



**AN INTRODUCTION TO
Anointing & Healing**



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Welcome to the ancient ministry of anointing

For millennia, Christians and their forbears have celebrated the gift of applying oil to individuals and objects. This often intimate act has communicated God’s blessing, healing, encouragement, and peace. It is an important of many Christian milestones: baptism, confirmation, healing, and death. It is a sensory expression of God’s healing love that connects the anointer and the anointed with God. As you explore and exercise this ministry may you discover the healing power of the Holy Spirit.

Old/First Testament

Exodus 30:22-30 (NRSV)

²² The LORD spoke to Moses: ²³ Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, two hundred fifty, and two hundred fifty of aromatic cane, ²⁴ and five hundred of cassia—measured by the sanctuary shekel—and a hin of olive oil; ²⁵ and you shall

make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. ²⁶ With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the covenant, ²⁷ and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, ²⁸ and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin with its stand; ²⁹ you shall consecrate them, so that they may be most holy; whatever touches them will become holy. ³⁰ You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, in order that they may serve me as priests.

In the First Testament anointing was used to signify holiness. Ultimately, anything that was anointed was set apart for God.

“Fundamentally the anointing was an act of God (1 Sa. 10:1), and the word ‘anointed’ was used metaphorically to mean the bestowal of divine favour (Pss. 23:5; 92:10) or appointment to a special place or function in the purpose of God (Ps. 105:15; Is. 45:1) (*MESSIAH).”¹

Healing the Sick

Scripture

Isaiah 1:6 (NRSV)

⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds; they have not been drained, or bound up, or softened with oil.

James 5:14 (NRSV)

¹⁴ Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.

Mark 6:13 (NRSV)

¹³ They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

¹D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., 49 (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

Matthew 8:16-17 (NRSV)

¹⁶That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.” (see Isa 53)

The anointing of the sick with oil always appeals to the life-giving Holy Spirit and can be interpreted as setting the nominated illness apart for Christ.²

- What is your experience of healing?

- What is your theology of healing?

- Do you distinguish between healing and wholeness?

²D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall, *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., 49 (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

Ministry of Healing includes two actions. Those ministering may use the laying on of hands, either with or without anointing. It may be used as a service on its own, or be incorporated with any other service where this ministry is appropriate.

Laying on of Hands

From ancient times the laying on of hands has been a symbol for the conveying of God's power.

Among the gifts received from God by this means is that of healing. In Scripture we see this practice commonly used and the healings which ensued.

Anointing

Anointing provides a vivid, sacramental expression of God's love in time of sickness. It is helpful at the onset of an illness, as well as in times of crisis.

The New Testament makes it clear that the anointing of the sick accompanied by prayer was used for healing.

A later practice was to restrict it to the moment of death. While still being available for the dying, its purpose is to convey healing in all sickness.

Preparation: The priest, minister and those seeking healing should prepare beforehand through prayer and instruction.

- How do you prepare for healing?
 - What prayers?
 - How do you prepare the candidate and manage their expectations without undermining the healing Spirit of God?
 - Where is the oil?
 - Where does it come from?
 - If you have no oil can you make your own?
 - What does it go in?

- Where (on the body) can you lay hands?
 - Permission and tradition

- Should anyone else be present?
 - Context, context, context
- Where (on the body) can you anoint with oil?

- Permission and tradition

Prayers and anointing to prepare for an event or comfort the distressed

- As ministers you will be involved in the critical life events of your community members. At times it will be appropriate to offer or respond to requests for anointing.
- ANZPB (747-748) provides a series of prayers for use in critical situations – they are a good foundation.
- What kind of events would you recommend anointing for?

- Is it ok to offer regular anointing?

Reconciliation of Penitent

- At certain times it will be pastorally appropriate to either offer a formal rite of reconciliation or acknowledge that a major penitential event has taken place. It is altogether right to offer anointing on such occasions.
- A formal reconciliation of a penitent is distinct from the rite of absolution: corporate v individual phenomenon.
- A rite for such reconciliation is available in the Prayer Book (750) – you need not use the exact words but get a sense of the structure and intent so that you can adapt to your context.
 - o Assurance of God’s forgiveness
 - o Confession
 - o Absolution (with anointing)
 - o Thanksgiving
- Lay people can perform this rite so long as:
 - o They have a licence
 - o They have been trained
 - o The absolution is appropriately amended
 - o The anointing does not include a formal priestly blessing
 - o Permission is given by the Vicar/priest-in-charge/equivalent

Prayers at a time of death: Extreme Unction

Luke 7:46 (NRSV)

⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.

