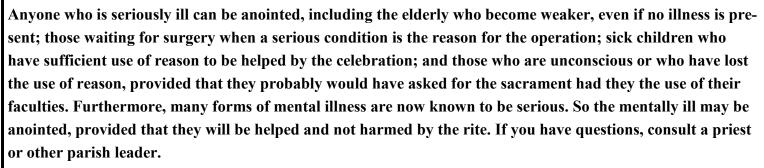
Anointing of the Sick: The Mystery of Illness

e get hurt. We wear out. The lungs, the eyes, the memory, and any of the many limbs and organs that compose us break or ache.
Gloom comes over us then: pity for ourselves, sorrow, depression, anger. But hope

can come, too, and courage, and sometimes peace.

All of this is marked and celebrated in the rites of our tradition. With a word and a deed, with touch and breath and spit and mud, Jesus heals those who ail. In every place and time, we who are the church remember and tell stories of healing, anoint the sick with oil and share the one bread even with those who cannot assemble for Mass. Thus the sick and the healthy, the homebound and the spry,

saints and sinners are made one and remain one, a single body of many parts.



The most complete celebration of the sacrament is a communal one, a celebration in which those to be anointed are surrounded and supported by other members of the Christian community, whether at home, or in the house of the church (for those who can leave their beds and come here). In song and in silence, with scriptures and prayers, we strengthen the bonds of love and faith that are stronger than the most lethal disease and more powerful even than death.

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