



Reminder of the Fundamentals for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

I. Guidelines for the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

Code of Canon Law

Book IV: The Sanctifying Office of the Church (Canons 834-848)

Part I: The Sacraments

Title V: The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick (Canons 998-1007)

Chapter I: The Celebration of the Sacrament

1. Canon. 1000

§1 The anointings are to be carried out accurately, with the words and in order the order and manner prescribed in the liturgical books. In a case of necessity, however, a single anointing on the forehead, or even on another part of the body, is sufficient while the full formula is recited.

§2 The minister is to anoint with his own hand, unless a grave reason indicates the use of an instrument.

2. Use of instrument for grave reason

The New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law offers this on “instrument”:

The serious reason which, according to paragraph two of the canon, may permit the minister to use an instrument to avoid direct contact with the body of the sick person may be in danger of infection or even extreme repugnance in some cases. Ordinarily, however, whatever the sick person’s condition, the minister will be able to take the same safeguards against the infection as do nurses and doctors in their ministry to the sick. (p.1184)

In the health care setting

- The instrument could be surgical glove or cotton ball. To be disposed of after use.
- Department of Spiritual Care to provide sterile container with oil of infirm, separate from individual oil stock, and disposal prayer sheet with ritual
- After ritual prayer sheet and oil in the room with biohazard materials to avoid contamination.

3. Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

The USCCB Website:

When the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is given, the hoped-for effect is that, if it be God's will, the person be physically healed of illness. But even if there is no physical healing, the primary effect of the Sacrament is a spiritual healing by which the sick person receives the Holy Spirit's gift of peace and courage to deal with the difficulties that accompany serious illness or the frailty of old age.

4. Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum (PCS)

- This is a ministry of mutual charity ... ministry of comfort” (PCS 33-34). “All baptized Christians share in this ministry of **mutual charity** within the Body of Christ by doing all that they can to **help the sick return to health**, by **showing love for** the sick, and by **celebrating the sacraments** with them.”
- It communicates Christ’s concern for bodily and spiritual welfare, people in need...“lest they be broken in spirit and, under the pressure of temptation, perhaps weakened in their faith. (PCS 5)
- It is the Gift of Spirit to the Person “helped and saved, sustained by trust in God, and strengthened against the temptations” (PCS 6) to bear suffering and fight against it.
- It “...includes the prayer of faith (see Jas 5:15), faith itself is manifested...above all this faith must be made actual both in the minister of the sacrament and, even more importantly, in the recipient.”
- “The sick person will be saved **by personal faith and the faith of the Church**, which **looks back** to the death and resurrection of Christ, the source of the sacrament's power (see Jas 5:15), and **looks ahead** to the future kingdom that is pledged in the sacraments. (PCS 7)
- It highlights the vocation of the one who receives...“associate themselves willingly with the passion and death of Christ (see Rom 8:17), and thus contribute to the welfare of the people of God.” (PCS 5)

5. PCC III, Rites for Exceptional Circumstances:

- The rites contained in this section are exclusively for use in exceptional circumstances. In all other cases, the more developed forms of pastoral care ought to be employed for the greatest benefit of those members of the community who are dying and for the greater consolation for those who are close to them” (206).
- “if death seems imminent and there is not enough time to celebrate the three sacraments in the manner given in the continuous rite, the priest should proceed with the ‘Rite for Emergency’” (PCS 206).
- **Rite for Emergencies**

1. The priest should be guided by the condition of the dying person in deciding how much of this rite should be celebrated and where it should be appropriately shortened or adapted (PCS 237).
2. If the circumstances are extreme, he should give viaticum immediately (see no. 30) without the anointing. (PCS 237).
3. In such a situation of emergency the priest should offer every possible ministry of the Church as reverently and expeditiously as he can. He may be able to provide only the barest minimum of sacramental rites and forms of prayer...
4. The priest should judge, in light of the particular circumstances, how much or how little of this rite is possible.
5. All emergency rites include the Apostolic Pardon

II. Special Indulgences in the Midst of COVID-19

March 20, 2020 from the Apostolic Penitentiary on regarding special indulgences issued for as long as the COVID-19 pandemic lasts.

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/03/20/200320c.html>

1. The *Plenary Indulgence* is granted to the **faithful suffering from Coronavirus**, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion, or if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the will to fulfil the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible.
2. **Health care workers, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick of Coronavirus** according to the words of the divine Redeemer: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (*Jn 15: 13*), will obtain the same gift of the *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions.
3. This Apostolic Penitentiary also willingly grants a *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions on the occasion of the current world epidemic, also to those **faithful** who offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself.
4. The Church prays for those who find themselves **unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and of the Viaticum**, entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints and granting the faithful a *Plenary Indulgence on the point of death*, provided that they are duly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime (in this case the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required). For the attainment of this indulgence the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended (cf. *Enchiridion indulgentiarum*, no.12).