

Sacramental Guidelines

Diocese of Pueblo



**ANOINTING OF THE SICK
VIATICUM**

2011

Spring 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Following you will find Diocese of Pueblo *Sacramental Guidelines for the Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum*. I promulgate them to clarify the gifts offered us through the sacraments of Anointing and Eucharist, the proper place of their celebration at the times of illness and death and to assist you in reflecting on the immense opportunity for evangelization and pastoral care these sacramental celebrations afford us as a people of faith.

These guidelines are the result of recommendations by the Lifelong Catechesis Commission and extensive consultations across the Diocese of Pueblo with priests, deacons and catechetical leaders. They have been reviewed as well by members of the diocesan staff. I offer my heartfelt thanks to all those who participated in the consultations. Their reflection, discernment and insight have made this work practical, helpful and faithful.

At their heart, these guidelines invite us to embrace illness as an opportunity for God's healing grace and a deep experience of the Christian community's tender care. They invite us as well to embrace the ministry surrounding the dying of a loved one as a life-giving opportunity for deep consolation, gracious comfort and tender care in the Lord as the dying prepare to go home and the living bid their farewell. Illness and death call us, these guidelines proclaim, to deep personal experience of the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ in itself and in our own bodies. How desperately we need to hear this message in our culture! How enormously important that we offer the faithful in Jesus Christ a thoroughgoing catechesis about the pulsating life God offers each of us through sacrament even in sickness and at the time of death!

I pray that we ministers of these sacred rites will take strong initiative to celebrate Anointing and Viaticum with our people when they are able to participate fully and well. I pray that our ministry to the ill and dying, and their families, will call them and all of us to see clearly and experience profoundly the fullness of consoling grace and transforming power that is paschal mystery in times of sickness and at the time of death.

Therefore with this letter I add these norms to the *Sacramental Guidelines for the Diocese of Pueblo*.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Fernando Isern, D.D.
Bishop of Pueblo

Anointing of the Sick

POLICY¹

Background on Illness:

1. Sickness has meaning and value for the salvation of those who are ill and for the World (PCS 1).
 - Sickness cannot be regarded as a punishment inflicted for personal sins (PCS 2).
 - We should fight strenuously against all sickness and carefully seek the blessings of good health (PCS 3).
 - Yet we should be prepared to fill up what is lacking in Christ's sufferings for the salvation of the world (PCS 3)
2. The role of the sick in the Church is to be a reminder of the essential or higher things; by their witness the sick show that our mortal life must be redeemed through the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection (PCS 3).
3. 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 faith (PCS 6).

The Sacramental Anointing Itself (AC²):

4. Through the sacrament of anointing, Christ strengthens the faithful who are afflicted by illness, providing them the strongest means of support (PCS 5).
5. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is given to those who are seriously ill by anointing them on the forehead and hands with blessed olive oil.
6. If circumstances warrant, another blessed plant oil may be used to administer the sacrament.
7. The administration of the sacrament includes saying once only these words:

Through this holy anointing
May the Lord in his love and mercy help you
With the grace of the Holy Spirit

May the Lord who frees you from sin
Save you and raise you up.

¹ Beyond Diocese-wide consultation, the following sources are used for the policies in this area and it is indicated in parentheses in the text: *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*, (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1983). This resource will be indicated by (PCS) in the text. The *Code of Canon Law* will be referred to in the text by (can. ---).

² When (AC) appears in the text, it refers to the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Paul VI that promulgated the new rite on 30 November 1972.

8. The first part of the text ought to be said as the forehead is anointed, the second as the hands are anointed (PCS 23).
9. In case of necessity, a single anointing may be given on the forehead.
10. Because of the particular condition of the sick person, a single anointing may be given on another suitable part of the body.

