



# OUR LADY OF GRACE

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## Mass with Anointing of the Sick

(The following wording is taken from [www.stmarycambridge.org/masses-anointing](http://www.stmarycambridge.org/masses-anointing))

### Who Should Receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick?

The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick may be received by any member of the faithful who has reached the age of reason (*Cf. CIC, CAN. 1004*) “whose health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age,” (*PCS, no. 8*) including serious mental sickness (*Cf. PCS, no. 53*). A sick person may be anointed before surgery whenever a serious illness is the reason for the surgery and elderly people may be anointed if they have become notably weakened even though no serious illness is present. (*Cf. PCS, nos. 11-12*) “Anointing is to be conferred on sick people who, although they have lost consciousness or the use of reason, would, as Christian believers, have at least implicitly asked for it when they were in control of their faculties.” (*PCS, no. 14*)

### What is meant by “Serious Illness”?

As noted above, those “whose health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age,” (*PCS, no. 8*) should receive the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. The footnote on this statement in PCS says that the word “seriously” was carefully chosen, rather than “gravely,” “dangerously,” or “perilously,” so as “to avoid restrictions upon the celebration of the sacrament” such that those “whose health is seriously impaired,” receive it, but also avoiding the sacrament being “given indiscriminately or to any person whose health is not seriously impaired.” “A serious illness or disorder represents a sever dysfunction of the balance of one’s psycho-physiological makeup.” (*Kasza, 10-11*) “That is to say, the sacrament is for those who, being clinically ill, undergo serious spiritual crisis, making it difficult for them to sustain faith and hope, and to live human life with resolution and dignity.” (*Power, 101*) “The seriously ill are those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit to such a degree that they become incapacitated as Christians or as human beings.” (*Kasza, 12*)

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### When Should the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick be Received?

“‘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.” (*SC, no. 73*) “The faithful should . . . ask for the sacrament of anointing . . . as soon as the right time comes, . . . and . . . should not follow the wrongful practice of delaying the reception of the sacrament.” (*PCS, no. 13*) In addition, for special cases, when there is a genuine necessity, for example, when sudden illness or an accident or some other cause has placed one of the faithful in the proximate or immediate danger of death, (*Cf. PCS, nos. 30, 232*) rites are provided for these exceptional circumstances and emergency situations.

# **What are the Effects of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick?**

The effects of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick are as follows: “the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for [their] own good and that of the whole Church; the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age; the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance; the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of [their] soul; the preparation for passing over to eternal life.” (*CCC, no. 1532*) “The foremost effect attributed to the sacrament is the salvation of the whole person in the midst of the challenge to faith and to hope posed by the experience of sickness . . . both physical cure and the forgiveness of sins are secondary effects contingent upon the need of the recipient.” (*Glen, 1179*)

# **How is the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick Celebrated?**

“There are three distinct and integral aspects to the celebration of [the sacrament of Anointing of the sick]: the prayer of faith, the laying on of hands, and the anointing with oil.” (*PCS, no. 104*) “The community, asking God’s help for the sick, makes its prayer of faith in response to God’s word and in a spirit of trust (see James 5:14-15).” (*PCS, no. 105*) The gesture of the laying on of hands has several meanings: the priest identifies the person who is the object of the Church’s prayer of faith; it’s a sign of blessing; it’s an invocation for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the sick person; and, above all, it’s a biblical gesture of healing and Jesus’ own usual manner of healing. (*Cf. PCS, no. 106*) “The practice of anointing the sick with oil signifies healing, strengthening, and the presence of the Spirit. . . . Thus, the sick person is strengthened to fight against the physically and spiritually debilitating effects of illness, . . . [and] the oil of anointing is a sacramental sign of the presence, power, and grace of the Holy Spirit.” (*PCS, no. 107*)

# **Can the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick be Repeated?**

The effects of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick continue as long as the one who receives it remains in the same infirm condition that occasioned the reception and the benefit persists until the need for its sacramental power has passed. (*Cf. Hardon, 542-3*) The “sacrament can be repeated if the sick person, having recovered, again becomes gravely ill or if the condition becomes more grave during the same illness.” (*CIC, CAN. 1004 §2*)