



## *How Catholics Pray*



Section 7:

## *Holy Orders & Anointing of the Sick*



*To Luke E. Hart, exemplary evangelizer and Supreme Knight from 1953-64, the Knights of Columbus dedicates this Series with affection and gratitude.*

*The Knights of Columbus presents  
The Luke E. Hart Series  
Basic Elements of the Catholic Faith*

# HOLY ORDERS AND THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

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PART TWO • SECTION SEVEN OF  
CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

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*What does a Catholic believe?  
How does a Catholic worship?  
How does a Catholic live?*

Based on the  
*Catechism of the Catholic Church*

*by  
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## A WORD ABOUT THIS SERIES

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This booklet is one of a series of 30 that offer a colloquial expression of major elements of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Pope John Paul II, under whose authority the *Catechism* was first released in 1992, urged such versions so that each people and each culture can appropriate its content as its own.

The booklets are not a substitute for the *Catechism*, but are offered only to make its contents more accessible. The series is at times poetic, colloquial, playful, and imaginative; at all times it strives to be faithful to the Faith.

The Catholic Information Service recommends reading at least one Hart series booklet each month to gain a deeper, more mature understanding of the Faith.



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PART II: HOW CATHOLICS PRAY  
(WORSHIP)

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# SECTION 7: HOLY ORDERS (ORDINATION) AND THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

## Holy Orders

### 1. *Its purpose*

“Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry” (CCC 1536).\*

### 2. *Its degrees*

“It includes three degrees: episcopate [bishops], presbyterate [priests], and diaconate [deacons]” (CCC 1536). “The divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in

\*CCC = *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests, and deacons'<sup>32</sup> ...all three conferred by a sacramental act called 'ordination,' that is, by the sacrament of Holy Orders" (CCC 1554).

### 3. *Its effect*

"[I]t confers a gift of the Holy Spirit that permits the exercise of a 'sacred power' (*sacra potestas*)<sup>5</sup> which can come only from Christ himself..." (CCC 1538). After ordination, a priest has the power to turn bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Such a supernatural power can come only from a supernatural source.

"As in the case of Baptism and Confirmation...the sacrament of Holy Orders...confers an *indelible spiritual character* and cannot be repeated..."<sup>74</sup> (CCC 1582).

"It is true that someone validly ordained can, for a just reason, be discharged from the obligations and functions linked to ordination, or can be forbidden to exercise them; but he cannot become a layman again in the strict sense,<sup>75</sup> because the character imprinted by ordination is for ever" (CCC 1583).

### 4. *Its material sign*

"The *laying on of hands* by the bishop, with the consecratory prayer, constitutes the visible sign of this ordination" (CCC 1538). "The *essential* rite of the sacrament of Holy Orders for all three degrees consists in the bishop's imposition of hands on the head of the ordinand and in the bishop's specific consecratory prayer..."<sup>60</sup> (CCC 1573).



## 5. *Bishops*

Bishops are the successors to the Apostles, in an “unbroken succession going back to the beginning”<sup>34</sup> (CCC 1555); for the Apostles “...passed on to their auxiliaries the gift of the Spirit, which is transmitted down to our day through episcopal consecration”<sup>35</sup> (CCC 1556; see Acts 1:8; 2:4; John 20:22-23; 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6-7).

“Episcopal consecration confers, together with the office of sanctifying [making holy], also the offices of teaching and ruling...”<sup>37</sup> (CCC 1558).

“Apostolic succession” is a historical fact. Scripture shows that Christ chose apostles and commissioned them to continue his work with his authority, and that they in turn ordained successors. Apostolic succession is the link that connects the Church today to the Christ who walked the earth 2000 years ago. Many converts from Protestantism, both great (e.g., Cardinal Newman) and small (e.g., the present writer), found their way into the Church through confronting this simple historical fact.

Christ did not tell the Apostles how to choose successors, and the “politics” of choosing bishops has varied through Church history. “In our day, the lawful ordination of a bishop requires a special intervention of the Bishop of Rome [the Pope], because he is the supreme visible bond of the communion of the particular Churches in the one Church...” (CCC 1559).