Recipients of the Sacrament:

11. Great care and concern should be taken to see that those of the faithful whose health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age receive this sacrament (PCS 8).
Pastoral Note: *The Diocese of Pueblo encourages pastors and parish life administrators to be most solicitous of the seriously ill, taking initiative to see to it that this sacrament is celebrated with them in a timely fashion – that is, when the sick person is conscious and able to participate – and in a consoling way.*
12. The sacrament should be administered to those whose health is seriously impaired (PCS 8, 99):
 - A sick person may be anointed before surgery whenever a serious illness is reason for the surgery (PCS 10).
 - A frail elderly person may be anointed if they have become notably weakened even though no serious illness is present (PCS 11).
 - Sick children may be anointed if they have sufficient use of reason to be strengthened by this sacrament; in case of doubt as to whether the child has reached the age of reason, the sacrament is to be conferred (PCS 12).
 - The sacrament may be conferred upon sick people who have lost consciousness or the use of reason if they would probably have asked for it were they in control of their faculties (PCS 14).

Pastoral Note #1: *Neither gravely, nor dangerously nor perilously was selected in the translation of the Latin word periculose. The sacrament should be given only to those whose health would be considered seriously impaired.*

Pastoral Note #2: *The sacrament may not be given indiscriminately or to any person whose health is not impaired. To do so is considered an abuse of the sacrament (PCS 99). Special care should be taken in communal celebrations of the sacrament to see to it that the sacrament is not abused.*

Pastoral Note #3: *In our time other appropriate subjects for the sacrament include people:*

- *suffering chronic depression*
- *suffering from psychological disease*
- *who are fresh into or out of chemical dependency treatment.*

13. The sacrament may be repeated (AC, PCS 9, 102):
- if the sick person recovers after being anointed and then falls ill
 - if, during the same illness, the sick person's condition becomes more serious.
 - In the case of the chronically ill or elderly in a weakened condition, the sacrament may be repeated when in the pastoral judgment of the priest the condition of the sick person warrants the repetition of the sacrament (PCS 102).

Pastoral Note: Care should be taken to chart the administration of the sacrament in hospital, nursing home and hospice records, and to have the chart checked or speak to a family member or chaplain before administering the sacrament.

14. The priest should ensure that the abuse of delaying the reception of the sacrament does not occur and that the celebration takes place while the sick person is capable of active participation (PCS 99).

15. The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is NOT be administered to those who are already dead (PCS 15, 263).

- If the priest is doubtful of death, he may administer the sacrament.

Pastoral Note: In this case, the sacrament is administered conditionally, and the sacramental form is introduced with the words: "If life is in you ..."

- In the case of the certainty of death, the priest ought to pray for the person who has died, and ask those attending to do so using some of the prayers suggested at the end of "Commendation of the Dying" (PCS 220, 221) asking God to forgive them and graciously receive them into paradise.

Non-Catholics and Anointing

16. A person must be baptized in order to receive sacraments (can. 842):
- Prayers for the sick, commendation for the dying and prayers after death may be offered for the unbaptized.
 - If the dying person asks for baptism, he or she should be baptized as soon as possible.
17. In ordinary circumstances the sacrament may be licitly administered only to Catholics.
- Priests may anoint Orthodox Christians and those in canonical equivalent Churches when those persons ask for the sacrament on their own and are properly disposed (can. 844:3).
 - Protestants may be anointed in danger of death or in grave necessity when they cannot approach a minister of their own denomination provided (can. 844:4):
 - they ask for the sacrament on their own
 - manifest a Catholic faith in the sacrament
 - are properly disposed.
 - Mormons, whose baptism is not recognized by the Catholic Church, and other non-baptized persons may not be anointed.

Ministers of the Sacrament:

18. A bishop or priest are the only proper ministers of this sacrament (PCS 16).
19. The minister of the sacrament has the responsibility of preparing and helping the sick, and others who are present, for the celebration of the sacrament (PCS 17).
Pastoral Note: At least some words of “orientation” for the sick person and the family are required to help everyone to understand
 - the essential meaning of the sacrament
 - the sacramental words and gestures
 - the shape of their participation.
20. Priests other than the pastor, his delegate, a major superior or the chaplain of the place may confer the sacrament with the consent of the bishop, the pastor of the place or the major superior (PCS 18).
21. In the case of necessity, consent may be presumed. The pastor, hospital chaplain or major superior, however, should be informed of the anointing (PCS 18).
22. When two or more priests are present, one priest says the prayers and carries out the anointing. Others may lay hands on the sick person.

