

## **Explaining the Anointing of the Sick**

*By Deacon Tim Sullivan*

Everything that Jesus did when He walked the earth is made available in the Church. So since Jesus healed so many in his earthly ministry, His power of healing is now available in the sacrament we all the Anointing of the Sick.

While for many years this sacrament was given at the point of death, since the 1960's the sacrament has been made available to any Catholic with a significant illness. A person can receive the anointing of the sick more than once.

Priests administer the sacrament by laying hands on and praying over the person and anointing the sick person with oil blessed by the bishop. The anointing can take place in church but can also be given at home, at a hospital or other appropriate place.

The effect of the sacrament can be but is not always a physical healing. It unites the sick person to the suffering of Jesus, gives the person strength and courage, and results in the forgiveness of sins if the person was not able to receive the sacrament of Confession. For a person near death, it helps prepare the person for passing over to eternal life.

*“Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the priests of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up.” Letter of James 5:4-5*