

# Orantes

Newsletter of the Office for Divine Worship  
of the Diocese of Worcester

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## *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and their Pastoral Care*

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This issue serves as an introduction to the new *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and their Pastoral Care* which is currently available for purchase and takes the place of all previous editions on Easter Sunday of 2026.

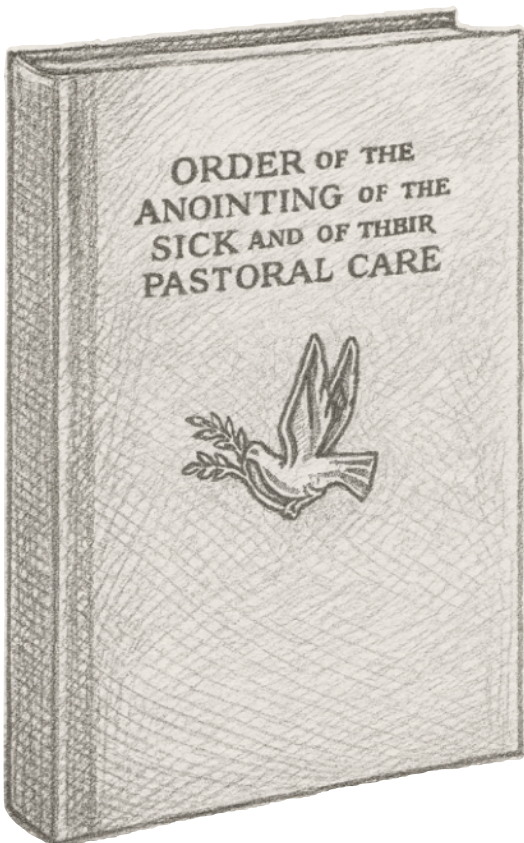
Published Editions	2
History of the Order	3
Introduction	6
Structure of the Order	8
Proper Ministers of the Rites	9
When Each Rite Should Be Used	11
The Rite of Commendation	13
A Note on the Apostolic Pardon	20

## Editions of the Order

Five publishers are producing a total of eleven ritual editions of the *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care* and *Ritual de la Unción de los enfermos y de su atención pastoral* for liturgical use in the United States. Seven of the books are in English, one is in Spanish, and three are bilingual editions. Three pocket size editions are softcover, while the others are hardcover.

Pre-sales for all editions are currently underway, and books may be distributed and sold as of January 1, 2026. As a reminder, first-use of the new Anointing rite begins on February 11, 2026, the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes and annual World Day of the Sick, with mandatory use as of Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026.

Further information on the Catholic Book Publishing Corporation's editions of this liturgical book may be found on pages 22-24 of this newsletter.



## History of the Current Editions<sup>1</sup>

Pope Saint Paul VI decreed a new sacramental formula for the Anointing of the Sick on November 30, 1972, and one week later, on December 7, the Holy See promulgated the *Ordo Unctionis infirmorum eorumque pastoralis curæ*, completing the reform of the rites for the sick and dying called for by the Second Vatican Council.<sup>2</sup>

In 1974, a provisional English translation was published by the authority of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, the *Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick*. This ritual's numbering was identical to that of the typical edition and included only minor editorial adjustments with no original material.

In 1982, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) transmitted a definitive, revised translation to its member Conferences: *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*. In an accompanying Explanatory Note, ICEL noted that the text had been significantly expanded, rearranged, adapted, and re-numbered in light of those competencies given in nos. 38-39 of the typical edition "so that it will more adequately meet pastoral requirements in concrete situations."<sup>3</sup> In that same year, ICEL's translation was approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship. Thus, *Pastoral Care of the Sick* became the mandatory version of the rite for use in the United States on November 27, 1983. Other ICEL member Conferences took similar steps and have been using the same arrangement of the book that is used in the United States.

In 1974, the Conference of the Mexican Episcopate (CEM, from its Spanish name) received the confirmation of its first

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted and adapted, with permission, from the *Newsletter of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship*, September, 2025, pages 35-36.

<sup>2</sup> cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 73-75.

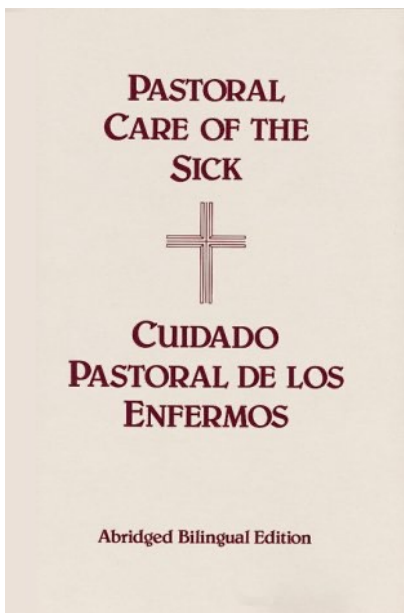
<sup>3</sup> Similar adaptations would be carried out for the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and the *Order of Christian Funerals* in 1985.

