

**“But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.”
(Mal 4:2)**

✠ Lecture XVIII: The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick ✠

There are two Sacraments for ‘healing’; one for spiritual illness, which is the Sacrament of Repentance & Confession, the other for physical and psychological illness, which is the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

✠ Institution of The Sacrament:

We do not know the exact time or occasion when our Lord instituted this Sacrament, which is no surprise for there are many things that the Lord did that were not written one by one (**Jn 21:25**), but we know that the Lord said:

- “Heal the sick, cleanse the leper.” (**Mt 10:8**)
- “Whatever city you enter, and they received you ... heal the sick who are there.” (**Lk 10:8-9**)

We also know that the disciples:

- “Anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.” (**Mk 6:13**)

→ It is understood that the apostles, having been sent by the Lord, were instructed to do so.

St. James also said:

- “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders (priests) 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, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” (**Jam 5:14-16**)

→ Here St. James is talking about both the Sacraments of Confession and Anointing of the Sick. This is not an ordinary means of healing sickness because it is administered by the priests and not by any person. Since the apostles did not preach their own gospel but delivered to us what they had previously received from the Lord, Therefore, St. James must have received this teaching directly from the Lord.

✠ FAQ:

Q1: Why do people sometimes receive this Sacrament and yet are not healed?

A1: It could be because of their lack of faith, “He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (**Mt 13:58**) or it could be that God in His wisdom sees that this illness is beneficial to the person’s spiritual life as the case with St. Paul who prayed three times to be healed but God said to him, “My strength is made perfect in weakness” (**2 Cor 12:9**). We need to understand that in this Sacrament we do not dictate to God what to do but rather ask for his mercies.

Q2: Why does the Church perform this Sacrament to the whole congregation on the last Friday of the Lent?

A2: During the Holy Week of Pascha, the Church does not perform this Sacrament and therefore performs it and anoints the entire congregation on the last Friday of the Lent. Moreover, many are weak from fasting and this anointing helps them to continue with the scheduled prayers and food abstinence of the Pascha.

* This lecture is adapted from, ‘*The Church Sacraments*’ by Archdeacon Habib Guirgess.