

Catechist Introduction

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is a frequently misunderstood Sacrament of the Church. Not just appropriate for those facing death, the Sacrament can be received anytime a person is facing serious illness. The graces from the Sacrament are given to help us overcome and endure the suffering that is a part of the human condition, while uniting our misery to Christ's own redemptive actions.

Original Sin

Our original parents were created by God without sin and they enjoyed an intimate relationship with God free from suffering, illness, or death in paradise. This idyllic situation changed, however, when Adam and Eve gave in to the temptation of the serpent and ate of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This singular action, the Original Sin, ushered in all subsequent sickness, suffering, sin, and death. This fallen state was now the human condition, the natural

consequences of our own actions, passed on to all humans for every generation.

God's Love for Us

God loved the world so much that He gave His only beloved Son into the world to become human, like us in all things but sin, to willingly suffer and die for all mankind on the Cross. In this redemptive act, Christ transformed human suffering into something new. No longer were suffering, illness, and death just a by-product of sin, the work of the devil. Now, united to Christ's own suffering, the suffering inherent in the human condition can make us more Christ-like and be offered for others and the Church as a redemptive sacrifice.

Anointing of the Sick

We will all encounter the consequences of sin: the suffering and sickness that are a part of the human condition. And we will all face death.



United to Christ's own suffering, the suffering inherent in the human condition can make us more Christ-like and be offered for others and the Church as a redemptive sacrifice.

Crucifixion, by Peter Gertner.

This Jesus knew, and experienced Himself. In fact, Jesus closely identified with the sick and suffering, not only during His own Passion, but during His public ministry when He healed so many who were sick and infirm. Jesus sent His Apostles out two by two to heal the sick and forgive sins as a sign of the arrival of the Kingdom of God, prophesied from the Old Testament. And He commanded His Church to heal the sick. And so, working through human signs and actions as He always does, Jesus gave to us the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick as a means of communicating God's grace and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to strengthen the sick and suffering person in the face of adversity, and to prepare the person for the

final struggles before beholding the Beatific Vision of God.

In this Sacrament, the priest, who is the proper minister, anoints the sick person with holy oil, and lays his hands upon him or her as a sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and an affirming of the indelible seal placed upon the person's soul at Baptism and Confirmation, marking the person as God's possession. This anointing strengthens the person to endure, gives peace and courage to overcome, and if it is God's will, be healed. It also unites the suffering of the person to Christ's own suffering, making it redemptive in nature and a participation in Christ's saving work.