## 6. *Priests*

- 1) *Their relation to bishops.* Priests are “co-workers of the episcopal order for the proper fulfillment of the apostolic mission...”<sup>44</sup> (CCC 1562) “Priests can exercise their ministry only in dependence on the bishop and in

communion with him. The promise of obedience they make to the bishop at the moment of ordination” (CCC 1567) gives expression to this bond.

- 2) *Their relation to the Eucharist.* The priesthood exists particularly for the Eucharist. It is in the Eucharist “that they exercise in a supreme degree their sacred office; there, acting in the person of Christ...in the sacrifice of the Mass they make present again...the unique sacrifice of...Christ offering himself...”<sup>49</sup> From this unique sacrifice their whole priestly ministry draws its strength”<sup>50</sup> (CCC 1566). When the priest pronounces Christ’s words, “This is my Body” and “This is my Blood,” it is Christ who speaks and acts.

That is why the saintly Cure of Ars said, “The priest continues the work of redemption on earth.... If we really understood the priest on earth, we would die not of fright but of love....”<sup>83</sup> (CCC 1589). Saints have seen angels bowing before priests – not because the priests were especially holy as human beings, but because the power Christ gave them in the Eucharist infinitely exceeds the greatest powers of the greatest angel.

- 3) *Their relation to the laity.* The title “Father” should show that love of which the Cure of Ars speaks. It is a reminder that the relationship between priest and people is *familial*, since it expresses the relationship between God and his people, which is also familial and “fatherly.” “Father” was the word Christ used most for God, and we cannot be better taught than by him. In fact, the very life of the Trinity is “familial.” It is “self-donation,” or self-giving love and service. By sharing in the triple

office of bishops, that is, of teaching, ruling, and sanctifying, priests express for us this service, especially in consecrating the Eucharist.

## 7. *Deacons*

The ordination of deacons is “not unto the priesthood but unto the ministry”<sup>53</sup> (CCC 1569).

Deacons assist priests, as priests assist bishops. They are clergy and can preside at weddings and funerals. They also “assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion...in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching...and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity”<sup>57</sup> (CCC 1570).

“Since the Second Vatican Council the Latin Church has restored the diaconate ‘as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy,’<sup>58</sup> while the Churches of the East had always maintained it. This *permanent diaconate*...can be conferred on married men...” (CCC 1571).

## 8. *Christ as fulfillment of the Old Covenant priesthood*

A priest is a *mediator* between God and man. “Everything that the priesthood of the Old Covenant prefigured finds its fulfillment in Christ Jesus, the ‘one mediator between God and men’”<sup>15</sup> (1 Timothy 2:5; CCC 1544).

Israel was God’s “chosen people” – chosen not simply for their own sake, but for service to the whole world. As Israel was God’s collective prophet to the whole world, Israel was also the collective priest for the whole world. “The chosen people was constituted by God as ‘a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’<sup>6</sup>

[Exodus 19:6]. But within the people of Israel, God chose one of the twelve tribes, that of Levi, and set it apart for liturgical service....<sup>7</sup> The priests are ‘appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins’<sup>8</sup>” (Hebrews 5:1; CCC 1539).

Even earlier there was also the priesthood of Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18). “The Christian tradition considers Melchizedek, ‘priest of God Most High,’ a prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ, the unique ‘high priest after the order of Melchizedek’<sup>16</sup> [Hebrews 5:10; 6:20]; ... ‘by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified,’<sup>18</sup> [Hebrews 10:14], that is, by the unique sacrifice of the cross” (CCC 1544).

Christ fulfilled the Old Covenant priesthood on the Cross, and extended that work through all time by the ordained priesthood of his Catholic Church, which God designed, like Israel, not for herself but for the whole world (“Catholic” means “universal”). The Catholic priesthood today is the extension of Christ. It is not a third step, so to speak, after the Old Covenant priests and then Christ. Priests are Christ’s own hands and lips. “Christ is the source of all priesthood: the priest of the old law was a figure of Christ, and the priest of the new law acts in the person of Christ”<sup>25</sup> (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, 22, 4; CCC 1548).

What Christ did on the Cross was the most important thing he came to earth to do: to save us from sin and reconcile us to the Father. This was his “priestly” work; and this incomparably important work – the work of salvation – he now performs through the ordained priesthood of his Church, shared in different ways and in different degrees by bishops, priests, and deacons. Through the Sacrament of Orders, the redemption

accomplished by Christ is mediated through the sacraments. Thus the fundamental purpose of the Sacrament of Holy Orders is that the members of the Church can be sure of taking part in the saving actions of Christ by having access to them through the celebration of the sacraments.