Requirements for the Celebration of the Sacrament:

23. The matter for the sacrament is olive oil or, according to circumstances, other oil derived from plants (PCS 20).
24. The oil must be blessed by the bishop or a priest who has the faculty (PCS 21).
25. The oil ordinarily used ought to be that blessed by the Bishop (PCS 21).
26. If a priest blesses the oil (PCS 22):
 - The oil needs to come from plants.
 - It should be in a suitable vessel.
 - If oil remains after the sacrament, it should be absorbed in cotton and burned.
27. If oil blessed by the bishop is used (PCS 22):
 - It should be kept in a suitable vessel.
 - It should be kept ordinarily in a place that shows proper respect.
 - It should be fit for use and replenished from time to time, at least yearly.

The Celebration of the Sacrament

28. When the priest prepares to celebrate the sacrament, he should ask about the condition of the sick person, taking this information into account in planning for the rite, choosing readings and prayers, deciding whether he will celebrate Mass when viaticum is to be given (PCS 37).
29. As far as possible, the priest should arrange for planning with the sick person and the family beforehand, and include in the planning explanation of the meaning of the sacraments (PCS 37).
30. Penance and Anointing (PCS 113):
 - If the sick person wishes to celebrate Penance, it is preferable that the priest make himself available for this during a previous visit.
 - If it is necessary for the sick person to confess during the celebration, this takes the place of the penitential rite.

31. In the celebration of the sacraments, the priest should stir up the hope of those present and strengthen their faith in Christ who suffered and is glorified (PCS 35).
32. If the anointing is to be an effective sacramental symbol, there should be a generous use of oil so that it will be seen and felt by the sick person as a sign of the Spirit's healing and strengthening presence (PCS 107).
33. For the same reason, it is not desirable to wipe off the oil after the anointing (PCS 107).

Adaptations by the Minister:

34. The minister should take into account the particular circumstances, needs and desires of the sick and other members of the faithful and should willingly use the various options and opportunities for ministry (lectoring, laying on of hands, etc.) that the rites provide (PCS 40).
 - Because of the sick person's tiredness and changing needs, the rites may be shortened if necessary.
 - When there is no group of faithful present, the priest should remember that the Church is present in his own person and in the one who is ill.
 - Sick persons who recover should be encouraged to give thanks for the favor received by participating in a Mass of thanksgiving or by some other suitable means.
35. The priest should follow the structure of the rite while accommodating it to the place and the people involved (PCS 41):
 - The penitential rite may be part of the introductory rite or take place after the reading from Scripture
 - In place of the thanksgiving over the oil the priest may give an instruction, particularly when:
 - the sick person is in a hospital
 - other sick people present do not take part in the sacramental celebration

Sudden Circumstances/Imminent Death:

36. For special cases, when sudden illness or some other cause has unexpectedly placed someone in danger of death, a continuous rite is provided by which the person may receive penance, anointing and the Eucharist as viaticum (PCS 30).
37. If death is imminent and there is not enough time to celebrate the three sacraments as described, the sick person should be given the opportunity to make a sacramental confession and then should receive viaticum. If there is sufficient time, the sick person should be anointed (PCS 30).
38. The sick person who, because of the nature of the illness, cannot receive communion, should be anointed (PCS 30).

The Apostolic Pardon:

39. When the Sacrament of Anointing is celebrated in the continuous rite (which includes viaticum) and within Mass, the prayer of Apostolic Pardon may be offered by the priest before the dismissal (PCS 195).

40. When the Sacrament of Anointing is celebrated in the continuous rite (which includes viaticum) outside Mass, the prayer of Apostolic Pardon may be offered by the priest at the conclusion of the sacrament of penance or the penitential rite (PCS 201).

