

**St Vincent's and Caritas  
Christi Hospice, Fitzroy**

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm  
Tel: Pastoral Care Services on 9288 3716

Saturday and Sunday 9am to 5pm  
Tel: 9288 2211 and ask for Catholic  
chaplain to be contacted

**Caritas Christi Hospice Kew**

Monday to Sunday 9am to 5pm  
Tel: 9853 2344 and ask for Pastoral  
Care Services to be paged

**St George's and residential aged care**

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm  
Tel: 9816 0444 and ask for Pastoral  
Care Services to be paged

Saturday and Sunday 9am to 5pm  
Tel: 9816 0444 and ask for the After  
Hours Coordinator to contact a chaplain

**After hours**

Please ring the hospital switchboard  
on 9288 2211 and ask for the After  
Hours Coordinator.

# Anointing of the Sick for Catholic patients at St Vincent's

## What is the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick?

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is a Sacrament of the Catholic Church which celebrates our faith in the healing touch of Christ in our lives.

Jesus had deep compassion for those who were sick and the Church continues his healing mission today:

*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. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.*

(James 5:14-15)

In the past, people waited until the moment of death before receiving the sacrament. This is the reason the sacrament became known as 'Extreme Unction', the unction (anointing) in extremis (at the end or extremity). However, the Second Vatican Council wanted to remedy this situation.

Anointing of the Sick is not just for those who are at the point of death; it is intended for all who are seriously ill and can be received as many times as needed to bring healing to the sick.

## Does healing always take place?

In the Sacrament, we pray that the sick person be healed in body, soul and spirit. The Sacrament offers forgiveness and healing. Healing, though, is not restricted to mere physical healing. God alone knows what kind of healing is most needed for us: that our anxieties are eased, that a wound be healed, that our fears turn to hope, that loneliness be embraced, that confusion turn to insight.

The Sacrament may also help the sick person and their loved ones understand and experience suffering differently.

## Who can receive the Sacrament?

Anointing of the Sick is meant for anyone who is suffering a serious illness: physical, emotional, mental or spiritual. The Sacrament may be received at any time during a person's illness, especially before surgery or treatment. Sacraments are for the living.

## How is the Sacrament celebrated?

Anointing of the Sick is a Sacrament of the Church. Therefore it is preferable, as far as possible, to celebrate the rite when others can be present.

The Sacrament is administered by a priest and follows this structure:

- a. The rite begins with the Sign of the Cross with blessed water which reminds us of our baptismal promise to die with Christ so that we might rise to new life with him.
- b. The readings from Scripture are adapted to the condition of the sick person.
- c. The Sacrament of Penance (Confession) may be celebrated within the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.
- d. The priest places his hands on the head of the one to be anointed, and anoints the forehead and hands of the sick person with the Oil which has been blessed by the Bishop during Holy Week.
- e. Holy Communion may be received at this time.
- f. The priest then blesses the sick person and all present.

## What happens if death is imminent or has occurred?

If death is imminent and the patient has not already been anointed, the priest should be called to give the Sacrament of the Sick for the spiritual healing of the patient and the comfort of the relatives. If the patient is conscious the priest will offer the last Holy Communion (Viaticum) that is given as food for the final journey.

Depending on the circumstances, the priest will pray the prayers of Commendation of the Dying and give a plenary indulgence.

If death has taken place, the Prayers for the Dead are prayed and the body is sprinkled with Holy Water recalling the promise of New Life which the deceased received in Baptism.

## How do I organise for the Sacrament to be administered?

Patients and families who would like to receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick can contact a Catholic chaplain through Pastoral Care Services.