



Scripture Reference

Old Testament

Anointing oil, mentioned 20 times in Scripture, was used in the Old Testament for pouring on the head of the high priest and his descendants and sprinkling the tabernacle and its furnishings to mark them as holy and set apart to the Lord ([Exodus 25:6](#); [Leviticus 8:30](#); [Numbers 4:16](#)). Three times it is called the "holy, anointing oil," and the Jews were strictly forbidden from reproducing it for personal use ([Exodus 30:32-33](#)). The recipe for anointing oil is found in [Exodus 30:23-24](#); it contained myrrh, cinnamon and other natural ingredients. There is no indication that the oil or the ingredients had any supernatural power. Rather, the strictness of the guidelines for creating the oil was a test of the obedience of the Israelites and a demonstration of the absolute holiness of God.

New Testament

A few New Testament passages refer to the practice of anointing with oil, and none of them offer an explanation for its use. We can draw our conclusions from context. In [Matthew 6:17](#) Jesus mentions the everyday practice of anointing oneself with oil. In [Mark 6:13](#) the disciples anoint the sick and heal them. In all four Gospels, a woman anoints Jesus as a sacrificial act of worship ([Matthew 26:6–13](#); [Mark 14:3–9](#); [Luke 7:36–50](#); [John 12:1–8](#)). In [James 5:14](#) the church elders anoint the sick with oil for healing. In [Hebrews 1:8–9](#) God says to Christ as He returns triumphantly to heaven, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever,” and God anoints Jesus “with the oil of gladness.”

Biblical Background of the Anointing of the Sick

The sacrament took shape from the healings of Jesus and the practices of his first followers. It drew heavily from the passage from James 5:14-16: “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, 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.**” (NAB)

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The elders had the specific role of **praying over the sick** and **anointing them with oil**, which they understood to be endowed with special power from the Holy Spirit. Believers should believe they would be **saved, raised, forgiven and healed.**

Anointing of the Sick

- Used to be called "**Extreme Unction**" ("unction" means "anointing")
- Also called "Last Rites"
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- Vatican II restored the sacrament for physical and spiritual healing for ALL seriously ill persons, not just the dying

Anointing of the Sick

- The anointing of the sick was then to be seen as an expression of God's presence in the midst of human illness and Christ's healing power and **concern for all those who are seriously sick.** (SC 73-75)
- The anointing of the sick, by which the Church commends the faithful who are dangerously ill to the suffering and glorified Lord in order that he relieve and save them, **is conferred by anointing them with oil and pronouncing the words prescribed in the liturgical books.** (Cann. 998)

Origin of the Sacrament

- Healing Ministry of Jesus
 - Jesus heals the sick, lame, paralyzed, blind, deaf, and the possessed
- Jesus bestows healing ministry on his Apostles
 - **“Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.” (Matthew 10)**
- Healing ministry passes from Apostles to the Church
 - **“Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the Church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.” (James 5:14)**

Who may receive the sacrament?

- **Individuals:** Any person who is
 - ▣ Seriously ill (in body, mind, or spirit)
 - ▣ Seriously weakened by advanced age
 - ▣ Scheduled for serious or life-threatening surgery
- **A Parish Community:** Parishes may hold a special Mass of Anointing for any who need the sacrament

Two provisions exist in the Church's general law

- **The kind of desire a person must have to receive anointing**
- **The people who are living in notorious sin**

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The kind of desire a person must have to receive anointing

- This sacrament is to be administered to the sick who, when they were in possession of their faculties, at least implicitly asked for it (Canon 1006).

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The people who are living in notorious sin

- The Anointing of the Sick is not to be conferred upon those who obstinately persist in a manifestly grave sin (Canon 1007).

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- **The kind of desire a person must have to receive anointing**
- **The people who are living in notorious sin**

Between these two situations lies the whole issue of having the proper dispositions to receive the graces available through anointing.

Two kinds of blessing which this sacrament confers

- **The principal blessing is for the soul**
- **The secondary is for the body**

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- **The principal blessing is for the soul**
- **The secondary is for the body**
- ✓ The guilt of mortal sin is removed, so that a sinner is restored to God's friendship
- ✓ The eternal punishment due to mortal sin is also removed
- ✓ The guilt and temporal punishment of venial sins are removed

What are the essential elements of the sacrament?

- Oil of the Sick
 - ▣ Blessed by the Bishop with the other Holy Oils
 - ▣ In emergency, any vegetable oil may be used
- Laying on of Hands and Prayer
 - ▣ Minister anoints the forehead and hands of afflicted and prays over him or her



Where is the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick administered?

- Anywhere!
 - ▣ Hospital, private home, retirement home, etc.
 - ▣ Parish church during Mass of Anointing
- (The other sacraments are usually performed in a church)



What are the effects of the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick?

- God's healing grace
- Forgiveness of venial sins
- Physical cure is **possible**



Some truths about healing

- Medical professionals can **cure**.
- Healing, on the other hand...
 - ▣ Can be emotional and spiritual
 - ▣ Comes through the love and kindness of others
 - ▣ Comes through the holy oil of the Sacrament Of Anointing.

The priest is the one who prays, and it is God who heals, for the sacrament is not a person's work but the work of God.