



*Preparing for a Catholic Funeral*



---

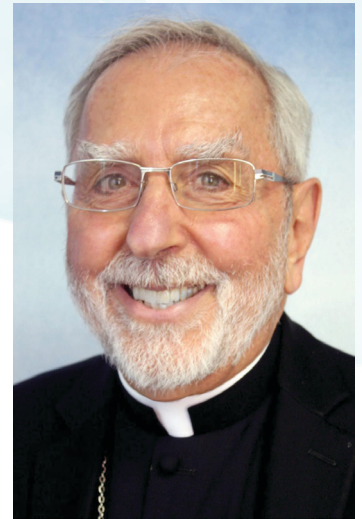
*Sacrament of the Sick*

---

[www.catholicburialtraditions.org](http://www.catholicburialtraditions.org)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus,

The Catholic Cemetery Conference (CCC) strives to provide information, training, best practices and guidance for Catholic Cemeteries throughout the United States and Canada. CCC's mission is to promote, to educate and to inculcate a culture of Catholic burial. Burying the dead is a Corporal Work of Mercy and an essential part of the Church's mission.



We live in the hope of the resurrection promised by Christ who spoke of the human person as a temple of the Holy Spirit. For that reason care and respect for the deceased matters greatly. The Church strives to assist grieving families in laying their loved ones to rest and provides support and comfort to the family and loved ones of the deceased.

These materials and videos presented by the CCC spell out what that care and respect needs to look like through the whole burial process. From pre-planning for death to the Vigil, to the Funeral Mass and the Rite of Committal, these materials and videos provide information on how Catholic Cemeteries accompany families in this difficult time.

Likewise, lesson plans are presented in order to introduce children and young people to the Rites of Christian Burial, outlining how and why the Church treats the human body in death with the utmost respect and dignity.

The burial or entombment of the deceased person's body or cremated remains is central to the Church's mission. The hope of CCC is that these materials will assist bishops, priests, Catholic cemeterians and pastoral educators to inform our Catholic people of the Church's approach to death and burial of loved ones.

Choicest blessings!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerald Kicanas".

Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas  
Episcopal Advisor for the Catholic Cemetery Conference  
Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Tucson

# COPYRIGHT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The Catholic Cemetery Conference, in conjunction with the Catholic Communication Campaign of the USCCB**, gratefully acknowledges the following:

**Confraternity of Christian Doctrine** “Scripture Readings for Funerals (taken from the Lectionary for Mass)” – Readings from the Old Testament 1-7; Reading I from the New Testament during the Easter Season 1-4; Reading II from the New Testament 1-15; and Gospel 1-19 are reprinted with permission and subject to the following copyright:

Copyright © 1970, 1986, 1992, 1998, 2001 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

The English translation of some Summaries, from the *Lectionary for Mass* © 1968, 1981, 1997, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc., Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.

The English translation, original texts, general introduction, pastoral, notes, arrangement, and design of Order of Christian Funerals © 1985, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc.



# SACRAMENT of the SICK

Suffering and illness have always been among the greatest problems that trouble the human spirit. Christians feel and experience pain as do all other people: yet their faith helps them to grasp more deeply the mystery of suffering and to bear their pain with greater courage. From Christ's words, they know that sickness has meaning and value for their own salvation and for the salvation of the world. They also know that Christ, who during his life often visited and healed the sick, loves them in their illness.

The Lord himself showed great concern for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick and commanded his followers to do likewise.

Those who are seriously ill need the special help of God's grace in this time of anxiety, lest they be broken in spirit and, under the pressure of temptation, perhaps weakened in their faith.

This is why, through the sacrament of anointing, Christ strengthens the faithful who are afflicted by illness, providing them with the strongest means of support.

Some questions & answers...

## What is the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?

It is through this sacrament that the healing ministry of Jesus Christ is continued by the action of the Church. Christians from the earliest times had recourse to this sacrament: "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). Through the power of the Holy Spirit, this work is continued by the Church today, allowing people to experience the healing touch and presence of the Lord Jesus.

## Is this the same as "the last rites"?

In the past, Anointing was looked upon primarily as being for the dying and was called "Extreme Unction." In the renewal of theology since the Second Vatican Council, there has been a rediscovery of the ancient roots of this sacrament as being for the sick rather than the dying. Properly speaking, therefore, the last rite is not the Anointing of the Sick but Viaticum, the last Holy Communion of a person at the point of death.

## How is the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick celebrated?

There are now three rites provided for Anointing. The first is for anointing celebrated outside of the Mass. This can be in the home, in the church, or in the hospital. Members of the sick person's family participate in the ceremony as do pastoral care ministers and the priest. This is intended to be the normal way the sacrament is celebrated.

The second is an anointing during Mass. This can be of one person or many persons.

Finally, there is a shortened rite, for emergencies only, which is usually used in the home or hospital if the person is in immediate danger of death. This is intended to be an exceptional case.

## What can be expected?

The healing ministry of the Church follows that of Jesus and is concerned with the healing of the whole person, body, mind, and spirit. The goal of the sacrament is this total healing. Sometimes a person is cured of a bodily illness. Sometimes there is psychological or spiritual healing. What is certain is that healing is taking place that can strengthen a sick person and enable them to bear their illness. Relationships, both with God and other people, can also be healed through this sacrament.



## Who should be Anointed?

Any person whose health is seriously impaired by illness or old age. A sick child should be anointed if old enough to derive a benefit from the sacrament.

## When should someone be Anointed?

As soon as it is clear that his or her health is seriously impaired due to sickness or old age, and if he or she suddenly enter a more acute stage of an illness. A person may be anointed before surgery if this results because of serious illness. If at all possible, the sacrament should not be delayed until the person is at the point of death.

## What is the structure of an Anointing service?

The greeting, invitation to prayer, reading of The Word of God, laying on of hands, prayer over the oil, anointing, prayer, and blessing. Communion or Viaticum may follow the anointing.

*God loved the world so much, he gave us his  
only Son, that all who believe in him  
might have eternal life.*

*—John 3:16*





# *Preparing for a Catholic Funeral*



## Acknowledgments



**Catholic  
Communication  
Campaign**

CONNECT WITH CHRIST



## Catholic Cemeteries

—  
A Ministry of the Archdiocese of Newark  
For Our Catholic Community For Over 160 Years



[www.catholicburialtraditions.org](http://www.catholicburialtraditions.org)