
POSITION STATEMENT 2017-A

PASSED 96.3% YES 3.7% NO

RATIONALE

There should always be an urgency to tend to the pastoral and spiritual needs of the sick and dying. We should do no less than to bring them the grace of the sacraments, the compassionate concern of our parish communities, and the very real hope of Christ's promise to be with them always.

How we tend to these needs is sometimes a matter of concern. Over the past several decades, there seems to be an increase in "healing services" that have become part of parish missions. Itinerant preachers have promised miracles or promoted revivals. Infrequent communal celebrations for healing have sometimes replaced pastoral visits to the sick. Often, parishioners need catechesis on the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick -- they still question how often one might receive it, who may receive it, and if it is reserved for someone near death. In some circles, there is even confusion about who may administer the sacrament.

POSITION STATEMENT

Whereas, the Judeo-Christian faith has a long-standing tradition of praying for the welfare and healing of those who are infirmed or suffering in any way;

Whereas, the Christian Church has employed for centuries the example of Christ in offering prayers for the sick and assisting their caregivers;

Whereas, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on September 14, 2000 issued a document that addressed certain issues concerning the disciplinary norms that affect the liturgical celebration of rites and blessings for the infirmed, "Instructions on the Prayers for Healing;"

Whereas, over the past several decades there continues to be a proliferation of so-called "Healing Masses" and "Healing Services" throughout the Church in the United States of America;

Whereas, continuing catechesis and formation are necessary for all the faithful in order to know the best orthopraxis of the Church in offering both prayers and rituals for the sick;

1. It is the position of the delegates to the 2017 National Meeting of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions that
2. resources be developed that can assist bishops and dioceses
3. in providing direction and pastoral assistance
4. for promoting the proper liturgical celebration of the treasury of the rites
5. that the Church offers in her ritual books for the pastoral care of the sick.

We request that a timeline be established by the Board of Directors at their January 2018 meeting.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHURCH DOCUMENTS

- Saint John Paul II
Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia* (November 30, 1980)
Apostolic Letter *Salvifici doloris* (1984) *On the salvific meaning of suffering*
Letter to the Elderly (1999)
- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI
Encyclical *Spes Salvi* (November 30, 2007)
- Pope Francis
Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera* (November 20, 2016)
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (September 14, 2000)
“Instruction on the Prayers for Healing” Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect.
- USCCB
Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (2009 edition)
Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities (2017)

BOOK AND ARTICLES

- Dudley, Martin and Rowell, Geoffrey, eds., *The Oil of Gladness: Anointing in the Christian Tradition*. London: SPCK. 1993.
- Glen, Genevieve, ed., *Recovering the Riches of Anointing: A Study of the Sacrament of the Sick*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press. 2002.
- Larson-Miller, Lizette. *The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press. 2005.
- Kasza, John C. *Understanding Sacramental Healing: Anointing and Viaticum*. Chicago: Hillenbrand Books. 2007.
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- O’Connell, Matthew J., trans. *Temple of the Holy Spirit: Sickness and Death of the Christian in the Liturgy*. The Twenty-First Liturgical Conference Saint-Serge. New York: Pueblo Publishing Company. 1983.
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- Woestman, William H. *Sacraments: Initiation, Penance, Anointing of the Sick Commentary on Canons 840-1007*. Ottawa: Faculty of Canon Law Saint Paul University. 2004.
- Kasza, John C., “Anointing of the Sick,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology*, Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering, eds., (Oxford University Press, 2015).