

Christ is present in every moment of our journey with the gift of love necessary to embrace the moment of joy, the growth in life, the failure of will, the sickness of body or spirit. The Church always proclaims that the sacraments are effective; i.e the sacraments accomplish what they set out to do. The Spirit of God always enters the individual in Baptism and makes that one a child of God. God always forgives in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Christ is always present in the form of bread and wine in Eucharist. Always! Not just sometimes. Christ always heals in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Always! Not just sometimes. We pray for physical healing. We pray as Jesus did that "This cup of suffering may pass me by." But we also pray, "Not my will but yours be done." Who could argue that Christ's prayer was not answered in Gethsemane. He left the garden no longer with the pain expressed in the image of shedding tears of blood, but as a lamb before the shearer, with no fear as he stood before Pilate. He was healed of fear. He was freed of his need to control his future but rather was able to trust his life into the hands of the Father. Is that not often the real healing that our loved ones need in the face of terminal illness? The Sacrament is the Sacrament of the Sick though and should be received when any serious illness clouds our hope, whether the illness is physical, psychological, emotional or addiction. When a person is anointed the Church proclaims that the sacrament "will save the sick person and if he/she has committed any sin, that sin will be forgiven." Christ first forgave the paralyzed man before he raised him from his bed.

If you experience the need for healing for yourself or others, invite one of the priests to pray over you or the one in need and anoint with the healing oil. "I have touched the hem of his garment and his power has made me whole!"