“The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all [Hebrews 10:10]; yet it is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. The same is true of the one priesthood of Christ; it is made present through the ministerial priesthood without diminishing the uniqueness of Christ’s priesthood: ‘Only Christ is the true priest, the others being only his ministers’”<sup>19</sup> (Saint Thomas Aquinas, on Hebrews 8:4; CCC 1545).

#### 9. *The priesthood of all believers*

All Christians are priests. “The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful participate, ‘each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ.’ While being ‘ordered one to another,’ they differ essentially....<sup>22</sup> The ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood” (CCC 1547).

Christ instituted the clerical priesthood to serve the larger priesthood of all Christians, and he instituted the priesthood of all Christians to serve and save the world. If ordained priests fulfill their mission well, the laity in turn will be effective priests of Christ to the world. The priesthood is a missionary task.

#### 10. *The relation between Christ and his priests*

“In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body...” (CCC 1548). The external, legal “head” of a corporation need not

be present to the corporation, but the internal, organic “head” of a living body is always present to that body. “This is what the Church means by saying that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts *in persona Christi Capitis*<sup>23</sup> [in the person of Christ the Head] ‘...and possesses the authority to act in the power and place of the person of Christ himself...’<sup>24</sup> (CCC 1548), when the priest acts as a minister of Christ’s Church.

“This presence of Christ in the minister is not to be understood as if the latter were preserved from all human weaknesses, the spirit of domination, error, even sin. The power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all acts of ministers in the same way.... [Yet] this guarantee extends to the sacraments, so that even the minister’s sin cannot impede the fruit of grace...” (CCC 1550).

#### 11. *Who can ordain?*

- 1) “Christ himself chose the apostles....<sup>61</sup> Thus, it is Christ whose gift it is that some be apostles, others pastors. He continues to act through the bishops<sup>62</sup> [whom his apostles ordained as their successors]” (CCC 1575).
- 2) “Validly ordained bishops, i.e., those who are in the line of apostolic succession, validly confer the three degrees of the sacrament of Holy Orders”<sup>65</sup> (CCC 1576).

#### 12. *Who can be ordained?*

For bishops or priests, as distinct from deacons, “[o]nly a baptized man (*vir*) validly receives sacred ordination.”<sup>66</sup> The Lord Jesus chose men (*viri*) to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry.<sup>67</sup> ...The Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For

this reason the ordination of women is not possible”<sup>68</sup> (CCC 1577). It is not arrogance but humility that makes the Church insist that she has no authority to correct her Lord.

One compelling reason against the ordination of women is that a religion with priestesses would be a different *religion*, and would implicitly signify a different *God*. To see this point, we must begin with data, with facts. One such fact is that the true God, the God who revealed himself to the Jews, the God of Jesus Christ, is never called “she” but always “he” throughout Scripture. Jesus himself always called him “Father,” never “Mother.” His mother was Mary. It is also a fact that the Jews, alone of ancient peoples, had no priestesses. For priestesses represent goddesses, and priests represent gods. God chose to incarnate himself as a man. This is also a fact; this we know. What God’s reason was, we do not know with certainty – though we do know what that reason *wasn’t*: it wasn’t because women are inferior or less holy, for Scripture declares “the image of God” to be “male *and female*” (Genesis 1:27). But we do know that, as C. S. Lewis put it, “Christians believe that God himself has told us how to speak of him.”

Three additional arguments against the demand for priestesses are that this demand is recent, local, and secular.

- 1) The demand is recent. It has never been done. Throughout all of Jewish and Christian history, only men have been ordained to represent the God of Scripture.

The reason most of the saints give for this is that “he” symbolizes the divine transcendence. God is other than and more than nature and human souls; and God comes into nature and into human souls from without, from

himself, from Heaven. He is not within us automatically, by nature. He is not a part of human nature, like thoughts and feelings, and he is not a part of the natural universe, as planets are, or as the pagan gods were thought to be. All human souls are feminine to God, he impregnates them with new life, as he performs miracles in nature; for this God is not “Mother Nature” but is “other” than nature, as a man is other than a woman. There is surely a connection between the two historical facts that throughout the ancient world a) all Gentile religions, polytheistic or pantheistic, had goddesses and priestesses, and b) that these religions did *not* have knowledge of the divine transcendence or of the doctrine of creation in the proper sense of the word (see Part I, Section 3, paragraphs 1-2).