Spanish edition, *Ritual de la Unción de los enfermos y de su atención pastoral*. Following the publication of *Pastoral Care of the Sick* in 1983, the then-Secretariat for the Liturgy asked the Secretariat of the Mexican Episcopal Commission on Liturgical Pastoral Care to prepare a Spanish translation of the ICEL text. *Cuidado pastoral de los enfermos: Ritos de la Unción y del Viático* became available from the publisher Buena Prensa in 1984, becoming the definitive edition in the U.S.; several of its chapters were used in abridged, bilingual editions of *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, first published in 1986. In 1993, the CEM determined to make this version of the text available in the dioceses of Mexico.

### Revised English and Spanish Editions

From August to December 2019, the bishops of the U.S. participated in the draft Green Book consultation for the *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care*, and in April 2020, ICEL issued a definitive Gray Book translation. The USCCB Committee on Divine Worship began work on the text at its November 2021 meeting and approved a draft for the body of bishops the following June. The USCCB approved the ICEL Gray Book in November 2022, and the Holy See gave its *confirmatio* and *recognitio* on November 30, 2024, the 52nd anniversary of the Anointing sacramental formula.

Meanwhile in the late 2010s, the CEM determined that it was necessary to replace *Cuidado pastoral de los enfermos*, and in 2020 reissued the text approved in 1974. This text followed the numbering of the typical edition but included several rites of its current edition as appendices, e.g., visits to the sick, Christian Initiation in danger of death, and prayers after death. This 2020 text would serve as the base text for a new U.S. Spanish edition. Slight modifications were made to the Mexican text where it differs from previously approved U.S. Spanish liturgical books. Additional modifications were also required in light of the changes made following the promulgation of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, which the Mexican text does not take into account. In a few places, the Mexican text has been modified to bring it closer to the Latin and English versions.





The new editions closely follow the arrangement of the Latin typical edition. Nevertheless, those rites of the current edition that are absent from the typical edition or taken from other ritual books have been added as Appendices I-IV.



## Introduction to the New Ordo



The introduction begins with a theological commentary on “Human Infirmary and its Meaning in the Mystery of Salvation.” The commentary explains that while human suffering and illness have always been among life’s greatest burdens, our faith in Christ, who healed the sick and loved the afflicted, redeems our fallen human condition by his paschal suffering, death and resurrection. Thus, while the sick should seek to be healed, they are also called to unite their sufferings with Christ’s, reminding others through the witness of their lives of our redeeming Paschal hope.

The second part of the Introduction addresses the Conferral of the Sacrament of the Sick, recalling that Christ instituted **the Anointing of the Sick** to strengthen those suffering from serious illness through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Rooted in Scripture<sup>4</sup> and practiced since the Church’s beginning, the sacrament unites the sick with the Passion of Christ, offers forgiveness of sins, restores spiritual and sometimes physical health, and fortifies faith against fear and temptation. It is administered by a priest who lays hands and anoints with the Oil of the Sick. The sacrament may be repeated if illness recurs, and it should not be delayed. It expresses the Church’s faith in Christ’s healing and saving power for the whole person.

**Viaticum**, or the final reception of the Body and Blood of Christ, strengthens the faithful as they pass from this life, assuring them of resurrection in fulfillment of Christ’s promise.<sup>5</sup> It is ideally received within Mass and under both species, signifying participation in Christ’s death and passage to the Father. All in danger of death are obliged to receive it while still conscious. In doing so, they renew their baptismal faith and hope in eternal life. Viaticum is ordinarily administered by priests or deacons, but in necessity, properly appointed laypersons may bring Viaticum to those who are dying.

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<sup>4</sup> James 5:14–16.

<sup>5</sup> John 6:54.

When a person is in imminent danger of death, the **continuous rite** allows them to receive the Sacraments of Penance, Anointing of the Sick, and the Eucharist as Viaticum. If time is short, confession should be offered first, even briefly, followed by Viaticum, since all the dying are obliged to receive it. If Holy Communion cannot be taken, the Anointing should be given instead. When possible, Confirmation may also be administered for spiritual strengthening; in such cases, any priest, especially a pastor, has the faculty by law to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation in danger of death.



The third part of the introduction addresses **Duties and Ministries** in regard to the pastoral care of the sick. In the Church, the Body of Christ, all share in one another's suffering, so works of mercy and care for the sick are greatly esteemed. Medical care and compassionate service participate in Christ's ministry of healing. All the baptized are called to share this ministry through prayer, support, and presence, especially in the sacraments. Families should strengthen the sick in faith and ensure timely reception of the sacraments. Priests should visit and comfort the sick with charity and hope. Catechesis should prepare all to participate actively, deepening faith in Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection as the source of healing and salvation.

