

Mass of Anointing of the Sick

Our Lady of Good Counsel

6 October 2018

Dear brother priests, and brothers and sisters in Christ:

Introduction

On this First Saturday of the Month of the Holy Rosary, we honour the Immaculate Heart of Mary and recall her apparition to the three children at Fatima a little over a century ago. Mary is with us on our journey through life. Her heart, her love, is with us. She is by our side, offering us strength, guidance and consolation.

Anointing

In a few minutes we shall proceed with the Rite of the Anointing of the Sick, that Sacrament by which Jesus himself continues his healing ministry in the Church. As we heard in the Gospel, Jesus cured the sick – here Peter’s mother-in-law – when he was called upon. Likewise, he “taught his disciples to have the same preferential love that he did for the sick and suffering, and he transmitted to them the ability and duty to continue providing, in his name and after his own heart, relief and peace through the special grace of this Sacrament.”¹

From the Scriptures, we know that this was already the Church’s practice at the time of the Apostles.

Most often but also most profoundly, this healing is one of the will,

¹ Francis, General Audience (26 February 2014).

leading us to accept more joyfully what the Father asks of us.

Dear friends who are to be anointed: in the Sacrament of the Sick remember that you will receive a special consecration which links you with Jesus' redemptive Passion.

The physical material used in the Sacrament we are celebrating this morning is the Oil of the Sick which I blessed at the Chrism Mass during Holy Week last year in Holy Rosary Cathedral.

In the Anointing of the Sick, then, we are reminded that we belong to Christ – and have belonged to him since our first anointing at Baptism when he claimed us as his own. Now the Oil of the Sick is offered to us as the assurance of his closeness, offering us strength and consolation to bear our infirmities. But, at the same time, it points beyond this time of illness towards our definitive healing, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.²

² Cf. Benedict XVI, Homily, Chrism Mass (1 April 2010).

In the beautiful words of Pope Francis, the greatest comfort that this Sacrament gives “comes from the fact that it is the Lord Jesus himself who makes himself present, . . . who takes us by the hand, who caresses us as he did with the sick, and who reminds us that we already belong to him and that nothing – not even evil and death – can ever separate us from him.”³

Conclusion

Let us now entrust ourselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel and Our Mother of Mercy. To her we turn with trust, certain that she will accompany us in our sickness and suffering, just as she accompanied her Son on the way to Calvary and kept watch at the foot of the Cross.

✦ J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver

³ Francis, General Audience (26 February 2014).