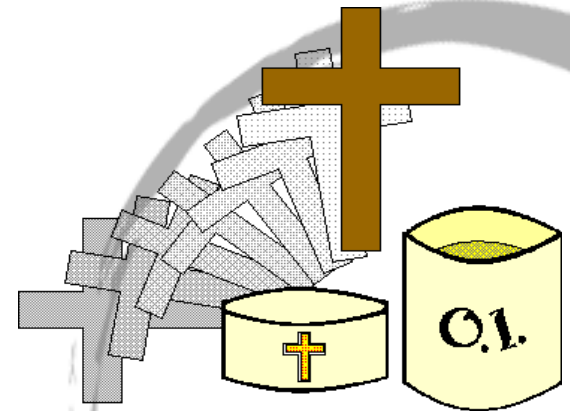


Anointing of the Sick

- Generations of Faith in February
Session 6



The History - Early Practices

- The sacrament took shape from the healings of Jesus and the practices of his first followers. It drew heavily from the passage from James 5:14-16:
- *“Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint (him) with oil in the name of the Lord, the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.” (NAB)*
- The elders had the specific role of praying over the sick and anointing them with oil, which they understood to be endowed with special power from the Holy Spirit. Believers should believe they would be saved, raised, forgiven and healed

Through The Years...

Early Third Century

Apostolic Tradition, written around 235 AD and traditionally attributed to Hippolytus, was one of the earliest liturgical manuals. It included a blessing for oil to be used for anointing the sick.

Fifth Century

- The first document of the teaching of the church that speaks explicitly of the Anointing of the Sick is a letter of Pope Innocent I to Decentius, Bishop of Gubbio (19 March 416).
- The Pope, in commenting on the words of the Letter of James, was reacting to an interpretation which held that only presbyters and not Bishops were the ministers of the sacrament; he rejects this limitation, writing that Bishops as well as presbyters are the ministers of the sacrament

Through The Years...

First Millennium

The sacrament became tied to the once-only policy for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Since it could only be administered once after Baptism, many waited until their deathbed for absolution. It became known as "Extreme Unction."

Fifteenth Century

In 1439 AD, the Council of Florence described the sacrament as follows:

- + To use olive oil blessed by a priest.
- + Only given to the sick if death is expected.
- + Person is anointed on eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, feet and loins.
- + The minister of the sacrament is a priest.
- + Effect is to cure the mind, body, and soul.

The practice at that time was for a priest to be accompanied by a procession of believers when he visited the dying. The dying received absolution, the Eucharist (as viaticum-food for the journey) and extreme unction.

Some or all of the penitential psalms were read, as was one of the Gospel accounts of Our Lord's passion and death. During this time the church developed the rite to include a commendation for the dying person, prayers for the dead, and prayers for the bereaved after the person died.

Since the Reformation

- In 1551 AD, the Council of Trent, in response to protestant reformers who talked of the permanent efficacy of baptism throughout Christian life, insisted on the sacramental status of “Extreme Unction.” They said that the sacrament is “to be administered to the sick, especially to those who are so seriously ill that they seem near to death; hence it is also called the sacrament of the dying.” The effects of the sacrament are “it confers grace, remits sin, and comforts the sick.” (Council of Trent)

Understanding What is Asked For

- What is the difference between healing and a cure? Healing involves the spirit while a cure is entirely physical. A cure assumes a single, correct answer.
- Healing is multi-faceted. Healing also suggests a path toward increased wellness. It means letting go of anger and finding hope. They need not oppose each other but can work together towards achieving increasing quality of life

What is the Nature of this Sacrament?

- The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is most likely one of the last sacraments one will receive. It is often administered near the time of death to bring spiritual and even physical strength during an illness.
- The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick brings Christ's compassionate loving healing to those suffering serious sickness. The healing referred to does not necessarily mean the eradication of the disease or defect pursued by the medical profession but to a healing by holistic care that touches the body, soul, and the spirit of the sick person.
- The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is an acknowledgement of the frailty of the people who are redeemed through the mystery of the Christ's own death and resurrection.
- When circumstances permit, the Church recommends that the sacrament take place during Mass or at least that it be preceded by Confession and followed by Holy Communion.

Nature of the Sacrament

- If suffering is an important part of Jesus' mission, so too, is healing. Jesus heals the lepers (Mt. 8:3), the crippled (Mt. 11:5), and the dying (Mt. 9:18-34). He restores sight to the blind (Mk. 10:46-52) and life to the dead (Lk. 7:11). He also forgives sinners (Lk. 7:47 ; Mt. 2:5).
- Such is His compassion for the sick that He institutes the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. He tells his apostles: Cure the sick, raise the dead, heal the lepers, expel demons. The gift you have received, give as a gift (Mt. 10:8).
- Biblical Basis of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick
- The sacrament's name has changed over time. It was called extreme unction (the last anointing), and was typically referred to as the "last rites."

MINISTER OF THE SACRAMENT

Only ordained clergy can administer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, since, when the sacrament was instituted during Christ's sending out of His disciples, it was confined to the men who would become the original bishops of the Church.

MATTER OF THE SACRAMENT

The matter is the oil (**The Oil of the Sick (Oleum Infirmorum)**), and the laying on of hands by the clergy.



Who Are The Recipients?

- According to St. James, the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is reserved for those in poor health, a term used to mean in danger of death.
- The sacrament is ordinarily received only once in the same illness, but it may be administered again if the sick person recovers, then becomes seriously ill again.
- The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament of the living. Hence, the person receiving it must be in the state of grace. It is customary, therefore, to have the sick person go to confession unless he or she is unable to do so for strong reasons.

Fruits of the Sacrament

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick offers the sick an opportunity to encounter God's healing touch. In this encounter with God, they also develop healing attitudes like the following:

- They receive spiritual strength.
- They are united with the passion of Christ.
- They receive ecclesial grace.
- They prepare for the final journey with the father.

The anointing in the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick fortifies the end of our earthly life like a solid rampart for the final struggles before entering the Father's house.