In addition those **adaptations** reserved to the Episcopal Conference, the individual priest is called to adapt the rite of Anointing with sensitivity to the condition and wishes of the sick person, using the permissions provided. He must be attentive to changes in the person's health, abbreviating the rite if needed. Even when no congregation is present, the priest represents the Church's presence and should extend its care before and after the sacrament. If recovery occurs, the priest should encourage thanksgiving, such as through a Mass of gratitude. The rite's structure should be maintained but adapted to circumstances, with flexibility in the penitential act or instruction, especially in hospital settings.

## Structure of the Order

The Order is divided into seven chapters. The first two deal with the ordinary care of the sick:

### **Chapter I**

The Visitation and Communion of the Sick

### **Chapter II**

The Order of the Anointing of the Sick

The next three chapters deal with the pastoral care of the dying:

### **Chapter IV**

The Order of Offering the Sacraments to a Sick Person Who Is in Imminent Danger of Death

### **Chapter V**

Confirmation in Danger of Death

### **Chapter VI**

The Order of the Commendation of the Dying

The seventh chapter provides various alternative texts to be used in the rites for the sick.

The Appendices to the USCCB edition provide four “redacted rites” for special circumstances, each of which appeared in the previous edition in use for the past forty years:

### **Appendix I**

Model Rites for the Visitation of the Sick

### **Appendix II**

Shorter Order of Adult Initiation to Be Used in Near Danger of Death or at the Point of Death

### **Appendix III**

Prayers after Death

### **Appendix IV**

The Emergency Rite of Penance, Viaticum, and Anointing





## Proper Ministers of the Rites

The new *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care* is a ritual book designed for use primarily by priests. However, in the absence of a priest, certain rites may be celebrated by deacons or lay ministers.

### Chapter I - The Visitation and Communion of the Sick

MAY BE USED ONLY BY A **PRIEST OR DEACON**

**Lay persons** distributing Holy Communion to the sick must use *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass*, nos. 68-78 (cf. *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care* [OAS], no. 29<sup>6</sup>).

### Chapter II - The Order of the Anointing of the Sick

MAY BE USED ONLY BY A **PRIEST**

### Chapter III - Viaticum

MAY BE USED ONLY BY A **PRIEST OR DEACON**

**Lay persons** giving Viaticum must use *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass*, nos. 68-78 (cf. OAS, no. 29, as quoted in footnote 4, below).

### Chapter IV - The Order of Offering the Sacraments to a Sick Person Who Is in Imminent Danger of Death

MAY BE USED ONLY BY A **PRIEST**

### Chapter V - Confirmation in Danger of Death

MAY BE USED ONLY BY A **PRIEST**

### Chapter VI - The Order of the Commendation of the Dying

MAY BE USED BY A **PRIEST, DEACON OR LAY MINISTER**

### Chapter VII - Various Texts to Be Used in the Rites for the Sick



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<sup>6</sup> 29. The ordinary ministers of Viaticum are the pastor and parochial vicars, chaplains, as well as the superior of a community in clerical religious institutes or societies of apostolic life, in regard to all those presently living in the house. In case of necessity or with at least the presumed permission of the competent minister, any Priest or Deacon should administer Viaticum; in the absence of a sacred minister, any of the faithful duly appointed.

A Deacon should use the same rite as a Priest (OAS, nos. 101-114), while extraordinary ministers use the rites contained in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Outside Mass*, nos. 68-78.

