

February 23, 2024

From the Desk of Fr. Jerry

Dear Friends,

We recently observed the World Day of Prayer for the Sick (February 11th, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes). Those who have visited Lourdes know the power of faith and prayer to give encouragement to those who experience weakened bodily strength. Jesus showed great compassion for the sick. He entrusted the power to heal to the apostles. It was not for their own notoriety, but rather to confirm their mission to heal. What is understood today as the sacrament of anointing of the sick is rooted in James 5:13-15:

“Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint [him] with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.”

The Catholic community is committed to a sacramental view of the world wherein clergy, religious, and lay ecclesial ministers all minister to the sick and infirm, as well as their family and friends who accompany them in the journey of suffering. The current liturgical rite for the Anointing of the Sick states that human illness is part of the mystery of salvation. We seek good health to enable us to fulfill our role in society and in the church. At the same time, those who are ill and infirm remind us of essential things and the necessity of the redemption of our lives through the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection.

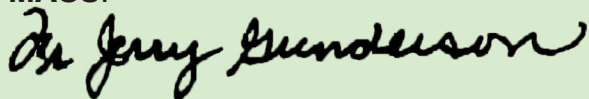
WHO MAY BE ANOINTED?

Baptized members of the Christian faithful who have reached the age of reason and who begin to be in danger due to sickness or old age may receive the sacrament of anointing. Participation in the rites is encouraged broadly. For example:

- The elderly who are weakened, even though no notable illness is present
- Those who face surgery due to serious illness
- Those who suffer serious mental illness or addiction
- Seriously ill children can be anointed if they are old enough to understand the sacrament
- The sacrament may be repeated if the illness becomes more acute or if six months have passed

Pastoral Care of the Sick is much more than the Sacrament of Anointing and rites for varied situations are provided by the church. The homebound may request communion or confession. Individuals or family members should request the sacrament of anointing as soon as the right time comes so that it may be received with full faith and devotion. When death is imminent, Viaticum (Holy Communion for the dying) and the Prayers of Commendation for the dying can be offered by any baptized Catholic. After a person has died, there is no anointing; however, prayers after death may be offered.

Celebration of the Anointing for the Sick in a communal setting of family, parish members, and health care professionals is ideal. For this reason, **A COMMUNAL CELEBRATION OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK WILL TAKE PLACE NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 2ND AT THE 10:00 AM MASS.**



Fr. Jerry Gunderson