

**All you need to know about...**  
**The Sacrament of the Sick**



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### **The Sacrament of the Sick**

#### **What is it?**

- The Sacrament of the Sick is one of the seven Sacraments of the Church.
- It is one of the two Sacraments of Healing given by the Church.

#### **What is the purpose of The Sacrament of the Sick?**

- The Sacrament of the Sick provides healing and forgiveness for those who are suffering either in mind or in body.
- The healing and forgiveness given through the Sacrament of the Sick is not necessarily in terms of a physical cure. It is about the comfort, acceptance of a situation and an inner feeling of peace that the Sacrament brings.
- One of the seven Corporal Works of Mercy contained in the Catechism requires members of the Church to care for the sick.
- The Sacrament of the Sick is not the same as the 'Last Rites' which are really the prayers offered for the dying.

#### **How did The Sacrament of the Sick originate?**

- In his earthly ministry Jesus healed many people from a variety of ailments (Luke 7:21, The Healing of the Paralyse Man: Matthew 9:1-7, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26) thus bringing them both healing and forgiveness of sin.
- He also gave the disciples the authority to heal to people (Matthew 10:1, 8, Mark 6:7, Luke 9:1-2). This authority, having been passed on by the disciples as the first leaders, now lies with the priests and bishops of the Church (James 5:14).

#### **When does The Sacrament of the Sick take place?**

- The Sacrament of the Sick should be administered when a person has become seriously ill, requires major surgery or has become weakened by age and frailty. It can be administered anywhere.
- The Sacrament of the Sick can take place within a communal liturgy of anointing, within the celebration of Mass or just with an individual person.

#### **Where does The Sacrament of the Sick take place?**

- The Sacrament of the Sick can take place in Church but also in other settings such as hospitals, hospices and people's homes.

## **Can anyone receive the Sacrament of the Sick?**

- Any baptised person of any age can receive the Sacrament.
- The Sacrament of the Sick, like all the other Sacraments, is only for the living. Different rites and prayers which are not Sacraments are used for those about to die, for those who have just died and for the funerals of the deceased.

## **How many times can you receive the Sacrament of the Sick?**

- The Sacrament of the Sick can be received more than once, especially when an illness is sustained or gets worse.

## **Who can celebrate The Sacrament of the Sick?**

- Only an ordained bishop or priest can administer the Sacrament.

## **Who has to be present at The Sacrament of the Sick?**

- Although the Sacrament can be received in a liturgy of anointing or the celebration of Mass where a number of people have been brought together, it can be celebrated just with the priest and individual person.

## **Are any special clothes worn?**

- If the Sacrament of the Sick is being celebrated within the Mass the priest will be wearing his vestments for Mass. If it is being celebrated outside of Mass the priest will wear either a cassock, cotter and stole or an alb and stole.

## **What happens at the Sacrament of The Sacrament of the Sick?**

### **Introduction**

- In the opening prayer the priest reminds the person going to receive the Sacrament of the power and authority given by Jesus to priests in order that they can bring his healing to them.

This prayer reminds the people present of the healing of either mind or body that the Sacrament can bring.

- The Sacrament of Reconciliation may take place.

This part of the Rite is optional. Some people, particularly those who are about to have an operation or who are gravely ill, may request it as they want to be in a state of grace and free from sin should they die.

- In silence the priest lays his hands upon the head of the sick person.

In the same way that Jesus brought healing to people by placing his hands upon them so too does the priest.

- The priest then anoints the sick person with the Oil of the Sick on the forehead and on the palms of their hands and says the words of anointing.

It is at this point in the liturgy when the Sacrament is received: during the anointing the priest says "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."

He does not repeat the words if he is anointing other parts of the body. This is because the Sacramental form (the necessary words and action) has already taken place.

- The priest concludes with the prayer after anointing.

The prayer which is selected for this part of the rite is dependent on the age of the person and their circumstances.

### **If you'd like to find out more about The Sacrament of the Sick you can ...**

- watch a short film clip featuring Bishop Christopher Coyne on the Catholic TV Network from a series of talks 'Everything you wanted to know about Catholic Liturgy' [www.catholictv.com/shows/everything-you-wanted-know-about-catholic-liturgy](http://www.catholictv.com/shows/everything-you-wanted-know-about-catholic-liturgy)
- watch a short film clip on [www.bustedhalo.com/video/anointing-of-the-sick-who-its-for](http://www.bustedhalo.com/video/anointing-of-the-sick-who-its-for)
- read more about it in 'Youcat' ('Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church') available from CTS
- read more about it in the 'Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church' available from CTS
- read more in 'The Catholic Source Book' Harcourt Religion Publishers

## **Rite of the Sacrament of the Sick**

The following is an example of the Rite of the Sacrament of the Sick when carried out with an individual somewhere other than the parish church such as a hospital or the person's home.

### **Introductory Rites**

#### **Greeting**

*Priest:* The peace of the Lord be with you always.

*R:* And with your spirit.

*Priest:* Lord God, you have said to us through your apostle James:

"Are there people sick among you? Let them send for the priests of the Church, and let the priests pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.

The prayer of faith will save the sick persons, and the Lord will raise them up.

If they have committed any sins, their sins will be forgiven them."

Lord, we have gathered here in your name and we ask you to be among us, to watch over our brother/sister N. We ask this with confidence, for you live and reign for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

or

*Priest:* My dear friends, we are gathered here in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who is present among us. As the gospels relate, the sick came to him for healing; moreover, he loves us so much that he died for our sake. Through the apostle James, he has commanded us: "Are there any who are sick among you? Let them send for the priests of the Church, and let the priests pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick persons, and the Lord will raise them up; and if they have committed any sins, their sins will be forgiven them." Let us therefore commend our sick brother/sister N. to the grace and power of Christ, that he may save him/her and raise him/her up.

*The Sacrament of Penance may now be celebrated if desired. Please see separate notes for this.*

### **Liturgy of Anointing**

#### **Laying on of Hands**

*In silence the priest lays his hands upon the head of the sick person.*

#### **Anointing**

*The priest now anoints the sick person on their forehead saying: Priest:* Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

R: Amen.

*The priest then anoints them upon the palms of their hands saying:*

*Priest:* May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.

R: Amen

*If required the priest may also anoint other parts of the body but does so without repeating the words of anointing.*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Priest:* Now let us offer together the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us:

All: Our Father....

### **Prayer after Anointing**

*The prayer now said by the priest will vary according to the age (child, young person or elderly) and condition (ill, awaiting surgery, terminal diagnosis) of the sick person.*

*Examples of general prayers after anointing are below.*

*Priest:* Father in heaven, through this holy anointing grant N. comfort in his/her suffering. When he/she is afraid, give him/her courage, when afflicted, give him/her patience, when dejected, afford him/her hope, and when alone, assure him/her of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen.

or

*Priest:* Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, by the grace of your Holy Spirit cure the weakness of your servant N. Heal his/her sickness and forgive his/her sins; expel all afflictions of mind and body; mercifully restore him/her to full health, and enable him/her to resume his/her former duties, for you are Lord for ever and ever.

R: Amen.

### **Concluding Rite**

The priest now blesses the sick person saying:

*Priest:* May the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, come upon you and remain with you for ever.

R: Amen.