

HEALING / ANOINTING OF THE SICK

**Part Vh:
Sacrament
of the Sick
and the Dying**



Healing/Anointing of the Sick

Catholic Christians have always believed in and practiced the anointing/healing of the sick. Before Vatican Council II the rite was called “extreme unction” or last anointing and referred principally to the anointing which took place when a believer was close to death. The sacrament has been restored to the role it had in the Apostolic Church. It is also a part of what is called “Last Rites.”



Jesus healed people according to the Gospels.

Mark 1:41

Moved with pity, he (Jesus) stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, “I do will it. Be made clean.”

Mark 8:23

Putting spittle on his eyes he laid his hands on him and asked, “Do you see anything?”



The Apostles followed the example of Jesus and carried out his teaching. They anointed the sick for healing.

Mark 6:13

They (the Twelve) drove out many demons, and they **anointed with oil** many who were sick and cured them.

James 5:14-15

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.

James 2:14

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

The constant faith of the Church and the teaching magisterium attest to the existence of the sacrament from the early Church.

In the first two centuries, there are no commentaries extant on the Epistle of James. Indeed, the canon of the New Testament to include the Epistle was not firm until the local Councils of Hippo and Carthage (393 and 397).

The early Fathers of the Church did not systematically comment on all aspects of the life of the Church. It must be noted that in the early Church, emphasis was not given to the need of anointing/healing. It was a practice of Christians to be baptized at the end of life.

Many allusions are found in later Fathers of the Church both in the use of the rite of anointing for the sick, and for obtaining healing of both soul and body:

Origen (Alexandria, 185 - 254),
Tertullian (Rome, 160 - 220),
Athanasius (Alexandria, 293 - 373),
Gregory (Nazianzus, 329 - 389),
John Chrysostom (Antioch, 349 - 407),
Ambrose (Tier, 340 - 397),
Augustine (Numidia, 354 - 430),
etc.

The **Council of Trent** defined that the sacrament of extreme unction/anointing of the sick was listed among the seven sacraments.

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The Sacrament of the Sick and Dying, Part Vh

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