

## Homily 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year A (*Anointing of the Sick*) 2023

### **Pope Francis:**

Every time we celebrate the *sacrament of the sick*, the Lord Jesus, in the person of the priest, comes close to those who suffer and are gravely ill or elderly.

The special grace of this sacrament should not cause us to fall into an obsessive search for a miracle or the presumption that it can always obtain healing. It is about the certainty of the closeness of Jesus to the sick, the elderly.

The practice of this sacrament comes from Christ himself who taught his disciples to have the same preference for the sick and the suffering, and handed down to them the ability and the responsibility to continue to offer it in his name and after his own heart by offering comfort and peace.

The parable of the Good Samaritan presents a man who has been beaten, robbed, and left lying for dead on the side of the road, being ignored by everyone except for a Samaritan man who not only stops to care for him, binding up all his wounds, but then takes the sick man to an inn and pays for him to be cared for there.

The Good Samaritan takes care of the suffering man, pouring oil and wine on his wounds.

The oil makes us think about the oil of the sick blessed by the Cardinal each year at the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday.

The wine, however, is a sign of the love and grace of Christ that comes from the gift of his life for us, and which expresses itself in all its richness in the sacramental life of the Church.

Finally, the suffering person is entrusted to an innkeeper, so that he can continue to take care of him, no expense spared.

Now, what is this inn? It is the Church, the Christian community, it is we to whom every day the Lord Jesus entrusts those who are afflicted in body and spirit, so that we can continue to bestow upon them, without measure, all his mercy and salvation.

Sometimes the sick or elderly are afraid to call the priest for anointing of the sick because they think it brings bad luck or that after his visit comes the funeral. **That is not true!** The priest comes to help the sick or the elderly. This is why it is so important for priests to visit the sick. Call him because it is Jesus who comes to lift up (the sick person), to give the person strength, to give hope, to offer help and to forgive sins. And this is beautiful!"

Jesus, we know healed people of evil spirits. These evil spirits go by many names all of which bring us great suffering and torment viz: grieving a broken heart, a miscarriage, an abortion, a dire medical diagnosis, a bankruptcy, the loss of a job, a divorce, a forced retirement, a rejection in love, the death of a cherished dream, the movement into assisted living, the adjustment to an empty nest within a marriage, barrenness, and frustrations of every kind. The sacrament of the sick is a particular way in which Christ through his church wants to bring healing. It will not necessarily heal you instantly but it is an important step in the process. The grace of God strengthens as well as heals, it reassures as well as eases pain, it is uplifting towards the light from a place of darkness. **It is a gift of God's pure love!**

### **Prayer for the Sick:**

*God of hope and healing,  
be with those whose bodies burn with fever,  
rage with pain, struggle for breath,  
cry out for limbs that used to be,  
or crave addictive substances.  
Be with those whose minds and emotions  
face the wait of a diagnosis,*

*wrestle with the choices for treatment,  
adapt to a life altered by chronic illness,  
recover from abuse,  
or push against the encroaching clouds of dementia.  
Be with those whose spirits are exhausted by the quest for health,  
doubt the existence of love, question the fairness of life,  
or stare into the face of death.  
Cool the fever, bring balm to the pain,  
ease the fight for air, adapt the body for new ways to move,  
and calm the cravings.  
Ease anxiety and fear.  
Build trust in your everlasting love and care.  
God of all, hear our prayer. Amen.*

**An elderly lady slipped** and strained her knee. Her doctor bandaged it and warned her, 'If you don't take great care, it's unlikely to heal properly. Don't rush around and **don't climb any stairs!**'

A fortnight later the old lady returned to have the bandage removed. The doctor was delighted to see that the leg had healed perfectly. *'Thank goodness for that!'* said the old dear. *'I can't tell you what a fool I've felt, shinning up and down the drainpipe.'*