



Anointing of the Sick

St. Matthew will celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick during Mass the weekend of May 31 and June 1. People of all ages who are in need of healing of body and soul are welcome to come forward and take part.

We ask that you write your name on a name tag so the presider can say your name as you receive the sacrament.

Due to the fact that these Masses will draw a number of vulnerable individuals, we ask that all members of the community wear a mask to those services. Masks will be provided at the doors.

Our Motto at St. Matthew's is to strive to be the Good Samaritan on the banks of the Mississippi.

St. Francis explains that the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10-35) is a "biblical icon" which reveals the mystery of grace within the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

When we celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, Jesus is made present to those who suffer serious illness. The priest, as the Good Samaritan, tends to the traveler on the road by pouring oil and wine on his wounds. Traditionally, olive oil is used for anointing of the sick. Olives recall for us the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane where Christ himself suffered and prayed before being handed over. The other salve, wine, is the symbol of Christ's love and grace, flowing from the gift of His life for us, which we celebrate each Sunday in the Eucharist.

After tending to the injured man himself, the Samaritan passes the care of the suffering traveler onto an innkeeper, expressing that he will repay any debt for the care of the injured man upon his return. The innkeeper in this parable represents the Church. It is our community that is entrusted with

the responsibility to tend to those afflicted in body and spirit. We are challenged in this parable to show God's mercy to those who suffer every day. Pope Francis called us to be Church as a field hospital, focusing on caring for those who suffer, rather than looking out for our own interests. (Pope Francis, General Audience, Saint Peter's Square, Wednesday, 26 February 2014.)

The other scriptural passage that helps us to understand the divine institution of Anointing of the Sick (declared at the Council of Trent (1545-1563)) is 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."

We believe that Jesus is truly present, and like a loving parent, holds us, rubs our backs, and reminds us that we belong to Him and nothing – not even evil and death – can separate us from Him. As a parent, it amazes me that I have a similar power when my child is hurting. That even if I cannot always make the pain go away, just holding my child brings him a level of peace. Anointing of the Sick should not cause us to obsess over searching for miracles to our suffering, or create a false sense of hope that physical healing will always occur. We can, however, find solace in knowing that our God and our community embrace us, love us, care for us, and will not leave us.

Cristina Czaia
Director of Music and Liturgy
cczaia@st-matts.org



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