- 2) The demand is also local. It is limited to Western Europe and North America. It is almost as limited in space as it is in historical time.
- 3) And the demand is secular. It is derived from secular feminism, with its language of “demands” and “rights.” Anyone who demands ordination for “empowerment” shows a radical misunderstanding of the priesthood. Christ’s priesthood, like Christ, is for service, not power (see John 13:12-15; Matthew 20:20-28). And anyone who demands it as a “right” is also using a radically different set of categories – legal and political ones – than those of Christ. “No one has a right to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Indeed no one claims this office for himself; he is called to it by God [cf. Hebrews 5:4].<sup>69</sup> Anyone who thinks he recognizes the signs of



God's call to the ordained ministry must humbly submit his desire to the authority of the Church.... Like every grace, this sacrament can be *received* only as an unmerited gift" (CCC 1578).

God ordained two sexes, not one, to be equal in value, different in nature, and complementary in function. He created women to be a kind of priest that men cannot be; for motherhood is a kind of priesthood and mediation between God and the world. Every mother brings a new image of God into this world as the Blessed Mother brought God himself into this world.

### 13. *Priestly celibacy*

"All the ordained ministers of the Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons, are normally chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and who intend to remain *celibate* 'for the sake of the kingdom of heaven'<sup>70</sup> [Matthew 19:12]. [They are] called to consecrate themselves with undivided heart to the Lord and to 'the affairs of the Lord'..."<sup>71</sup> (1 Corinthians 7:32; CCC 1579).

"In the Eastern Churches a different discipline has been in force for many centuries: while bishops are chosen solely from among celibates, married men can be ordained as deacons and priests....<sup>73</sup> [However,] priestly celibacy is held in great honor in the Eastern Churches and many priests have freely chosen it for the sake of the Kingdom of God. In the East as in the West a man who has already received the sacrament of Holy Orders can no longer marry" (CCC 1580).

The Church's *disciplines* can change and have changed through time, for serious reasons arrived at through long experience and reflection; for Christ put that authority into her

hands. Her *doctrines*, however, are unchanged and unchangeable, for she did not originate them. Priestly celibacy, like rules of fasting and how bishops and popes are chosen, are matters of Church discipline. The sacrament itself is a matter of doctrine.

14. *Are priests holier than laity?*

There are two answers: 1) No, not necessarily. And 2) Yes, they should be.

- 1) “Since it is ultimately Christ who acts and effects salvation through the ordained minister, the unworthiness of the latter does not prevent Christ from acting.<sup>76</sup> ‘...The spiritual power of the sacrament is indeed comparable to light: those to be enlightened receive it in its purity, and if it should pass through defiled beings, it is not itself defiled’<sup>77</sup> (Saint Augustine; CCC 1584).
- 2) “Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, as a very young priest, exclaimed: ‘We must begin by purifying ourselves before purifying others; we must be instructed to be able to instruct, become light to illuminate, draw close to God to bring him close to others, be sanctified to sanctify....’<sup>82</sup> (CCC 1589).

# The Anointing of the Sick

## 1. *The importance of illness and suffering*

This sacrament, like all sacraments, addresses one of the basic aspects of life. “Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life” (CCC 1500).

Many religions and philosophies sharply separate body and soul, matter and spirit, and cultivate “spirituality” instead of sanctity, detachment from the material world instead of involvement in it. But Christianity, like Christ, takes matter and the body, and therefore physical illness, very seriously. God created the angels as pure spirits, but he designed us to be a unity of body and soul. Part of Christ’s ministry was the healing of bodies, and the Church continues this ministry.

Sickness, suffering, and death are important also for a spiritual reason: because they are an effect of sin – not of one’s individual, personal sin (“actual sin”) but of the “original sin” of our first parents and of the whole human race. Sin is the disease of the soul, and the body is not insulated from the soul. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23; Genesis 2:17).

## 2. *Two choices regarding illness*

It may seem that illness removes our choices and makes us passive. But even in illness, even as we are dying, we are able to choose between two attitudes.