**Appendix I - Model Rites for the Visitation of the Sick**

MAY BE USED BY A **PRIEST, DEACON OR LAY MINISTER**

**Appendix II - Shorter Order of Adult Initiation to Be Used in Near Danger of Death or at the Point of Death**

MAY BE USED BY A **PRIEST, DEACON OR LAY MINISTER**

**Appendix III - Prayers after Death**

MAY BE USED BY A **PRIEST, DEACON OR LAY MINISTER**

**Appendix IV - The Emergency Rite of Penance, Viaticum, and Anointing**

MAY BE USED ONLY BY A **PRIEST**



## When Each Rite Should Be Used

RITES FOR THE SICK	
<p><b>Communion to the Sick (Priest or Deacon)</b>            Father Smith regularly brings Holy Communion to a number of his parishioners who are unable to get to Mass due to their advanced age or illness.</p>	<p>When he does so, he uses:            THE ORDINARY RITE OF COMMUNION OF THE SICK (Chapter I, nos. 49ff).</p>
<p><b>Communion to a large number of Sick people (Priest or Deacon)</b>            Father Smith sometimes distributes Holy Communion to a large number of people who cannot leave their rooms in the nearby Nursing Home.</p>	<p>When he does, he uses:            A SHORTER RITE OF COMMUNION OF THE SICK (Chapter I, nos. 59-63).</p>
<p><b>Communion to the Sick (Extraordinary Minister)</b>            Mrs. Jones is an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and has been asked by Father Smith to bring Holy Communion to a number of parishioners who are unable to get to Mass due to their advanced age or illness.</p>	<p>When an Extraordinary Minister distributes Holy Communion to the sick they use <i>Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass</i>, Chapter II: “Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister,” nos. 54-78.</p>
<p><b>Communion to a Large Number of Sick People (Extraordinary Minister)</b>            Mrs. Jones is an Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and has been asked by Father Smith to bring Holy Communion to a large number of people in the Nursing Home or Hospital.</p>	<p>When an Extraordinary Minister distributes Holy Communion to a large number of the sick they use <i>Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass</i>, Chapter II: “Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister,” nos. 64-67.</p>
<p><b>Anointing of Sick Individuals (Priest)</b>            Father Smith often celebrates the ordinary rite of the Anointing of the sick (outside Mass) with individuals who are mortally ill, approaching surgery or suffering from the fragility of advanced age.</p>	<p>When he does, he uses: Chapter II: “The Order of the Anointing of the Sick,” nos. 64-79.</p>
<p><b>Anointing of the Sick During Mass (Priest)</b>            Father Jones celebrates Mass every month in a large assisted care living facility in the Parish. Twice a year, he includes the anointing of the sick during Mass.</p>	<p>He uses (Chapter II: “The Order of the Anointing Within Mass,” nos. 80-92).</p>

RITES FOR THE DYING	
<b>Viaticum for the Dying (Priest or Deacon)</b> Father Smith and Deacon Stephan are sometimes called to the bedside of a person who is dying. If the person is able to receive Holy Communion, they bring the Blessed Sacrament to the dying person in the form of Viaticum.	They use Chapter III: “Viaticum,” nos. 93-114.
<b>Viaticum for the Dying (Extraordinary Minister)</b> If a priest or deacon is not available, an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may bring the Blessed Sacrament to the dying person in the form of Viaticum.	They use <i>Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery outside Mass, Chapter II: “Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister,”</i> nos. 68-78.
<b>Penance, Anointing and Viaticum to the Dying (Priests)</b> Father Jones is often called to the bed of a dying person and administers the Rite of Penance, followed by the Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum.	He uses Chapter IV: “The Order of Offering the Sacraments to a Sick Person Who Is in Imminent Danger of Death,” nos. 115-135.  A shorter “Emergency Rite of Penance, Viaticum and Anointing” is also provided in Appendix IV, nos. 316-325.
<b>Confirmation of the Dying (Priest)</b> If the dying person has never received the Sacrament of Confirmation, Father Jones is encouraged to confirm them before they die.	If the dying person has not been confirmed, he uses Chapter V: “Confirmation in Danger of Death,” nos. 136-137.
<b>Baptism of the Dying (Priest or Deacon)</b> Father Jones and Deacon Stephan have sometimes been called to the bed of a dying person who wishes to be baptized. If, in the absence of a priest or deacon, a dying person requests to be baptized, any person present may baptize them.	Whether the person is a catechumen or not, he uses: Appendix II: “Shorter Order of Adult Initiation to Be Used in Near Danger of Death or at the Point of Death,” nos. 277-306.
<b>Commendation of the Dying (Priest, Deacon or the faithful)</b> Whenever possible, Father Jones and Deacon Stephan encourage people to pray with and for the dying person over an extended period of time.	The priest, deacon or those present use the prayers in Chapter VI: “The Order of the Commendation of the Dying,” nos. 138-151.
<b>Prayers after Death (Priest, Deacon or the faithful)</b> When he a person has died, Father Jones, Deacon Stephan or someone else who is present prays for the deceased person.	They may use Chapter VI: “The Order of the Commendation of the Dying,” no. 151 or APPENDIX III: Prayers after Death, nos. 307-315.



# The Rites of Commendation

## History

The Commendation of the dying to the mercy of God has been a part of the Church's pastoral ministry from its first days, as testified to by Saints Cyprian of Carthage, John Chrysostom and Augustine. Saint Augustine's insistence on posting large pages from the penitential Psalms as well as popular prayers to Christ as Good Shepherd to lead the dying person "through the valley of the shadow of death" testify to this practice.



The first structured *Ordo ad commendandum animam* is found in the seventh century *Gregorian Sacramentary*. It consists of Psalms, litanies, and other formulae for the moment of death. In the subsequent centuries, the *Subvenite*, *Sancti Dei* and the *Proficiscere, anima Christiana* would be added.

