

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

### **Q. 222. What is the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?**

The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is administered to anyone who is seriously ill and to those who are in danger of death due to old age.

Jesus showed great love and compassion toward the sick and suffering. “Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them” (Luke 4:40). Jesus continues to come to the ill in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

The priest anoints the sick person on the forehead and the hands with blessed oil, saying once: “Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen. May the Lord Who frees you from sin save you and raise you up. Amen.”

#### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**1511** The Church believes and confesses that among the seven sacraments there is one especially intended to strengthen those who are being tried by illness, the Anointing of the Sick: “This sacred anointing of the sick was instituted by Christ our Lord as a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament. It is alluded to indeed by Mark, but is recommended to the faithful and promulgated by James the Apostle and brother\* of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Vatican Council II***

And on behalf of the faithful who are moved to sorrow or are stricken with sickness, they [priests] exercise in an eminent degree a ministry of reconciliation and comfort, whilst they carry the needs and supplications of the faithful to God the Father (cf. Heb. 5:1-4). *The Church*, 28

#### ***Summary Prayer***

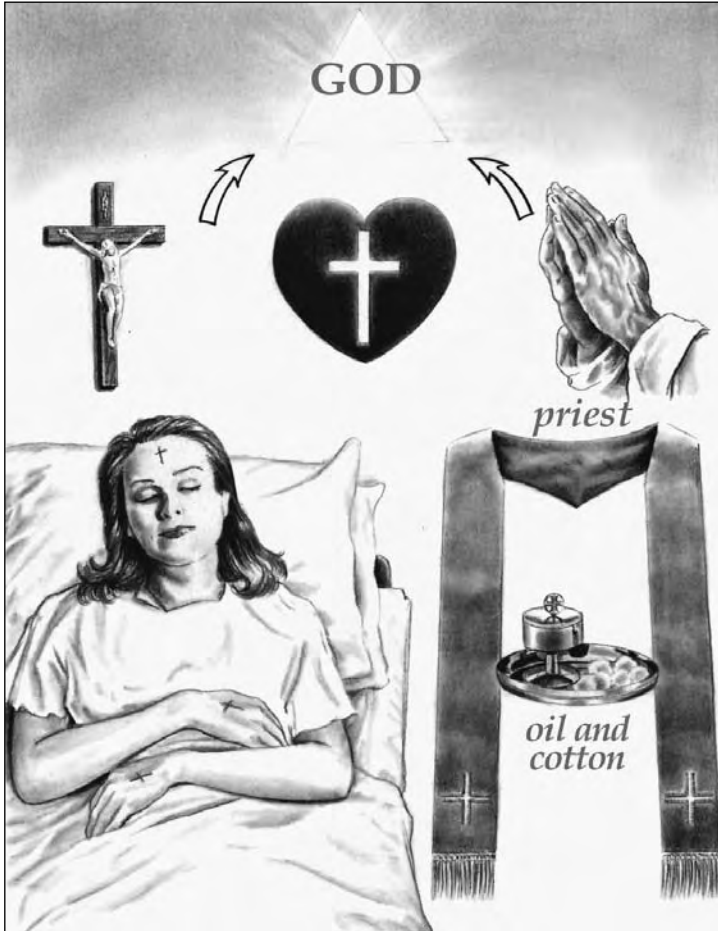
*Almighty and All-loving Father, You are the source of eternal health for those who believe in You. May our brothers and sisters who are anointed in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick be refreshed with divine comfort from heaven and safely reach Your Kingdom of light and life, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

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*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

Catechism by Diagram

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**The Anointing of the Sick.** The minister of the Anointing of the Sick is the priest (stole). The sign is the oil of the sick (container of oil, cotton balls). The words are: “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. Amen.” In giving the sacrament, the priest usually traces a small cross with the oil on the forehead and hands. The priest asks the Lord (folded hands) to lighten the sufferings of the ill, infirm, and aged (cross in heart), to forgive their sins, and to bring them to eternal life (arrows toward God).

**Q. 223. When is the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick best received?**

This sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is best received as soon as possible when there is danger of death from sickness or old age.

This sacrament is for all who are seriously ill and not only for those near death. It is important to note that the sacrament can be repeated for persons who get

*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

well and become seriously ill again. The priest should be called early to a sick person's side so that he can help the person to sincere sorrow for sins.

### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**1514** The Anointing of the Sick “is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived.”<sup>1</sup>

**1516** Only priests (bishops and presbyters) are ministers of the Anointing of the Sick.<sup>1</sup> It is the duty of pastors to instruct the faithful on the benefits of this sacrament. The faithful should encourage the sick to call for a priest to receive this sacrament. The sick should prepare themselves to receive it with good dispositions, assisted by their pastor and the whole ecclesial community, which is invited to surround the sick in a special way through their prayers and fraternal attention.

### **Q. 224. What does the Church ask the Lord for by this anointing?**

By this anointing and by her prayers, the Church, through the ministry of her priests, asks the Lord to (1) alleviate the sufferings of the sick, (2) forgive their sins, and (3) grant them eternal life.

*1. By this anointing and by her prayers, the Church, through the ministry of her priests, asks the Lord to alleviate the sufferings of the sick.*

Christ comes to the ill in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. This sacrament may restore the person to health, as St. James says: “Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15).