- 1) “Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God” (CCC 1501). Pain can make it very difficult to avoid self-absorption and to turn from self to God.

- 2) Difficult, but not impossible. The man of faith “lives his sickness in the presence of God. It is before God that he laments his illness, and it is of God, the Master of life and death, that he implores healing”<sup>99</sup> (CCC 1502).

### 3. *Why does God allow sickness and suffering?*

God did not create illness; he is the God of life, not of death. The activity that flows from his nature is not to bring illness but to cure it. But he allows it, for the sake of some greater good. Some of its possible good effects are:

- 1) “It can...make a person more mature, helping him to discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is” (CCC 1501).
- 2) Illness can be a teacher; it makes us wise by showing us what our pride naturally ignores: “In illness, man experiences his powerlessness, his limitations, and his finitude. Every illness can make us glimpse death” (CCC 1500).
- 3) “Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him” (CCC 1501).
- 4) “...Suffering can also have a redemptive meaning for the sins of others”<sup>102</sup> (CCC 1502), and we can “offer it up” for them. We may make a more powerful contribution to the good of other souls on our sickbed, and even our deathbed, than at any other time in our lives. Illness does not destroy or even lessen our active participation in the Mystical Body of Christ and the Communion of Saints, if we use our suffering by uniting it to Christ’s. Suffering is a task, and God often sends the greatest crosses to

those he loves the most, those who can use them most effectively.

Offering up our suffering for others also helps us to focus on a reality outside ourselves and overcome the temptation to self-absorption that is one of the worst effects of illness.

#### 4. *Christ's attitude toward sickness*

Christ did not ignore or downplay physical illness. In fact, he took it more seriously than any other religious figure in history.

- 1) According to all four Gospels, much of his ministry on earth consisted in physical healings. We can continue this work of his. The fact that we use natural rather than supernatural powers does not make our work any less an extension of his.
- 2) "But he did not heal all the sick. His healings were signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God. They announced a more radical healing: the victory over sin and death.... By his passion and death on the cross, Christ has given a new meaning to suffering: it can henceforth configure us to him and unite us with his redemptive Passion" (CCC 1505). Christ came not to make all our sufferings disappear but to give them all a new meaning, to unite them to his own.
- 3) The most important thing he did for the sick is something we can do too: he loved them, and associated himself with them. "Moved by so much suffering Christ not only allows himself to be touched by the sick, but he makes their miseries his own: 'he took our infirmities

and bore our diseases”<sup>112</sup> (CCC 1505). Most often the best and most Christlike thing we can do for the suffering, the sick, and the dying is simply to be present to them, as God made himself present to us and our sorrows in Christ.

When your car is stuck in the snow, your friend who comes to be with you in the car is doing a more important and intimate work than the tow truck that gets you out. *Sharing* the problem can be more precious than *solving* the problem. Christ does both, but usually one at a time.

- 4) Our ministry to the sick is not only *from* Christ, inspired by his Spirit, but is also *for* Christ. He makes himself present to us “in the distressing guise of the poor and suffering” (Mother Teresa), and tells us that in the Last Judgment we will hear these words from his mouth: “I was sick and you visited me... truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matthew 26:35, 40).

### 5. *The Church's work of healing*

Christ commanded his disciples to “heal the sick!” (Matthew 10:8). “The Church has received this charge from the Lord and strives to carry it out [by both natural and supernatural means] by taking care of the sick as well as by accompanying them with her prayer of intercession. [For] she believes in the life-giving presence of Christ, the physician of souls and bodies....”<sup>122</sup> (CCC 1509).

Christ not only commanded this, he promised that his Church would do it: “In my name... they will lay their hands on

the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17-18). The hands of the doctor or surgeon and the hands of the one who prays for divine intervention both fulfill this promise.

#### 6. *When the sick are not healed*

When we or a loved one are not healed, we should not attribute this to a lack of faith any more than to personal sin. We simply do not know why God heals some and not others.

“The Holy Spirit gives to some a special charism [supernatural gift] of healing<sup>119</sup> [cf. 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30], so as to make manifest the power of the grace of the risen Lord. But even the most intense prayers do not always obtain the healing of all illnesses. Thus Saint Paul must learn from the Lord that ‘my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness,’ and that the sufferings to be endured can mean that ‘in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church’<sup>120</sup> (2 Corinthians 12:9; Colossians 1:24; CCC 1508).