Anointing of the Sick Within Mass:

41. In order to better:
 - meet the pastoral needs of our people
 - honor the role of the sick within our parish and Diocesan communities
 - emphasize the importance in the life of the Church of the sacrament itself
 - offer opportunity for parish-wide and diocese-wide catechesis
 - experience the beauty and power of the sacrament,

the Diocese of Pueblo encourages every parish and/or parish cluster, or even perhaps deaneries – if possible – to celebrate the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick communally within all Sunday celebrations at least once per year.

Pastoral Note: This annual celebration might be scheduled:

 - late in the liturgical year prior to or on the weekend of the Solemnity of Jesus Christ Our Universal Lord and King, before the snow falls and the infirm are confined;
 - on the annual weekend each February commemorating the sick;
 - on one of the Sundays of Eastertide.
42. The ritual Mass for the Anointing of the Sick would be permitted except for the following occasions:
 - During the Easter Triduum
 - On the solemnities of Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi and those solemnities that are a holy day of obligation
 - On the Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter seasons
 - On Ash Wednesday
 - On the weekdays of Holy Week

Pastoral Note: Though the use of the ritual Mass is restricted, the sacrament may nonetheless be celebrated communally on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter season.
43. In these celebrations, the pastor or parish life administrator should ensure that all disciplinary norms concerning anointing are observed, as well as the norms for pastoral preparation and liturgical celebration (PCS 108).
44. The practice of indiscriminately anointing numbers of people on these occasions simply because they are ill or have reached advanced age should be avoided (PCS 108).

Pastoral Note: Only those whose health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age are proper subjects for the sacrament (see #s 7–9 above).

45. The full participation of those present must be fostered by every means so the celebration manifests the Easter joy that is proper to this sacrament (PCS 108).
46. The communal rite begins with a greeting followed by a reception for the sick (PCS 135), which is a sympathetic expression of Christ's concern for those who are ill and of the role of the sick in the people of God (PCS 109).
47. If there are large numbers of sick people to be anointed, other priests may assist the presider (PCS 110).
 - Each priest lays hands on some of the sick.
 - Each priest anoints using the sacramental form.
 - Everything else is done once for all.
 - The prayers are said in the plural by the presider.
48. The Diocese of Pueblo encourages the celebration of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick within Mass whenever possible either for individual persons or for groups of persons.
Pastoral Note: This practice can be immensely consoling for the sick person and the family even when they are invited to anointing within daily Eucharist.
49. For large numbers of persons, the Diocese of Pueblo discourages the celebration of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick outside Mass or adjacent to Mass.

Catechesis for the Sacrament:

50. The faithful should be educated and formed to ask for the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick when the right time comes, and to receive it with full faith and devotion (PCS 13).
Pastoral Note: The Diocese recommends that the faithful be instructed about the sacrament at least once yearly either in preaching, the bulletin, in an educational event or in some combination of the above. Preparation for communal Anointing of the Sick and/or the annual weekend each February commemorating the sick might be ideal occasions.
51. The faithful should not follow the wrongful practice of delaying the reception of the sacrament (PCS 13).
Pastoral Note: Because the faithful have learned so very well the practice of calling for the sacrament of "extreme unction" at the time of death, and because they are often inclined to delay even that request until a dying person is unconscious, catechesis around the sacrament needs to stress that the sacrament is for the ill and the conscious.
52. All who care for the sick should be taught the meaning and purpose of the sacrament (PCS 13).

Viaticum for the Dying

POLICY

The Critical Importance of Viaticum:

1. All baptized Catholics who are able to receive communion are obliged to receive viaticum by reason of the precept to receive communion when in danger of death for any cause (PCS 27).
Pastoral Note #1: Catholic ministers may licitly administer the sacraments of penance, Eucharist and anointing of the sick to members of the oriental churches which do not have full communion with the Catholic Church, if they ask on their own for the sacraments and are properly disposed (can. 844:3).
Pastoral Note #2: If the danger of death is present or other grave necessity, Catholic ministers may licitly administer these sacraments to other Christians who do not have full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and on their own ask for it, provided they manifest Catholic faith in these sacraments and are properly disposed (can. 844:4).
2. Priests with pastoral responsibility (pastors, chaplains) must see that celebration of viaticum is not delayed, but that the faithful are nourished by it while still in possession of their faculties (PCS 27).

