



Catholic Parish of
Christchurch North

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

"Are any among you sick?"

They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord."

(James 5:14)

When a Catholic is very sick, the Church anoints that person with oil, special oil blessed by the Bishop for the specific use for people who are sick.

This is known as the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. You may know this as Extreme Unction or Last Rites, but its proper title is Anointing of the Sick.

This sacrament is administered both to the dying, and to those who are gravely ill or those who are about to undergo a serious operation - for the recovery of their health and for spiritual strength.

In the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, through the ministry of the priest, it is Jesus who touches the sick to heal them from sin - and sometimes even from physical ailment. His cures were signs of the arrival of the Kingdom of God. The core message of his healing tells us of his plan to conquer sin and death by his dying and rising.

This sacrament of healing is appropriate not only for physical sickness, but also for mental and spiritual sickness.



WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK?

This sacrament is a true sacrament instituted by Christ and proclaimed by St James. It is administered by anointing with blessed oil accompanied by prayer. Only a priest can validly administer it, but can be received by any baptised person who has reached the age of reason and is on account of sickness or age in danger of death.

The sick person receives the Holy Spirit's gifts of strength, faith, peace, and courage, and his or her suffering is united with the suffering of Christ for the building up of the Church (*Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], 1520-1523*).

Through the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, the Church carries out Jesus' mission of compassion and healing for the sick. The one who is ill can also be a minister to others. By uniting their suffering to Christ, those who are sick can be signs of faith and witnesses of Christ's Resurrection to the entire community (*Pope John Paul II, Christifideles Laici, No. 54*).

HOW IS THE SACRAMENT CELEBRATED?

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is both "a liturgical and a communal celebration." In the family home, hospital, rest home or church, members of the Body of Christ gather for the sacramental rite led by a priest. This celebration of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick can inspire and comfort both those who are ill and their family and friends who are gathered (CCC, nos. 1517-18).

Many parishes in our Diocese have communal celebrations where many persons receive the sacrament. We normally have an Mass where the Sacrament of Anointing is celebrated at the same time in **Advent** and **Lent**. Of course, our priests are able to anoint anyone who is sick, whether they are housebound, or residing in an aged-care facility. Please contact the priests to organise with them a day and time for them to come and anoint yourself, or a loved one.

These sacramental celebrations are a "source of strength amid pain and weakness, hope amid despair" and a "joyful encounter" for the entire community (*Christifideles Laici, no. 54*).

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS DURING THIS SACRAMENT?

If circumstances allow, the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be celebrated with the sick person prior to the Sacrament of Anointing. If not, there is a brief penitential rite within the introductory prayers.

The sacrament consists of readings from the Scriptures, the laying on of hands, the anointing on the forehead and hands, the communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and the dismissal. If the sick person is able to receive Communion, the Eucharist may be offered just after the Lord's Prayer.

It is ideal if the family of the sick person can gather for this ritual. If done in a hospital or a rest home, the staff also may be invited to participate. The presence of others assures us that the Church is present in prayer. If family members and others aren't able to be present, the sacrament can be celebrated with just the sick person and the priest present.

DOES ONE HAVE TO BE DYING TO RECEIVE ANOINTING?

Canon law states that anyone who is in some danger of death from an illness or from old age can receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Likewise, should the person's condition worsen, the sacrament may be repeated. The code then immediately offers this caveat: If there is any doubt as to the seriousness of the illness or condition, the sacrament is to be received. The Catechism of the Catholic Church adds that it is also appropriate to receive the sacrament prior to surgery (CCC, 1515).

In the past, this sacrament was often kept strictly for those close to death. In more recent years the Church has encouraged greater use of this sacrament for illness which is not necessarily life-threatening. As with all the sacraments, this anointing has significance for the whole Church. It reminds us of our call to wholeness and our call to be a sign of salvation to the world.

Wherever there is brokenness, we are to be instruments of Christ's healing touch.



HOW DO I (OR A LOVED ONE) GET ANOINTED?

If you, or a family member or friend, is sick and would like to get anointed here are some ways to organise the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick celebrated.

- If you are able to come to Mass or travel, you may like to organise with a priest to be anointed at the Church either before or after Mass, or at a suitable time organised by you and the priest.
- If you are housebound, or in a rest-home, please contact the parish office and a priest will contact you to organise a time to come and see you.
- If you are going in for surgery, you can be anointed. Please contact the parish office, or one of the priests.

I HAVE A LOVED ONE IN HOSPITAL, CAN THEY BE ANOINTED?

We have a great Hospital Chaplaincy Team at Christchurch Hospital and Burwood Hospital. If you have a loved one at one of these hospitals, we ask that you contact the Hospital Chaplain.

The chaplaincy team do not get names of Catholics automatically and so rely on people letting them know who is in hospital. The chaplain team will organise a priest to come and anoint them and will follow up with visits while they are in hospital. If you are heading into hospital and would like a visit, please contact the chaplaincy team beforehand, or let one of the nurses know that you would like to see the Catholic Chaplain.

Christchurch Hospital & Christchurch Women's Hospital

Pastoral Chaplain - Angela McCormick

(03) 364 0640 ext 89554 // angela.mccormick@cdhb.health.nz

Burwood Hospital

Pastoral Chaplain - Kirsten Challies

027 437 6737 // kirsten.challies@cdhb.health.nz

Hillmorton Hospital

Pastoral Chaplain - Joan Hough

03 337 7969 ext 33700 or 021 501 683 // joan.hough@cdhb.health.nz

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the parish office to speak to the Priests' PA to organise a time for a priest to visit, or contact the priests directly.