#### 7. *The sacramental rite of healing*

“[T]he apostolic Church has its own rite for the sick, attested to by Saint James: ‘Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders [*presbyters*] of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven’<sup>123</sup> [James 5:14-15]. Tradition has recognized in this rite one of the seven sacraments’<sup>124</sup> (CCC 1510). The “presbyters” are bishops and priests.

“From ancient times in the liturgical traditions of both East and West, we have testimonies to the practice of anointings of the sick with blessed oil. Over the centuries the Anointing of the

Sick was conferred more and more exclusively on those at the point of death. Because of this, it received the name 'Extreme Unction.'..."<sup>126</sup> (CCC 1512), and it was expected to be given only once in a person's life, as a preparation for one's final crossing to eternity. Those at the point of death are still anointed, but the sacrament is also given in hope of healing and recovery from a serious illness, and so it is given as many times as needed.

#### 8. *Who receives this sacrament?*

"The Anointing of the Sick 'is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived'"<sup>130</sup> (CCC 1514).

"If a sick person who received this anointing recovers his health, he can in the case of another grave illness receive the sacrament again. If during the same illness the person's condition becomes more serious, the sacrament may be repeated. It is fitting to receive the Anointing of the Sick just prior to a serious operation" (CCC 1515).

#### 9. *Its connection with the Eucharist*

Since it prepares us for our meeting with God, "the sacrament can be preceded by the sacrament of Penance and followed by the sacrament of the Eucharist. As the sacrament of Christ's Passover the Eucharist should always be the last sacrament of the earthly journey, the 'viaticum' [the provisions for the journey] for 'passing over' to eternal life" (CCC 1517) because the Eucharist is Christ himself and, for the Christian, death as well as life is "Christocentric."



“Communion in the body and blood of Christ, received at this moment of ‘passing over’ to the Father...is the seed of eternal life and the power of resurrection, according to the words of the Lord: ‘He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day’”<sup>141</sup> (John 6:54; CCC 1524).

#### 10. *Its effects*

- 1) “The first grace of this sacrament is one of strengthening, peace and courage to overcome the difficulties that go with the condition of serious illness or the frailty of old age. This grace is a gift of the Holy Spirit, who renews trust and faith in God and strengthens against the temptations of the evil one, the temptation to discouragement and anguish in the face of death”<sup>135</sup> (CCC 1520). It “fortifies the end of our earthly life like a solid rampart for the final struggles before entering the Father’s house”<sup>140</sup> (CCC 1523).
- 2) “This assistance from the Lord by the power of his Spirit is meant to lead the sick person to healing of the soul, but also of the body if such is God’s will”<sup>136</sup> (CCC 1520).
- 3) “Furthermore, ‘if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven’”<sup>137</sup> (James 5:15; CCC 1520).
- 4) “By the grace of this sacrament the sick person receives...the gift of uniting himself more closely to Christ’s Passion.... Suffering, a consequence of original sin, acquires a new meaning; it becomes a participation in the saving work of Jesus” (CCC 1521). We are never closer to Christ and Christ’s essential work, done on the Cross, than when we are suffering.

“The Anointing of the Sick completes our conformity to the death and Resurrection of Christ, just as Baptism began it. It completes the holy anointings that mark the whole Christian life: that of Baptism which sealed the new life in us, and that of Confirmation which strengthened us for the combat of this life...” (CCC 1523). “[J]ust as the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist form a unity called ‘the sacraments of Christian initiation,’ so too it can be said that Penance, the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist as viaticum constitute at the end of Christian life ‘the sacraments that prepare for our heavenly homeland’...” (CCC 1525).

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#### Notes from the Catechism in Order of Their Appearance in Quotations Used in this Section

<sup>32</sup> LG 28.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. LG 10.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1767; LG 21; 28; 29; PO 2.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. CIC, cann. 290-293; 1336 § 1 3°, 5°; 1338 § 2; Council of Trent: DS 1774.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Pius XII, apostolic constitution, *Sacramentum Ordinis*: DS 3858.

<sup>34</sup> LG 20.

<sup>35</sup> LG 21; cf. *Acts* 1:8; 2:4; *Jn* 20:22-23; *1 Tim* 4:14; *2 Tim* 1:6-7.

