

Chapter 27 – Anointing of the Sick

- From the very first book of the Bible (Genesis) we see that suffering and sickness are the result of Original Sin.
- Recall that Adam and Eve were fooled by Satan and they chose to disobey God and learn of evil through eating of the forbidden fruit in the middle of the garden.
- *“Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”* → God had protected mankind from evil in a special way, but Adam and Eve through the gift of free will rejected God when they disobeyed Him and listened to Satan.
- Before original Sin Adam and Eve were free from pain, illness, and death.
- Lucky for mankind that God is forgiving and out of His love for us He gave mankind a second chance for redemption. → Jesus would be our Savior!
- When Jesus came to earth He showed kindness and Love to us and performed many miracles of healing. He healed the blind, the mute, the paralyzed, and He even raised the dead to life.
- When Jesus died on the cross for our sins He did not abandon the sick and the suffering.
- Jesus left His Church with the Sacrament of the Sick → Anointing of the Sick.
- Exorcism is a prayer that falls in the category of sacramentals associated with Anointing of the Sick.

Jesus Shares His Healing Power

- During His life on Earth Jesus shared His healing power with His disciples.
- *“So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them.” (Mark 6:12-13)*

- After Jesus' resurrection we still see His apostles using the power and authority given to them by Jesus to heal the sick and suffering.
- *"Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14)*

Question: So if the Church can heal why isn't everyone miraculously healing when they receive the sacrament of the Sick?

Answer: Sometimes God has other plans and our suffering may be for our own good or the good of others. Sometimes suffering may lead a person to change their lives or make them do penance which would lead them to heaven when they die. God realizes that sometimes suffering is good for us. Remember that Jesus suffered for us and we can share in His suffering. Jesus knows what it is like to suffer! If he suffered why would we not have to?

Example: A while back I took my son to the dentist because he had to have a deep cavity filled. As the dentist was grinding on his tooth my son looked at me as if to say "daddy why are you letting the dentist hurt me?" Obviously his pain saddened me and I wish that he didn't have to suffer. I had the power to stop the pain my son was experiencing by telling the dentist to stop, but I knew that the pain was necessary to prevent further damage to his teeth and even greater pain later. God knows what is best for us even if sometimes we don't understand His ways.

- The fact remains that many priests have seen actual bodily cures as a result of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

The Purpose of this Sacrament

- For the 1200 or so years this sacrament was seen as one for healing the both the body and the soul. The sacrament was received whenever a Catholic felt seriously ill or in danger of death.
- However, some people began to view the sacrament as a sign of death and they would put it off until the last moments of life. The sacrament began to be called "The Last Rites".

- The Church wants us to properly understand what the sacrament is and that we should not fear it or put it off until the last moments of our lives.
- This sacrament helps us to prepare for the possibility of death by taking away sins and giving peace to the soul. Through it we can better see God's plan for our life and we can die a Holy Death.

The Sign and Effects of Anointing

- As with the other sacraments there are signs that go along with Anointing of the Sick.
- The person is anointed with the Oil of the Sick and a special prayer is said over the person while being anointed with the oil.
- Rite of Anointing Prayer: *"Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."*
- When a person receives this sacrament they are strengthened spiritually and their venial sins are forgiven and if the person is able to confess their sins mortal sins are forgiven to.
- During the sacrament the priest anoint the sick with oil and reminds them to be sorry for their sins.

The Rite of Anointing

- The sacrament can be given anywhere. In a church, a hospital, a home, the street, etc....
- How it's typically done in the home:
 - First the family calls the priest.
 - Then they should cover a small table with a white cloth, place a crucifix, two small candles, and a small bowl of water on the table.
 - The priest when he enters will call down God's blessing and sprinkles the room with Holy Water.
 - He then explains the sacrament to those present including the sick.

- The sick person would then receive the sacrament of penance or everyone joins in a penitential rite.
Example of a penitential rite: *“I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, <strike your chest three times> through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.”*
- A reading from the Bible is then read dealing with healing and forgiveness.
- The priest then anoints the person with the Oil of the Sick.
- Holy Communion is given to the sick and to those present.
- The Priest closes with a blessing.

Indulgences

- While this sacrament is usually received in old age we should not wait until then to prepare for ourselves for a good and holy death.
- We should be praying daily and receiving the sacraments often and storing up treasures for ourselves in Heaven.
- One way to do this is by gaining Indulgences.
- **Indulgences** are spiritual riches which shorten or even take away “time” we must spend in purgatory making up for our sins and purifying our souls. Recall → Nothing impure will enter Heaven (Rev 21:27)
- By definition, an indulgence is the remission in whole or in part of the temporal punishment due to personal sin, provided that the sin has already been forgiven and the conditions of the indulgence have been met. The power invested in the Church to grant indulgences is found in several scriptures.
- **An indulgence is not permission to indulge in sin as some Protestants mistakenly think!**
- Indulgences are Biblical!
- The three classic actions leading to indulgences are prayer, good deeds and almsgiving.

- “...let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” (James 5:20)
- “Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)
- “Therefore, O king, take my advice; atone for your sins by good deeds, and for your misdeeds by kindness to the poor; then your prosperity will be long.” (Daniel 4:24)

Example: A boy is playing baseball and hits a ball through his elderly neighbor’s windows breaking it. The boy feels very bad so he walks over and tells the neighbor that he is sorry and that he broke the window. The window is very expensive and there is no way that the boy can pay for the window. The elderly man tells the boy that he can repay him for the window by mowing his grass for a month and that that would take care of his debt because the boy’s dad has been shoveling his driveway (for the last 10 years) every time it snows. The elderly man is applying the work the boy’s dad has done to the boy’s debt for the window.

Question: Did the Catholic Church ever sell indulgences?

Answer: The Catholic Church has never sold indulgences. There were however instances in history when certain priests were selling indulgences specifically before the protestant reformation. These instances were not approved or sanctioned by the Church and the priests who were selling indulgences acted out on their own accord. Their actions do not reflect what the Catholic Church actually teaches on Indulgences.