Mark 14:8 (NRSV)

⁸She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial.

It is the Bishop’s preference that a priest or deacon anoints at a time of death. However, in exceptional circumstances licensed laypeople may offer this ministry.

Where possible the minister ensures that the dying person is prepared beforehand.

The person should be helped to be aware of the nature of her/his condition, and that the time of death is approaching.

If the sick person wishes, The Reconciliation of a Penitent is used.

Prior to this service the person may receive Holy Communion and/or receive anointing.

It is appropriate that those who are gathered (the dying person's family and friends) may receive the Holy Communion together with the dying person.

- As Christ was anointed for death so may we anoint the dying. However, we need to think carefully about what words we would use to describe what's happening. The extreme ends of the spectrum range from a hope for a complete healing to an acceptance of imminent death.
- ANZPB has one prayer for the dying that might facilitate an anointing, 748.

The Rules

A person's authority to exercise the ministry of anointing with consecrated oil is defined in Schedule Four of Statute 18 (The Lay Ministry Licences Statute 2011).

"We ... hereby admit you to the Office of Lay Minister to Anoint with Consecrated Oil whereby you are authorised to perform the duties specified for that office, namely
to exercise "The Ministry of Healing" through the Laying on of Hands and/or Anointing using the Order of Service in the New Zealand Prayer Book/He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa pages 738-745; as requested by the Bishops, the Bishops' lawful nominee or your Vicar.
to be a member of the ministry team
to perform such other duties as shall from time to time be

requested by the Bishops, the Bishops' lawful nominee or your Vicar.

Provided always that you do not use the Absolution or the Blessing; and that you do not use the Great Thanksgiving of a Eucharistic Liturgy; and the Prayer of Consecration of Oil.”

Terminology

<i>Absolution</i>	proclamation of formal release from sin declared by a priest
<i>Blessing</i>	a formal, first-person, priestly proclamation of God's approval, sanctification, consecration, approbation, benediction ('well-wishing')
<i>Great Thanksgiving</i>	any of the prayers intended to consecrate the bread and wine of Holy Communion
<i>Prayer of Consecration</i>	the prayers set aside for a bishop to bless oil for anointing

The Voice of Wisdom and Experience

- Try to learn (by heart) an anointing prayer and blessing, so that if you get caught without a book, you can still provide a ministry, particularly if you are wrestling with your own emotions as well.
- Laypeople need to keep their Vicar/Priest-in-Charge in the loop, preferably before they act. The ministry belongs to the church not an individual.
- A good practice is to record anointing at least in the parish register. It might be a separate register if this is a regular ministry.
- Having a large bottle of oil on the altar for the main Eucharist is a good way of reminding people of the availability of the sacrament; doing the anointing in the service quietly, but visibly, is a good way of educating the congregation.
- A rule of thumb – one anointing for an illness. If more is expected from the same candidate then the laying on of hands could be repeated.

Conclusions and Summary

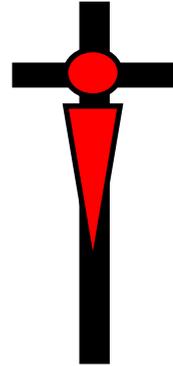
Ultimately, when we are praying for healing we are seeking to separate the illness/suffering from the person/people concerned and hand it over to Jesus the Anointed One so that he can bear that burden vicariously (that is, on another's behalf).

Prayer and anointing symbolize the separation and the consecration/blessing. The key features are: the sensation of the oil and its smell; touch; and, prayer.

Healing and wholeness are different, and we need to be careful that people understand the language that we are using. There will always be those who are not physically healed but who nevertheless achieve a sense of wholeness through reconciliation. That reconciliation may be to their own earthly end, to their creator, to previously broken relationships – to any number of things. No matter what, that reconciliation is deeply embedded in the reconciliation performed by Jesus on the Cross when he took our sins and suffering for us. That is the reconciliation that lead and continues to lead us to redemption.

- Healing and Wholeness
- Reconciliation and Redemption

It is critical to keep a sense of perspective when considering healing. Too often we become focused on the individual who seeks healing, and/or the person expected to provide it. First and foremost, it is God alone who heals. Second, healing has the potential to affect many more than the 'target'. Consider a family praying for a sick child. The prayers and anointing invested in that activity can influence not just the child and her family, but the school she attends, the church they worship in, the medical staff who provide the care, and so on. God's perspective can easily be lost. Think big!



Reflections and Questions