<sup>37</sup> LG 21.

<sup>44</sup> PO 2 § 2.

<sup>49</sup> LG 28; cf. *1 Cor* 11:26.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. PO 2.

<sup>83</sup> St. John Vianney, quoted in B. Nodet, *Jean-Marie Vianney, Curé d' Ars*, 100.

<sup>53</sup> LG 29; cf. CD 15.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. LG 29; SC 35 § 4; AG 16.

<sup>58</sup> LG 29 § 2.

<sup>15</sup> *1 Tim* 2:5.

- <sup>6</sup> *Ex* 19:6; cf. *Isa* 61:6.
- <sup>7</sup> Cf. *Num* 1:48-53; *Josb* 13:33.
- <sup>8</sup> *Heb* 5:1; cf. *Ex* 29:1-30; *Lev* 8.
- <sup>16</sup> *Heb* 5:10; cf. 6:20; *Gen* 14:18.
- <sup>18</sup> *Heb* 10:14.
- <sup>25</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *STb* III, 22, 4c.
- <sup>19</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Hebr.* 8, 4.
- <sup>22</sup> *LG* 10 § 2.
- <sup>23</sup> Cf. *LG* 10; 28; *SC* 33; *CD* 11; *PO* 2; 6.
- <sup>24</sup> Pius XII, encyclical, *Mediator Dei*: AAS, 39 (1947) 548.
- <sup>61</sup> Cf. *Roman Missal*, Preface of the Apostles I.
- <sup>62</sup> Cf. *LG* 21; *Eph* 4:11.
- <sup>65</sup> Cf. DS 794 and cf. DS 802; CIC, can. 1012; CCEO, can. 744; 747.
- <sup>66</sup> CIC, can. 1024.
- <sup>67</sup> Cf. *Mk* 3:14-19; *Lk* 6:12-16; *1 Tim* 3:1-13; *2 Tim* 1:6; *Titus* 1:5-9; St. Clement of Rome, *Ad Cor.* 42, 4; 44, 3; PG 1, 292-293; 300.
- <sup>68</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *MD* 26-27; CDF, declaration, *Inter insigniores*: AAS 69 (1977) 98-116.
- <sup>69</sup> Cf. *Heb* 5:4.
- <sup>70</sup> *Mt* 19:12.
- <sup>71</sup> *1 Cor* 7:32.
- <sup>73</sup> Cf. *PO* 16.
- <sup>76</sup> Cf. Council of Trent: DS 1612; DS 1154.
- <sup>77</sup> St. Augustine, *In Jo. ev.* 5, 15: PL 35, 1422.
- <sup>82</sup> St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 2, 71, 74, 73: PG 35, 480-481.
- <sup>99</sup> Cf. *Pss* 6:3; 38; *Isa* 38.
- <sup>101</sup> Cf. *Isa* 53:11.
- <sup>112</sup> *Mt* 8:17; cf. *Isa* 53:4.
- <sup>122</sup> Cf. *Jn* 6:54, 58; *1 Cor* 11:30.
- <sup>119</sup> Cf. *1 Cor* 12:9, 28, 30.
- <sup>120</sup> *2 Cor* 12:9; *Col* 1:24.
- <sup>123</sup> *Jas* 5:14-15.

- <sup>124</sup> Cf. Council of Constantinople II (553): DS 216; Council of Florence (1439): 1324-1325; Council of Trent (1551) 1695-1696; 1716-1717.
- <sup>126</sup> Cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1696.
- <sup>130</sup> *SC* 73; cf. *CIC*, cann. 1004 § 1; 1005; 1007; *CCEO*, can. 738.
- <sup>141</sup> *Jn* 6:54.
- <sup>135</sup> Cf. *Heb* 2:15.
- <sup>140</sup> Council of Trent (1551): DS 1694.
- <sup>136</sup> Cf. Council of Florence (1439): DS 1325.
- <sup>137</sup> *Jas* 5:15; cf. Council of Trent (1551): DS 1717.





*“Faith is a gift of God which enables us to know and love Him. Faith is a way of knowing, just as reason is. But living in faith is not possible unless there is action on our part. Through the help of the Holy Spirit, we are able to make a decision to respond to divine Revelation, and to follow through in living out our response.”*

*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, 38.*

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Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* 34  
Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation and Mission  
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