

18. The Sacraments of Healing – Anointing of the Sick & the Sacrament of Reconciliation

The sacraments of Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick give health and strength to body and soul. Uniting their suffering to the passion of Christ, the Christian experiences healing through Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, for their own good and that of the Church, the Body of Christ.

Key terms:

Redemptive Suffering: Suffering that the Christian offers to God; sanctified by Jesus it becomes a spiritual good.

Consider also: Form, Matter, Sacrament, *Ex opere operato*.
Session Plan 15. Sin & Confession – Key terms.

THE LORD CARES FOR HIS PEOPLE (1Pt. 2:24)

- The Suffering Servant who heals us by his wounds is prophesied (Is. 52:13 – 53:12).
- The Father's mercy and never-ending love are fully revealed in Jesus, the divine physician.
- Jesus came as the divine physician to heal sinners (Mk. 2:17).
- Jesus came to heal the blind, deaf, sick and afflicted (Lk. 4:16-21).
- Jesus sent out his apostles, commissioning them to preach and heal.
- The early Church, led by the Holy Spirit, confers the sacrament for the salvation of the sick and the forgiveness of sins.
- The form of Anointing of the Sick is the Prayer of the priest in faith or the sick person.
- The matter is the anointing by the priest with the oil of the sick, usually on the forehead.

EFFECTS OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

- Confers sanctifying grace – strengthening, courage, healing of the soul, and sometimes healing of the body.
- Consecrates the one receiving it to be united with Jesus' suffering.
- Can be administered for serious illness, as well as for those close to death.
- During a person's lifetime, the sacrament can be administered as many times as deemed necessary.

REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING (Col 1:24)

- Sin and sickness cause spiritual, physical, and emotional disturbance that often lead to sorrow, bitterness, discouragement, and lack of hope.
- Jesus did not come to banish suffering in this life, but to give it meaning, and to invest it with redemptive power.
- Through redemptive suffering, we are given the dignity of sharing in Jesus' suffering for the sake of His Church.

- Suffering provides immeasurable benefits to the Body of Christ. It expands our capacity to experience His great love.
 - By performing corporal and spiritual works of mercy, we imitate Jesus the healer, and become more fully transformed in him by the power of the Spirit.
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GOD'S FORGIVENESS

- God's mercy in the Old Testament prefigures the mercy offered in this sacrament (Lam 3:22-23).
- The Father sends his Son to redeem us and restore us to the Father's favour.
- The mercy of the Father culminates in his Son, Jesus (Jn. 8:2-11).
- Jesus tells us of the abundance of the Father's mercy (Lk. 15:11-32).
- Jesus asks his Father's forgiveness for his executioners (Lk. 23:33-34).
- Jesus empowers the apostles to forgive sins (Jn. 20:22-23).

RECONCILIATION - THE NEW CREATION

- The form of Reconciliation is the priest's prayer of reconciliation.
- The matter of Reconciliation is the audible confession, with right intention to reform, of the penitent.
- Sacramental absolution can be conferred by a priest or a bishop.
- The priest acts *in persona Christi*, so it is Christ who forgives, acting through the priest.
- A penitent's confession is perpetually confidential; the 'seal' of the sacrament of Reconciliation is absolute.

EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

- All sins are forgiven and their guilt wiped away, so that the soul returns to the grace of God.
- The penitent is reconciled to the Church, the Body of Christ, which has been wounded by any and all sinful acts.
- The penitent grows in holiness through the sanctifying grace of the sacrament; greater progress in holiness is made possible by the sacrament, especially frequent Confession, even of venial sins.
- The penitent is strengthened against concupiscence and receives help to avoid temptation and occasions of sin.
- remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins.
- remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin.
- peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation.
- an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT NAMES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE?

- Sacrament of Penance: We are called to change our ways through penance.
- Sacrament of Confession: The disclosure of sins is essential to the sacrament. Our confession is a form of praise to God.
- Sacrament of Conversion: We are returned to the Father from whom we stray.
- Sacrament of Forgiveness: God grants us "pardon and peace" through absolution.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation: The sacrament gives us the love of God who reconciles.

FOUR ACTS OF THE PENITENT DURING THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

- Sorrow for sins committed
 - A resolution or firm purpose of amendment,
 - The sincere confession of sins.
 - Satisfaction or sacramental penance
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CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

- **Contrition** – the sorrow of the soul and the detestation for the sin committed.
- **Confession** – the admission of sins.
- **Penance** - prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbour, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices. These penances help configure us to Christ, who alone offered himself for our sins once and for all; they allow us to become co-heirs with the Risen Christ.
- **Absolution** – the forgiveness of sins

Prayer of Absolution: “God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Laying on of Hands A biblical gesture that indicates that this particular person is the object of the Church’s prayer of faith.

Anointing with Oil The oil of the sick signifies healing, strengthening, and the presence of the Spirit.

Reconciliation the forgiveness of sin and restores unity with God and the Church.

Prayer of Anointing: *As the priest anoints the forehead, he says:* “Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

As the priest anoints the hands, he says: “May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up. Amen.