The Ministers of Viaticum:

3. The bishop, pastor or major superior of a religious institute are the proper ministers of viaticum (PCS 29).
4. In case of necessity, priests other than the pastor or major superior may celebrate viaticum (PCS 29).
5. If no priest is available, viaticum may be brought to the sick by a deacon or a member of the faithful duly appointed (PCS 29).
 - If a deacon brings viaticum, he follows the rite prescribed in the ritual.
 - If a member of the faithful brings viaticum, he or she follows the rite ordinarily used for the distribution of communion, but with the special words given in the ritual for the rite of viaticum (PCS 29; see PCS 207).

The Celebration of Viaticum within Mass:

6. When possible, viaticum – a special sign of participation in the mystery celebrated in the Eucharist – ought to be received within Mass so the dying person may receive under both kinds (PCS 26).
Pastoral Note: The Diocese of Pueblo encourages pastors and parish life administrators to be most solicitous of the seriously ill, taking initiative to see to it that viaticum is celebrated with them in a timely fashion – that is, when the sick person is conscious and able to participate – and in a consoling way.

The Celebration of Viaticum:

7. When the priest prepares to celebrate the sacrament, he should ask about the condition of the sick person, taking this information into account in planning for the rite, choosing readings and prayers, deciding whether he will celebrate Mass when viaticum is to be given (PCS 37).
8. As far as possible, the priest should arrange for planning with the sick person and the family beforehand, and include in the planning explanation of the meaning of the sacraments (PCS 37).
9. In the celebration of the sacraments, the priest should strive to stir up the hope of those present and strengthen their faith in Christ who suffered and is glorified (PCS 35).

The Apostolic Pardon:

10. When viaticum is distributed within Mass, the prayer of Apostolic Pardon may be offered by the priest before the dismissal (PCS 195).
11. When viaticum is distributed outside Mass, the prayer of Apostolic Pardon may be offered by the priest at the conclusion of the sacrament of penance or the penitential rite (PCS 201).

Sudden Illness/Imminent Death:

12. For special cases, when sudden illness or some other cause has unexpectedly placed someone in danger of death, a continuous rite is provided by which the person may receive penance, anointing and the Eucharist as viaticum (PCS 30).
13. If death is imminent and there is not enough time to celebrate the three sacraments as described, the sick person should be given the opportunity to make a sacramental confession, and then should receive viaticum (PCS 30)
14. The sick person who, because of the nature of the illness, cannot receive communion, should be anointed (PCS 30).
15. It is desirable that during the celebration of viaticum Christians renew their profession of faith (PCS 28).

Confirmation in Danger of Death:

16. In danger of death, the bishop should be called to administer confirmation.
17. In danger of death, if the Bishop is not easily available or is lawfully impeded, the law gives the faculty to confirm to the following, and in this order:
 - pastors
 - parochial vicars
 - priests who are in charge of special parishes lawfully established
 - any priest who is not under censure or canonical penalty.

Pastoral Note: Priests are advised to keep chrism with them in the kit they carry for administering Anointing of the Sick.

Catechesis for Viaticum:

18. Because all baptized Christians who are able to receive communion are bound to receive viaticum by reason of the precept to receive communion when in danger of death for any cause (PCS 27), the faithful should be educated to ask for viaticum when the right time comes, and to receive it with full faith and devotion (PCS 13, 36).

Pastoral Note: The Diocese recommends that the faithful be instructed about the sacrament at least once yearly either in preaching, the bulletin in an educational event or some combination of the above (Please see #46 above for specific recommendations).

19. The faithful should not follow the wrongful practice of delaying the reception of viaticum (PCS 13, 36).

Pastoral Note: Because the faithful have learned so very well the practice of calling for the sacrament of “extreme unction” at the time of death, and because they are often inclined to delay the request for viaticum until a dying person is unconscious, catechesis around the obligation, necessity and appropriateness of viaticum as “the sacrament for the dying” needs to be stressed.

20. All who care for the sick should be taught the meaning and purpose of viaticum (PCS 13, 36).