



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

03 March 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Anointing of the Sick

\ə-ˈnɔɪnt-tɪŋ ˈæv ˈθə ˈsɪk\

A sacrament for the recovery and salvation of a critically ill or injured person formerly called Extreme Unction (“last **anointing**”). No longer reserved for those near death, one may be **anointed** before surgery, in extreme age or illness, after losing consciousness, or when no longer coherent.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-anointing-the-sick>

CONTEXT

Anointing of the Sick permits us to touch with our hands God's compassion for humanity.

—Pope Francis

When the church **anoints** a sick person, it **anoints** a member of its own body.

—Sister Susan Wood, S.C.L.

By the grace of the sacrament of **Anointing of the Sick**, the sick person receives the strength and the gift of uniting more closely to Christ's Passion.

—Catechism of the Catholic Church

WHY IT MATTERS

The mercy of God extends to the body as well as soul of each person. Jesus ministered to the sick and suffering both physically and spiritually. The church continues this ministry in its care for the whole person.

From *Rites of the Catholic Church as revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council*: The Church obeys Jesus' command to care for the sick by visiting those in poor health but also by raising them up through the **sacrament of Anointing** and by nourishing them with the Eucharist during their illness. The church offers prayers for the sick to commend them to God, especially in the last crisis of life.

RELATED WORDS

Extreme Unction | Consecration | Holy Oils | Chrism

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What is the Anointing of the Sick?

One of the seven sacraments of the church, **Anointing of the Sick** recalls the healing presence and power of Jesus when we touch our mortality most vulnerably. From ancient times oil was valued for its healing and beautifying properties and in preparing bodies for burial.

The ordinary minister of the sacrament is the priest. However, it's presumed that others share the event: family, friends, caregivers. Elements of the ritual include prayers, scripture, laying hands on the recipient, and **anointing** of the head and hands. A water sprinkling rite may be included, and affected areas of the sick person's body may also be **anointed**. When in danger of death, additional sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion (*viaticum*, or “on the way with you”) are also administered.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-anointing-the-sick>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

MEMORIAL OF SAINT JOHN OF GOD, RELIGIOUS (MARCH 8)

Power players in prayer

When it comes to your health, you can always turn to the saints for help. Feeling sick? Ask Saint John of God, patron of the sick and hospitals, to intercede on your behalf. Suffering from arthritis? Invoke Saint Alphonsus Ligouri. Have a headache? Entreat Saint Teresa of Ávila. Catholics also have the sacrament of **Anointing of the Sick**, to bring further healing.

READINGS: 1 John 3:14-18; Matthew 25:31-40 (539 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/0308-memorial-john-god.cfm>). “*Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.*”

FAITH IN ACTION

No matter the physical outcome, remember that the primary purpose of our petitionary prayer is to draw us closer to God, which will truly and wholly heal us.