EXPLORE!

Explore with the candidates a personal experience of illness and healing. What was the impact of the illness on yourself and others? How did ‘healing’ manifest itself? What things changed as healing occurred?

Explore with the candidates the Christian understanding of ‘Redemptive Suffering’.

HEALING IN THE SCRIPTURES

Healing was an integral part of the life of Jesus, and of the early Christian communities.

Mark 2:1–12	Jesus and the Paralysed Man
Luke 18:35–43	The Blind Man
Luke 17:11–19	The Ten Lepers
Luke 9:37–43	The Epileptic
Mark 6:12–13	The mission of the Church to cure physical and spiritual illness
1 Corinthians 12:26	The suffering of one member of the Church becomes the suffering of all
Luke 13:10–17	The Crippled Woman
Luke 8:40–56	The Woman with the Haemorrhage and the Daughter of Jairus
James 5:14–16	Anointing of the Sick
Luke 7:36–50	The Woman at the House of the Pharisee
Acts 2:37–47	Reconciliation and Community

The Sacraments of Healing— Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. How does the Christian view of suffering differ from that of our culture?
2. Jesus healed the body and soul. How is this healing manifested in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?
3. In what way does the Sacrament of Reconciliation express itself as a Sacrament of Healing?
4. What does Anointing of the Sick tell us about the response of the Christian community to sickness and suffering.
5. How does the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick continue the healing ministry of Jesus in the Gospels?

PRAYER

Psalm 6

or

Gospel Reflection:	Year A	Matt. 5:38-48
	Year B	Mk. 2:1-12
	Year C	Lk. 6:27-38

The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion.

The following questions may be helpful:

What does this mean to me?

How does it make me feel?

Did I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing?

What images of God emerge for me?

What do I think that God is saying in this text?

What impact does this have on my life?

Scripture and Catechism Resources

The Sacraments of Healing

Scripture

Anointing of the Sick

Ex. 15:25-26	God promises health to the Israelites if they obey his commandments.
Sir. 38:1-14	Prayer, repentance, and the care of physicians will heal you when sick.
Is. 52:13-53:12	He has borne our grief and carried our sorrows, and his suffering heals us.
Mk. 6:7-13	Jesus commissions the apostles, who anoint the sick with oil and heal them.
Lk. 4:40	Jesus lays hands on the sick and heals them.
Lk. 9:23	Jesus' followers must take up their crosses daily.
Jn. 9:6-7	Jesus uses ordinary material things as instruments of miraculous healing.
Acts 3:1-16	Peter and John heal a man lame from birth in Jesus' name.
Rom. 8:15-17	We are children of God and fellow-heirs with Christ if we suffer with him.
1 Cor. 12:26	The suffering of one enables all to participate in Jesus' suffering.
2 Cor 12:9	God's power is made perfect in our weakness.
Col. 1:24	Our sufferings complete the sufferings of Jesus for the welfare of the Church.
2 Tim 1:8	We must share in suffering for the Gospel.
Jas. 1:2-3	Suffering should be welcomed since it tests our faith and makes it steadfast.
Jas. 5:14-15	The sick are to call for the elders (priests) who will pray over him and anoint him; the sick person will be saved and his sins will be forgiven.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wis 11:23	In his mercy, God allows repentance from sin.
Is. 1:13-20	God wants not offerings and worship from sinners, but repentance and virtue.
Lam. 3:22-23	The steadfast love and mercy of the lord never ceases.
Mt. 16:18-19	Jesus gives Peter the power of the keys and the authority to bind and loose.
Lk. 15:1-7	The shepherd seeks the lost sheep, and Heaven rejoices over the repentant sinner.
Lk. 15:11-32	The Parable of the Prodigal Son, showing the Father's merciful forgiveness.
Jn. 20:23	Jesus gives the apostles the power to forgive sins.
Rom. 3:22-25	We have all sinned and are justified by Jesus' sacrifice and God's forgiveness.
2Cor 5:17-19	God has entrusted the work of reconciliation to humans.

Catechism

Anointing of the Sick

164-165	Suffering tests and strengthens faith.
618	By our suffering we participate in Jesus' Paschal mystery and attain Heaven.
1127-1128	By their very action, the sacraments accomplish what they symbolise, working by the power of Christ and not by the holiness of the minister of the sacrament (Ref. <i>ex opere operato</i>).
1420-1421	Anointing of the Sick is one of the two sacraments of healing.
1499-1525	Anointing of the Sick: how illness and healing fit into the economy of salvation, who may receive and who may administer the sacrament, how it is celebrated, its effects, <i>Viaticum</i> as the last sacrament.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

1127-1128 By their very action, the sacraments accomplish what they symbolise, working by the power of Christ and not by the holiness of the minister of the sacrament.

1420-1421 The sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments of healing.

1422-1484 Reconciliation: names, why it is needed, call to conversion, forms of penance, forms and effects, the acts of penitents, who can administer, indulgences.

(Source: Adapted from RCIA Catechist's Manual, Association for Catechumenal Ministry, Maryland, 2007)