

Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick



The **Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick** is not only for those who are at the point of death, but for anyone who is seriously ill, including mental or spiritual illness. It is a community-based sacrament although it can be privately administered as well.

Who is a candidate to receive this sacrament? Today we are all aware that tensions, fear and anxiety about the future affect not only our mind but our body. Emotional issues and psychological disorders can be serious. They can move us to ask for the healing touch of Christ in the Sacrament of Anointing. Persons with the disease of alcoholism or a person suffering from other addictions can be anointed. The anxiety before exploratory surgery to determine if cancer is present is a situation in which Christ's power can be invoked in the sacrament.

In these cases the person does not have to wait until the illness is so grave that he or she is in the hospital or institutionalized to celebrate the sacrament. Sacraments, after all, are community celebrations. It is preferable to celebrate them in the context of family and parish even before going to the hospital. The sick person has a better opportunity to appreciate the prayers and symbols of the rite when in her or his customary worshipping community. Those who are experiencing illness in their life, where death could be even a remote possibility, are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Sick.

We have an annual communal celebration of the Anointing of the Sick in the Church, with Mass, usually in the autumn; and that the Sacrament is

conferred on our Nursing Home residents at least once a year, also typically in the autumn.