

RITUAL MOMENT

LITANY

Introduction

The Sacrament of the Sick includes a litany of prayers for those who will be anointed and for those who care for them. Litany is a word that means to pray or ask in earnest. When someone is sick or hurting we earnestly pray for their healing and for God's help to deal with the pain.

Word of God

"The Lord will answer your prayers if you trust and do not doubt." (Wisdom 1:2)

Word to Remember: ANSWER

We pray to God seeking healing and petition God with our needs and hopes. God always answers our prayers, but not always with the answers we had hoped for.

Practice: Professing Your Faith

Practice answering questions or requests with the answer that you know to be the right one, instead of the answer that seems easiest at the time or the answer that you think the person wanted you to say, even though you knew in your heart that it was not the right answer.

Activity

What are some of the "answers" to prayer that God has surprised you with? Maybe a baby brother was prayed for and a baby sister arrived; maybe healing of body was sought but healing of the heart was the answer instead. Make a list or talk about the diverse ways in which God answers prayer.

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LAYING ON OF HANDS

Introduction

"In silence, the priest lays his hands on the head of the sick person." (*Pastoral Care of the Sick* #122)

The laying on of hands is often seen in the Catholic tradition as the invocation, the calling down of the Holy Spirit. Through the laying on of hands by the priest on the head of the sick person the Spirit is called upon to send forth the Trinity's healing power.

Word of God

"Some people brought to Jesus a man who was deaf and could hardly talk. They begged Jesus just to touch him." (Mark 7:32)

Word to Remember: TOUCH

Sick people often feel that others would not want to touch them. Often when we are hurting a simple gesture of touch—placing a hand on another's shoulder, holding one's hand, embracing another—is the first step towards healing.

Practice

Practice holy touching—touch those around you with simple gestures of touch that let them know that you care.

Activity

Create a poster for your refrigerator that lists with words or pictures the healthy ways we can support one another with touch, such as a handshake of peace, shoulder rub, high five, hug, etc.

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PRAYER OVER THE OIL

Introduction

"The priest says a prayer of thanksgiving over blessed oil or he may bless the oil himself." (*Pastoral Care of the Sick* #123)

The prayer over the oil praises God for the gift of Jesus, the gift of healing, and the gift of strength, and asks God to ease and comfort those being anointed.

Word of God

"They praised the Lord and gave thanks as they took turns singing: 'The Lord is good! His faithful love for Israel will last forever!'" (Ezra 3:11)

Word to Remember: FAITHFUL

We do not always understand God's ways and the presence of pain in our lives. Through and despite our pain we are called to place our trust in God's faithfulness, for God is faithfully present through every moment of our lives, including illness.

Practice: Faithfulness

Practice being a faithful friend, spouse, brother or sister. Practice being faithful through times of hurt, doubt in the other, and in times of conflict.

Activity

Talk about times when you find it hard to be faithful in your relationship with others. For example: Is faithfulness harder when you are busy, tired, angry with the other person, or absorbed in your own needs and problems? Talk about what faithfulness looks like in a relationship: How does one be a faithful friend, sibling, parent, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, cousin, and spouse?

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ANOINTING

Introduction

"The priest anoints the sick person with the blessed oil. First he anoints the forehead, then he anoints the hands, ...the priest may also anoint additional parts of the body, for example, the area of pain or injury" (*Pastoral Care of the Sick*, #124). The Church teaches that anointing of the sick and dying makes persons stronger in body and spirit and forgives sin.

Word of God

"If you are sick, ask the church leaders to come and pray for you. Ask them to put olive oil on you in the name of the Lord. If you have faith when you pray for sick people they will get well. The Lord will heal them, and if they have sinned, he will forgive them." (James 5:14-15)

Word to Remember: STRENGTH

Through the power of the act of anointing the Spirit of the Lord is called upon to strengthen those being anointed. We too can be strengthened by calling upon the Spirit for healing and courage.

Practice

Practice asking others for help when you do not feel strong enough to walk by yourself in times of pain, hurt, or sorrow. As part of the Body of Christ, we are called to seek out the healing we need and to support those who in turn seek strength from us.

Activity

Create a prayer basket for the center of the table and invite household members and table guests to write out prayer petitions for current needs that they or others they know have. Pray the petitions as part of table grace.