

## ANOINTING OF THE SICK

- The anointing of the sick is not a sacrament only for those who are on the point of death. Hence, as soon as any one of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age the appropriate time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly arrived.
- Up to ten years ago the priest was not called in to administer this Sacrament until the person was truly on his deathbed, with no hope of recovery. The priest should be called as soon as there is danger of death from sickness or old age and not wait until the point of death.
- The basis of the Church's teaching on this Sacrament stems from two passages in the New Testament.
  1. "They expelled many demons, anointed the sick with oil, and worked many cures (Mk:6:13)
  2. "Is there anyone sick among you? He should ask for the priests of the church. They in turn are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. This prayer uttered in faith will reclaim the one who is ill, and the Lord will restore him to health. If he has committed any sins, forgiveness will be his (Jas 5:1-15)".
- Jesus healed the sick as a sign that sin had been overcome and with sin, its effects. Jesus then was a genuine faith-healer. He healed sick bodies as well as sinful souls. His healing miracles are signs that the kingdom has arrived, the sick are made well, and all who witness these cures are offered the gift of faith, conversion, and ultimately eternal life.
- The apostles continued the healing mission of Jesus as he told them to do; "Then He summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority to cure sickness and diseases of every kind" (Mk10:1). The cures, however, should never be seen as something purely medical; in the thought of those times, there was no distinction between body and soul – man was seen as one.
- Oil used for physical healing was something very real to the people of the early church. It is, for example, one of the remedies applied by the good Samaritan to the wounds of the man he found lying by the wayside (Lk10;3).
- Why does the Church offer this sacrament to those who are sick? The answer this question we must consider what serious illness is and what effect it has on persons. Illness means more than pain and

physical suffering. Serious illness brings with depression – a feeling of isolation from others, especially from the family – because it makes persons preoccupied with themselves and their sickness. It causes impatience, discouragement, and at times despair. Once independent individuals now experience a painful dependence on others, even for the most basic bodily needs. Communication can break down, and the sick person often feels that no one really understands them or cares about them – even God seems distant.

- Those who receive this sacrament worthily receive strength for soul, mind and body.