The Tridentine *Ordo ad commendandum animam* formed the basis for the "De Commendatione Morientium," Chapter VI in the 1972 *Ordo Unctionis infirmorum eorumque pastoralis curae*, the current *editio typica Latina* for the Roman Church.

## Introduction

Five introductory paragraphs begin with the simple statement that "Charity toward a neighbor urges Christians to express communion with a dying brother or sister, by pleading with and for him (her) for God's mercy and for confidence in Christ."<sup>7</sup>

The prayers in this chapter have been chosen in order to help the dying person "to overcome the innate anxiety about human death, by imitating Christ in his suffering and dying, and by accepting such anxieties in the hope of heavenly life and resurrection with the strength of him who, by dying, destroyed our death." Even if the dying person has lost consciousness, however, those present "may draw consolation from these prayers, learning the paschal meaning of Christian

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<sup>7</sup> OAS, no. 138.

death.” They are to be encouraged to “express this meaning in a visible sign, by signing the dying person on the forehead with the Sign of the Cross, with which they were first signed at Baptism.”<sup>8</sup>



The prayer and readings from this Chapter are “to be freely chosen” and adapted, in the light of “the spiritual and physical state of the dying person as well as to other circumstances of the place and the persons present.”<sup>9</sup> It is further recommended that they should be recited slowly and in a quiet voice, with the shorter invocations repeated “softly two or three times.”<sup>10</sup>

When death has occurred, all may kneel as the prayer found at no. 51 is prayed.<sup>11</sup>

Whenever possible, a Priest or Deacon should lead the Commendation Prayers, expressing by their presence the care of the whole Church.<sup>12</sup> Laypersons should be provided the resources they need to lead these prayers when the clergy are called away by other pastoral duties.<sup>13</sup>

## THE RITES OF COMMENDATION

The Ordo is divided into five sections, from which prayers and readings may be freely chosen and adapted.

The first section consists of **Brief Formulas**,<sup>14</sup> sentences from the letters of Saint Paul, the first letter of Saint John, the Psalms, the Gospels and the final words of Saint Stephen before the protomartyr’s death. The brief sentences conclude with invocations of Holy

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<sup>8</sup> OAS, no. 139.

<sup>9</sup> OAS, no. 140.

<sup>10</sup> OAS, no. 140.

<sup>11</sup> OAS, no. 141.

<sup>12</sup> OAS, no. 142.

<sup>13</sup> OAS, no. 142.

<sup>14</sup> OAC, no. 143.

Mary, Saint Joseph and the Holy Family (“Jesus, Mary and Joseph, be with me in my last agony”).

The second section consists of longer **Biblical Readings**.<sup>15</sup> The two from the Old Testament are Isaiah’s call to “Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not...he comes to save you. [to] enter Zion singing, crowned with everlasting joy...[as] sorrow and mourning will flee.”<sup>16</sup> and Job’s profession of faith: “I know that my Vindicator lives...and from my flesh I will see God...”<sup>17</sup>



This is followed by seven Psalms, including Psalm 23 (“The Lord is my shepherd...”), Psalm 25 (“To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.”), Psalm 91 (“You will not fear the terror of the night...”), Psalm 114 (Exodus from Egypt), Psalm 116 (“Deliver my soul, O Lord!”), Psalm 121 (“I lift up my eyes to the mountains...”), and Psalm 123 (“Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.”)

The readings from the New Testament are from Paul’s letter to the Corinthians (“Christ died for our sins...”), 1 John (“whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.”) and the Book of Revelation (“He will wipe every tear from their eyes...”).

The Gospel readings consist of Matthew’s account of the wise and foolish virgins, Mark’s account of the death of the Lord and the appearance of the angel to Mary and the women in the empty tomb. From Luke, the account of the Lord’s praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, the dying repentance of the good thief, and the appearance of the angel to the women who had come to anoint the Lord’s body are excerpted. Finally, two Gospel passages from John report Jesus’ words that “Everything that the Father gives me will come to

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<sup>15</sup> OAS, no. 144.

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 35:3-4, 6c-7, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Job 19:23-27b.

me,” and “I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.”

These longer readings from scripture are followed by the **Litany of the Saints**, to which the rite recommends that special patrons of the deceased be added.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, there are **five ancient prayers** provided for “when death is imminent.”

**Go forth, Christian soul**<sup>19</sup> (*Proficiscere, ánima cristiána*) begins with this bold command to the dying person. It is an ancient prayer which reflects the redemptive power of the Triune God and the intercession of the saints in interceding for the dying person. The current version preserves the prayer’s ancient simplicity, a combination of realism and hope, one of the most tender and theologically rich expressions of the Church’s care at the hour of death.

