



A man's hands are anointed during the new public ritual of the Sacrament of the Sick. [RNS]

Anointing Given New Objectives

By Father Albert J. Shamon
[First in a series of three articles]

In the last ten years, the Church, mandated by Vatican II, has been revising the rites of all the sacraments. The latest and most drastic revision is that made recently in the sacrament of Extreme Unction. The sacrament has been given a new orientation. Anointing is for the sick, not for the dying. The sick need the care and concern of the entire Christian community throughout their period of suffering.

The sacrament of Extreme Unction will be referred to henceforth as the "Anointing of the Sick." Extreme Unction is not the sacrament of the dying — Holy Viaticum is that. Thus the new ritual makes no mention of the danger of death as being a condition for the reception of anointing. The ritual lists the following instances:

A sick person should be anointed before surgery whenever a dangerous illness is the reason for the surgery.

Old people may be anointed if they are in weak condition although no dangerous illness is present.

Sick children may be anointed if they have sufficient use of reason to be comforted by this sacrament.

As for the misleading practice of anointing the apparently dead, the ritual clearly states that priests are not to anoint the dead, instead they are to pray for them. In case of doubt, conditional anointing may be administered.

A second change, perhaps the most important, is in the sacramental formula — the words used during the anointing. In the old rite of Extreme Unction the formula accompanying the anointing expressed only one of the effects of the sacrament, namely, the healing of sins. Hence the five senses, the avenues of sin, were anointed; and the sacrament took on a distinctively penitential aspect. "May the Lord pardon whatever sins you have committed through the sense of sight or touch, etc."

In the new rite, the old formula is replaced by one inspired by the texts of St. James and the Council of Trent. It stresses not only the healing of sin, but especially the healing of sickness.

Sickness can have spiritual repercussions. A serious illness

Father Shamon's regular column, *Word for Sunday*, will resume following publication of this special series on Anointing of the Sick.

can cause depression stemming from pain and suffering or it can spawn feelings of loneliness, due to being cut off from work and from friends. Depression and loneliness in turn can foster impatience, moodiness, excessive preoccupation with self. Thus sickness is more than a medical phenomenon. It is a crisis situation in the life of a Christian regarding salvation.

Sacraments are situational things — they address themselves to a concrete situation in which a Christian finds himself and are meant to help in this particular situation. The anointing of the sick aims at overcoming the specific obstacles to grace and salvation arising from the situation of sickness itself. So in the new rite the five senses are not anointed — only the forehead and hands are. The forehead, because it is the seat of worry, anxiety, psychic depression. And the hands, because sickness prevents them from doing their normal work.

A third and final point. Sacraments, being as they are the actions of Christ performed through His Church, are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church. Consequently, whenever possible, a "communal celebration, involving the presence and active participation of the faithful is preferred" (Constitution on Liturgy, #27). The new rite makes provisions for this kind of celebration. Instead of the anointing being done, as in the past, almost furtively, in a hush-hush manner, we shall see a beautiful development growing in favor of a communal celebration of this sacrament.

Situated as it now can be within the Mass and administered in the presence of the people of God, the sacrament can better stir up both the ill and aged who receive it to consecrate their state, unite their sufferings with Christ's and receive the graces needed in this critical situation of life.

"One of the great ministries of a parish is the pastoral care of the sick and aged. The new rite is geared to make Christians more aware of their responsibility to those whom Christ so identified with Himself. "I was sick and you visited me."

[To be continued].

New Bishops Named For Baltimore, Newark

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — Pope Paul has accepted the resignations of two leading Roman Catholic prelates, Cardinal Lawrence Shehan of Baltimore, who heads the nation's oldest Catholic See, and Archbishop Thomas Boland of Newark.

At the same time, the Pope named Bishop William D. Borders of Orlando, Fla., a 60-year-old native of Indiana, to succeed Cardinal Shehan, and Bishop Peter L. Gerety of Portland, Maine, a 61-year-old native of Connecticut, to take over the Newark see.

In making the announcement here, Archbishop Jean Jadot, apostolic delegate in the U.S., said that Cardinal Shehan, 76, and Archbishop Boland, 78, are both past the normal retirement age for bishops.

He also said that the retiring prelates — who were ordained on the same day, Dec. 23, 1922 — would serve as apostolic administrators of their Sees until their successors arrive.

Archbishop designate Borders, currently serving as chairman of the U.S. Catholic Conference's Committee on Education, will be moving from one of the nation's youngest dioceses — Orlando was established in 1968 — to the nation's oldest. Baltimore was established in 1789 as a diocese, and became an archdiocese in 1808.

Born in Washington, Ind., Archbishop Borders studied at St. Meinrad (Ind.) Seminary and Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans. Ordained in New

Orleans in 1940, he later studied at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and at St. Louis University.

Archbishop-designate Gerety, named to the Newark see, spent 20 years as pastor of a predominantly black parish in New Haven, Conn. He was the first chairman of a U.S. bishops' liaison committee with the National Office for Black

Catholics and has been a strong episcopal spokesman for racial justice and understanding.

Born in Shelton, Conn., he studied for the priesthood at the Sulpician Seminary in Paris, France, and was ordained in 1939 at Notre-Dame Cathedral in the French capital.

K OF C WINNERS

Six high schoolers in the diocese have recently been named winners in the annual Knights of Columbus scholarship program. The winners are Robert Curtis, Charing Road, Rochester; Deborah Prince, Viscount Drive, Rochester; Marguerite Bannon, Lewis Street, Auburn; James Cooney, Brown Road, Corning; Theodore White, Gorton Street, Corning; Catherine D'Amico, West Avenue, Geneva.

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