

GROUP



ONLINE, DO-IT-YOURSELF
CATHOLIC RETREATS

WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG
A RETREAT GUIDE ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

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Two columns of horizontal lines for writing.

SECOND MEDITATION

Strength from Weakness

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- 1 The Catechism explains that the grace of this sacrament “is meant to lead the sick person to healing of the soul, but also of the body if such is God’s will. Furthermore, if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (CCC 1520). Why wouldn’t God guarantee to cure the body every time the sacrament is administered?

- 2 In discussing when to receive the sacrament of anointing, the Catechism explains the following:


The anointing of the sick is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived... It is fitting to receive the anointing of the sick just prior to a serious operation. The same holds for the elderly whose frailty becomes more pronounced.

—CCC 1514–1515

Why are many people afraid to suggest that a sick or elderly person receive this sacrament?

- 3 Reflect on my own experiences of sickness. What did I learn from them? How did I react to them? How did God work through them? Repent of any lack of faith that may have accompanied these experiences, and thank God for the graces received. Make a resolution about how I want to react the next time I have to face a difficult situation of sickness or loss.

Biblical Passages to Help Your Meditation



Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters 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. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.

—James 5:13–15, NABRE



Although if I should wish to boast, I would not be foolish, for I would be telling the truth. But I refrain, so that no one may think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me because of the abundance of the revelations. Therefore, that I might not become too elated, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it might leave me, but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. Therefore, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

—2 Corinthians 12:6–10, NABRE



Christ’s compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that “God has visited his people” (Luke 7:16) and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins; he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician the sick have need of. His compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them: “I was sick and you visited me” (Matthew 25:36). His preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them.

—CCC 1503