**I commend you to almighty God**,<sup>20</sup> (*Comméndo te omnipoténti Deo*) is similarly ancient, drawing from Scripture, patristic theology, and the monastic liturgical tradition of early medieval Europe. Its current form is, likewise, simplified, more ancient and profoundly Christological, calling upon Christ “who was crucified for you...who was pleased to die for you...the true Shepherd” who is asked to absolve the dying person and place him among the chosen ones.

**Receive, O Lord, your servant**<sup>21</sup> (*Súscipe, Dómine, servumtuum*) is an ancient litany asking God to deliver the dying person “from all tribulation” as he hopes for God’s mercy. The scriptural analogies it offers date from the early Middle Ages.



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<sup>18</sup> OAS, no. 145.

<sup>19</sup> OAS, no. 146.

<sup>20</sup> OAS, no. 147.

<sup>21</sup> OAS, no. 148.



**Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Noah from the flood.**<sup>22</sup> God delivered Noah and his family from the destroying waters of the flood by placing them safely within the ark which God had commanded him to build. In saving Noah, God demonstrated his power to save Noah and his family from the waters of death, just as we ask that God shelter the dying person in the “ark” of his mercy, carrying him safely through the waters of death to eternal life.

**Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees.**<sup>23</sup> Just as God led Abraham out of Ur, a land of idolatry and darkness, into a new life grounded in covenant and promise, so we ask that God lead the dying person through the darkness of their final agony into the promised land.

**Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Job from his sufferings.**<sup>24</sup> As Job’s unimaginable sufferings were transformed by God’s grace, so we pray that God transform the dying of this person into and eternity of peace in God’s presence.

**Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Moses from the hand of Pharaoh.**<sup>25</sup> As God delivered Moses from Pharaoh’s murderous decree at birth and later delivered all Israel as Moses led them through the deadly water of the Red Sea, so we ask that God might lead the dying person through the waters of death into the promised land.

**Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Daniel from the lions’ den.**<sup>26</sup> As God heard the prayer which Daniel prayed from the lions’ den, “sent



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<sup>22</sup> Genesis 6–9.

<sup>23</sup> Genesis 11:31–12:1.

<sup>24</sup> Job 42:10–17.

<sup>25</sup> Exodus 1–14.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel 6.

his angel and shut the lions' mouths,"<sup>27</sup> so we ask that God preserve the dying person from all harm and lead him safely home with his steadfast love.

**Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered the three young men from the fiery furnace and the hand of the wicked king.<sup>28</sup>**

As God delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace, with a divine figure walking among them,<sup>29</sup> so we pray that Christ might lead the dying person through their final moments to a place of refreshment, light and peace.

**Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Susanna from a false accusation.<sup>30</sup>**

As Susanna was freed by the mercy of God from the false accusations of the corrupt elders, so we pray that the dying person may be judged by God's truth and merciful compassion.



**Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered David from the hand of King Saul and from the hand of Goliath.<sup>31</sup>**

As God delivered David from Goliath's lethal strength Saul's attempts to kill him, so we ask that the dying person be defended them from every spiritual assault and, in King David's words come to love "into the house of the Lord forever."<sup>32</sup>

**Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Peter and Paul from prison.<sup>33</sup>**

As Peter was freed from Herod's prison by an angel of the Lord and Paul and Silas by an earthquake, so may the dying person be freed from the chains of sin

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<sup>27</sup> Dan 6:22.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel 3.

<sup>29</sup> Dan 3:25–27.

<sup>30</sup> Daniel 13.

<sup>31</sup> 1 Samuel 17; 1 Samuel 18–24.

<sup>32</sup> Psalm 23:6.

<sup>33</sup> Acts 12:6–11 and 16:25–34.

and death, and be led into the full liberty of the children of God.

**Deliver your servant, Lord, through Jesus our Savior, who suffered bitter death for us and bestowed on us eternal life.**

The dying person is encouraged to join their sufferings to the Passion of the Lord, in the words of Saint Paul “completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for His body, that is, the Church.”<sup>34</sup>

The Litany is followed by a simple **Prayer of Commendation** (*Commendamus tibi, Dómine*)<sup>35</sup> asking Christ to receive the dying person “believed and has faithfully worshiped the God who made all things” with mercy into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Rite of Commendation then concludes with the **Hail, Holy Queen** (*Salve Regina*), as intercession of the Mother of God for the dying (“now and at the hour of our death”) is sought for the dying person “mourning and weeping in this vale of tears,” that “after this our exile” she might “show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus...”

Finally, the prayer **Saints of God** (*Sancti Dei*) is excerpted from the Ordo Exsequiarum to be prayed after the person has died.



## A Note on the Apostolic Pardon

Absolution in the *Rite of Penance* means that God, through the ministry of the Church, has truly forgiven my sin. It is wiped away and no longer exists.

