

Anointing of the Sick offers encounter with the healing Christ

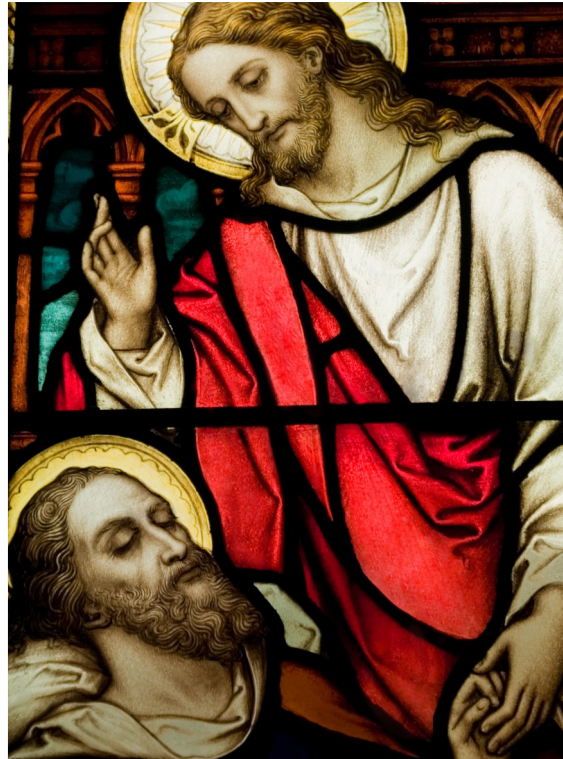
The Oil of the Sick is used for the healing of body, mind, and spirit. The oil is used year for the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, a Sacrament that celebrates an encounter with the healing Christ.

By becoming man, Jesus experienced suffering and death. Those who are sick unite their sufferings to those of Christ and become witnesses of Christ's Resurrection, testifying to the fact that all are called to participate in the redemption of the world. The ministry of those who are sick is a powerful witness to the fact that human dignity is intrinsic and does not increase or decrease based on a person's physical state or abilities.

The Sacrament is administered by a priest and can be offered in a home, hospital, or church setting. The celebration begins with a Penitential Rite followed by the Liturgy of the Word, the laying on of hands and sacramental anointing. When the Rite is celebrated in the home or hospital, family and friends who are gathered can also draw inspiration and comfort.

The Rite of Anointing says that there is no need to wait until a person is at the point of death to receive the Sacrament. A careful judgment about the serious nature of the illness is sufficient. The Sacrament can be repeated each time there is a threat of serious illness.

"I have been privileged to celebrate the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick with many persons over the years especially in my native Jamaica and more recently as pastor of St. Patrick, Mount Dora," said Franciscan Father Anthony Aarons. "There are so



many persons who associate this Sacrament with death and dying so much that caregivers are anxious to have a priest come to anoint if they think someone is near to death. The Sacrament is for healing. So sick persons - young, old, advanced in age, terminally ill and those preparing for surgery should ask for this Sacrament. The grace of this Sacrament is healing of body, mind and spirit."

Some parishes have communal celebrations at which many people receive the Sacrament. Following a celebration at Nativity Parish in Longwood,

Mary Ann Zanata described the experience as "beautiful and special." She said she was so happy to be there to celebrate with her community of faith, especially those brought by family members or friends who were not usually able to participate in the Sunday liturgy.

Mary Nielsen from Nativity said celebrating the Sacrament "brings feelings of peace and joy" and is a reminder of God's continual presence. Others spoke about receiving the Holy Spirit's gifts of strength and courage and a renewed trust and faith in God.

Through the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, the Church carries out Jesus' mission of compassion and healing for the sick. Those who care for the sick do holy and important work; they walk with Christ's suffering people and in doing so, serve Christ himself.

To arrange to receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick for yourself or a family member, contact your parish office.