In this sacrament Jesus gives us graces which help us to bear the pain and suffering of our illnesses with patience. Our Lord comes with consolation for the soul which is often experiencing pain, and sometimes fear and temptation.

*2. By this anointing and by her prayers, the Church, through the ministry of her priests, asks the Lord to forgive the sins of the seriously sick.*

In this sacrament, Christ gives the sick special graces that enable them to have a deep sorrow for their sins. This sorrow or contrition is required to have sins forgiven. In this regard, it is good to call a priest as soon as possible so he may help the sick person develop a sincere sorrow for sins and to otherwise help him prepare for a fruitful reception of the sacrament.

*3. By this sacrament, the Church, through her priests, asks the Lord to grant the seriously ill eternal life.*

By the fruitful reception of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, the seriously ill are prepared for a holy death. Besides forgiving their sins, Jesus helps the sick

*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

to offer themselves, their lives, and the pains of their illness to Him with sincere Christian resignation and with deep sorrow for their sins.



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### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**1520** *A particular gift of the Holy Spirit.* The first grace of this sacrament is one of strengthening, peace and courage to overcome the difficulties that go with the condition of serious illness or the frailty of old age. This grace is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who renews trust and faith in God and strengthens against the temptations of the evil one, the temptation to discouragement and anguish in the face of death.<sup>1</sup> This assistance from the Lord by the power of his Spirit is meant to lead the sick person to healing of the soul, but also of the body if such is God's will.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, "if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."<sup>3</sup>

### ***Splendor of Truth***

Man always has before him the spiritual horizon of hope, thanks to the help of divine grace and with the cooperation of human freedom. (*section 103*)

### ***Vatican Council II***

By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord that he may raise them up and save them (cf. Jas. 5:14-16). *The Church, 11*

### ***Summary Prayer***

*God our Father, Your Son accepted His sufferings to teach us the virtue of patience in human illness. Hear the prayers that we offer for our sick brothers and sisters. May all who suffer pain, illness, or disease realize they are chosen to be saints, and know that they are joined to Christ in His suffering for the salvation of the world. We ask this in His Name. Amen.*

**Q. 225. What does the Church ask the sick to do?**

The Church asks the sick to help their fellow Christians by offering their sufferings in union with the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Anointing of the Sick prepares us for eternal life, if it is our time to die. It promotes the restoration to health, if it is God's will that we serve Him still longer here on earth. Our Lord increases the divine life in souls through this sacrament, and enables us to offer our sufferings in union with His own on the Cross, that we might share in the work of redemption. We can contribute to the welfare of the Church, not only by repairing for sin, but also by meriting grace for the sanctification of the Church. If we share in Christ's sufferings, we can expect to share also in His glory.

Before the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the priest usually offers the sick person the sacrament of Penance, and, after the anointing, he gives him the Holy Eucharist as viaticum. The Last Blessing, which may bring with it a plenary indulgence, is given also. This is what St. James had in mind when he said: "Therefore confess your sins to one another... that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects" (James 5:16). Our Merciful Lord pours His love and consolation upon a sick Christian through this sacrament.

***Sacred Scripture***

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer by human passions but by the will of God. *1 Peter 4:1-2*

But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed... Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will do right and entrust their souls to a faithful Creator. *1 Peter 4:13, 19*

***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**1506** Christ invites his disciples to follow him by taking up their cross in their turn.<sup>1</sup> By following him they acquire a new outlook on illness and the sick. Jesus associates them with his own life of poverty and service. He makes them share in his ministry of compassion and heal-

*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr: John Vianney and Fr: Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

ing: “So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them.”<sup>2</sup>

**Vatican Council II**

And indeed she [the Church] exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the passion and death of Christ (cf. Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 2:11-12; 1 Pet. 4:13). *The Church, 11*

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**Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise** (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. How does the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick help those who are seriously ill or those who are in danger of death from old age?
2. If you have a loved one who is seriously ill or in danger of death from old age, what is your first responsibility towards him as a Christian?
3. Every day, offer a prayer for the sick, that they may experience God’s healing power, and for the dying, that they may have a peaceful and holy death.

**Chapter Summary Prayer**

*Heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus Christ, is our Way, our Truth, and our Life. May those who are anointed in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, entrust themselves to You with full confidence in all Your promises. Hear us as we ask Your loving help for the sick; restore their health, that they may again offer joyful thanks in Your Church. Show them the power of Your loving care. In Your kindness, make them well, if it is Your will. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Family Wisdom Library: Chapter 63**

*See Appendix A for more references.*

**Q. 222. What is the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?**

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 11;  
Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), Vatican II, sect. 73-75.*

**Q. 223. When is the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick best received?**

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 11.*

**Q. 224. What does the Church ask the Lord for by this anointing?**

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 11.*

**Q. 225. What does the Church ask the sick to do?**

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 11;  
The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 53-54;  
On Evangelization in the Modern World, Paul VI, sect. 10;  
On Human Work, John Paul II, sect. 27;  
On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum, John Paul II, sect. 25, 59.*



## Thought Provokers

*Please see Appendix C for the answers.*

Q. 222: What does “anointing” mean?

Q. 223: May young people receive the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?

Q. 224: May a person receive the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick more than once during any one illness?

Q. 225: May a person who has lost control of his or her intellectual faculties receive the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?

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