Yet forgiven sin often leaves real damage. The adulterer, the liar, or the one who neglected the poor may walk out of the confessional reconciled to God, but still burdened with relationships wounded by their actions. Their sin is forgiven—if they were to die today, God would not hold it against them—but the work of restoring their life, their relationships, and their integrity remains.



This remaining disorder is addressed through “works of mercy and charity, as well as prayer and the various practices of penance, to put off completely the old man and to put on the new.” Many such practices are outlined in the *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* (*Manual of Indulgences*) issued by the Holy See.

Among the indulgences granted by the Church is a plenary indulgence at the moment of death, which remits all temporal punishment. The *Manual of Indulgences* describes two ways this may be received. First, a priest may impart the Apostolic Blessing, to which the plenary indulgence is attached.

If no priest is available, any dying person who “has been in the habit of reciting some prayers during their lifetime” likewise receives the plenary indulgence, and is encouraged to kiss a crucifix in doing so.

Before the Second Vatican Council, this Apostolic Blessing and the associated indulgence were included directly within the prayers of the Rite of Commendation.

The 1972 *Ordo Unctionis infirmorum eorumque pastoralis curæ* took a different approach. Indulgences contained in the *Manual of Indulgences* were intentionally omitted from the liturgical book to avoid duplication. While the *Manual* encouraged priests to impart the Apostolic Pardon at the moment of death, its text did not appear in the Rite of Commendation.



In variance with this decision, the English edition of the *Ordo* inserted the Apostolic Pardon into a specially redacted appendix titled “Emergency Rite of Penance, Anointing, and Viaticum.” This appendix, now found in Appendix IV of the new English edition, preserves that inclusion. Yet the Rite of Commendation itself, being a close translation of the *editio typica*, contains no reference to the indulgence, nor does the English appendix label the text with the title “Apostolic Blessing.”

Priests wishing to give the Apostolic Blessing to a dying person may, therefore, use either of the two optional formulas found at number 318 of the *Ordo*:

**318. The plenary indulgence at the moment of death may follow, which the Priest grants to the sick person in this way:**

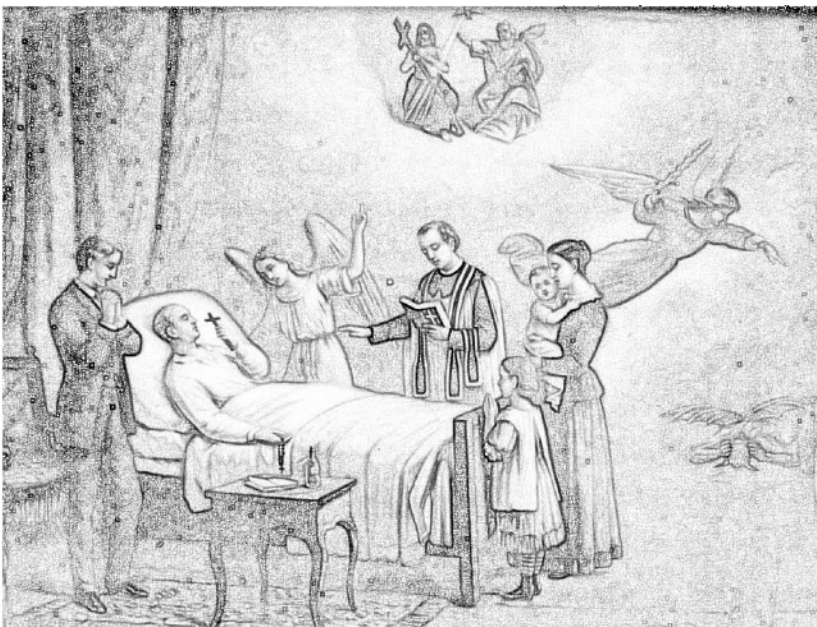
By the authority given to me by the Apostolic See,  
I grant you a plenary indulgence and remission of all your sins,  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit.

**R.** Amen.

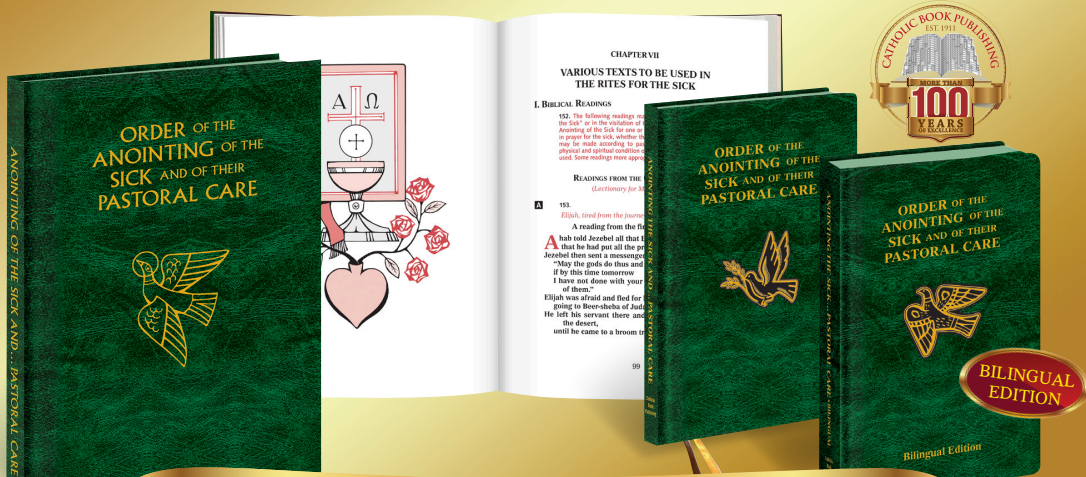
**Or:**

Through the sacred mysteries of human redemption,  
may almighty God release you  
from all punishments of the present life and of the life to come;  
may he open the gates of paradise,  
and lead you to everlasting joys.

**R.** Amen.



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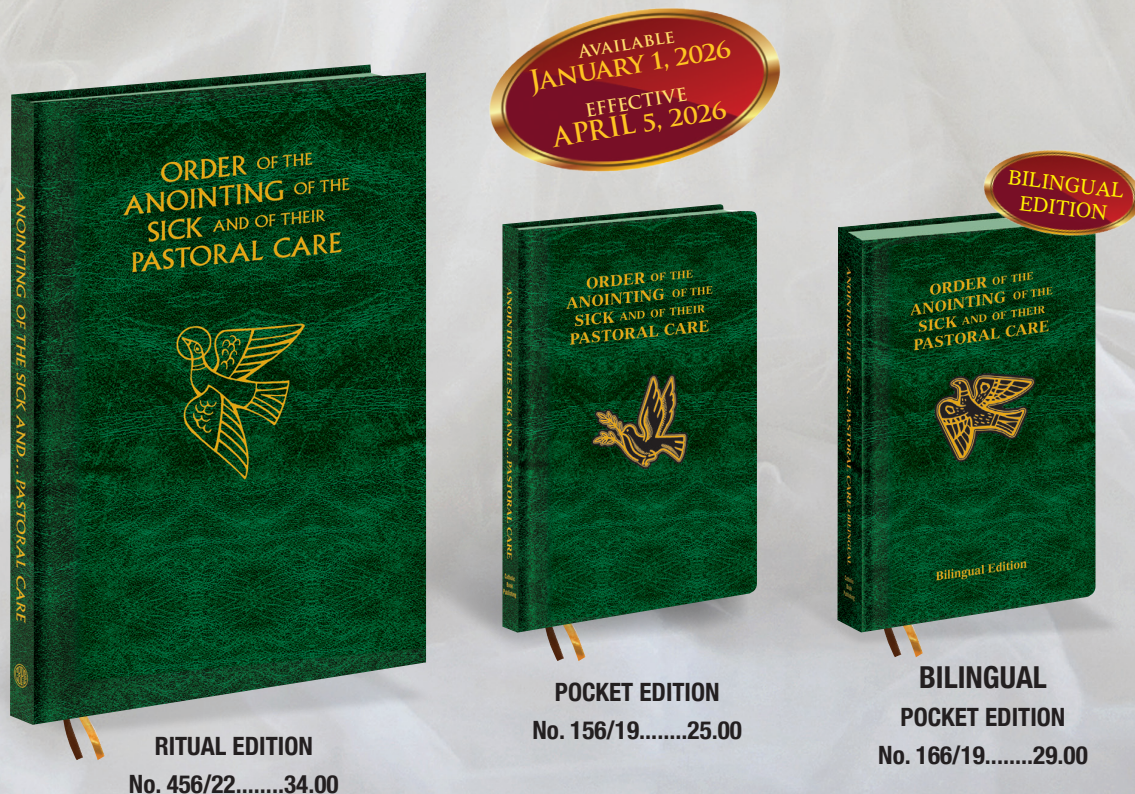
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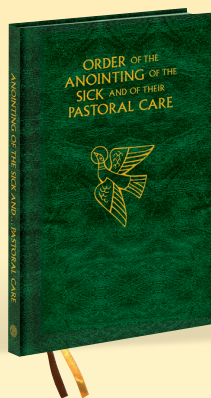
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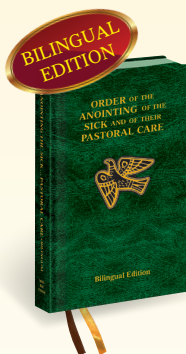
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