

UNCEDDED ALGONQUIN TERRITORY STATEMENT

By: Walter Hughes, Parishioner
St. Joseph's Parish

At St. Joseph's, we open our liturgy with the statement that gather on unceded Algonquin territory. Parishioners have raised some questions about what led to this new practice and how this decision was made. The statement was first used at our 160th Anniversary celebration on the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2016, at which time our gratitude for being able to gather in peace was expressed to an Algonquin elder. We have continued to use the statement since that time.

We are collaborating with the Kateri Native Ministry of Ottawa, a Christian Native Ministry, sponsoring events in the parish to further the work of healing and reconciliation. Acknowledgement of traditional territory is an important cultural protocol for many Indigenous peoples, nations and cultures both in Canada and abroad. We follow the practice to demonstrate solidarity with our Algonquin sisters and brothers who are in dialogue with government over the traditional territories which were never ceded to the Crown through treaty.

At St. Joseph's, we wish to play our role in the reconciliation with Canada's First nations, which is called for in the "Calls to Action" of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We accept responsibility for educating ourselves on what that role may be, particularly with respect to any treaty regarding traditional Algonquin territory. In beginning our liturgies with this statement, we are expressing our prayer that treaty negotiations will conclude successfully.

The statement about unceded Algonquin Territory references a proclamation in 1763 by our sovereign at the time, King George III, stating that

First Nations live under the protection of the Crown and should not be molested or disturbed in the possession of territories not ceded to or purchased by the Crown, and that these lands were to be reserved to them as their Hunting Grounds. The Constitution Act recognizes and affirms Aboriginal rights, but does not define them. Such rights are pre-existing and they are being defined through court rulings and political negotiation.

Canada, Ontario and the Algonquins of Ontario are working together to resolve a historic Algonquin Aboriginal rights claim through a negotiated settlement that will produce Ontario's first modern-day, constitutionally-protected treaty. These negotiations raise and address issues which are complex on all sides. An agreement in principle was concluded in October 2016. Key terms of a possible settlement are said to be 1) more than 40,000 hectares of Crown Land to be transferred to Algonquin ownership, 2) Canada and Ontario to provide a considerable sum of financial capital, 3) Algonquin rights related to lands and natural resources will be defined, 4) Algonquin Park to be preserved for the enjoyment of all, and 5) private land will not be expropriated for the settlement. The final details have yet to be worked out and ratified.

1. <http://katerinativeministry.ca/>
2. <https://carleton.ca/aboriginal/resources/territory-acknowledgement/>
3. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/royal-proclamation-of-1763/>
4. http://indigenousfoundations.adm.arts.ubc.ca/constitution_act_1981_section_35/
5. <https://www.ontario.ca/page-algonquin-land-claim>

ST. EUGENE'S VISION

From the very beginning, St. Eugene sought out those in the society of his day whom he regarded as 'the poor' - those who in any way had been neglected or pushed to the margins: Here is his assessment of how that was lived out in the community of the Oblates:

"Thus, at Aix, for example, besides the church that belongs to their house, where the members of the Congregation are attached offer divine service and every evening after prayer give an informal instruction to the people, they are assigned to give religious instruction to prisoners, hearing their confessions, something unheard of before, and when one of them is condemned to death, they accompany him to the scaffold. Besides that, they do the religious services at the hospital for incurables, for foundlings, for charity and at the college.

At Marseilles, besides the service at the church and in prisons as at Aix, they instruct the people from Genoa in Italian and they direct the Major Seminary which is recognized as one of the best in France. At Nimes, besides the church services and the difficult missions in the Cévennes, which are sprinkled with Protestants, the Bishop has wished to assign to them the camp of 1400 condemned prisoners, a degraded group, who have some notion of morals and religion only from the time that they were confined to the charity of the members of our Congregation who, in this den of thieves, have worked true miracles of conversion.

Everywhere else the most difficult works of the holy ministry are entrusted to these religious, and if I am to believe the reports that the bishops testify to, they acquit themselves in a way that fully satisfies the solicitude of these vigilant first Pastors.

Letter to Fr. A Grassi SJ, 11 December 1830, EO XIII, n 76.

A new heart I will give you, and a

NEW SPIRIT

I will put within you. Ez. 36:26a

MASS OF ANOINTING Sacrament of the Sick

Saturday, October 28, 2017

10:00 a.m.

We will celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick in the context of a community celebration of the Eucharist on Saturday, October 28. All are invited to come and celebrate the gift of God's healing love together.

The centre pages of our newsletter contain an article on the Sacrament of the Sick. It gives the background on the sacrament from perspective of the reform of the liturgy and sacraments carried out after Vatican II.

Our celebration of the Sacrament of the Sick in the context of Eucharist is an expression of our care and compassion for one another, especially for those who are ill or suffering in any way. As the article explains, we do this in imitation of Jesus who cared in a special way for all who were suffering.

Who should come for the sacrament? All are welcome, as we are all in need of healing in some way. In particular, the church invites those who live with chronic pain, with serious illness, anyone preparing for surgery or other medical procedures, those with emotional or mental distress, the

aged and infirm and anyone who feels in need of God's healing compassion in their lives.

Since sacraments, by their nature, are meant to be communal celebrations, we celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick as a community as well. By our gathering we support one another through our presence and by our prayer. It is a sign that we do not have to bear our illness or suffering alone, but that we have the support and love of the community to assist us in that particular journey.

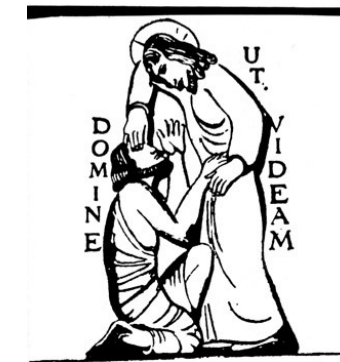
Celebrating the sacrament in community is also an opportunity for us to help alleviate the isolation and loneliness that the sick, infirm and aged often experience. If you know anyone who is unable to gather on a regular basis with the community, please make a special effort to invite them to come for the celebration, and if needed, arrange to bring them. This is a concrete way in which we can live out our call to be a welcoming, inclusive community of faith. We heed Jesus' invitation to come with our burdens, and we assist others to respond as well.

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SACRAMENT (ANOINTING) OF THE SICK

JESUS, SACRAMENT OF HEALING

Our mission as Church is to do what Jesus did. And on nearly every page of the gospels we read of Jesus' concern for the sick. Healing was essential to the mission of the disciples. "He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two ... they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them" (see Mark 6: 7-13). After Jesus ascended into heaven, the Church continued to be a sacrament of healing: "Is anyone among you sick? (H)e 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 (h)e has committed any sins, they will be forgiven" (James 5:14-15).

In the course of time, the focus of the sacrament shifted from healing to forgiveness of sins, and the time for receiving the sacrament was delayed to the deathbed when forgiveness of sins would also be the final preparation for heaven. "Over the centuries the Anointing of the Sick was conferred more and more exclusively on those at the point of death. Because of this it received the name 'Extreme Unction' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1512). The sacrament of the sick had become the last anointing, the unction *in extremis*.

The Second Vatican Council wanted to remedy this situation. It placed the sacrament once again in the context of mutual prayer and concern described in the Epistle of James. Anointing "is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 73) but is intended for all those who are seriously ill.

Consequently, what we had formerly called "extreme unction" is now more properly called "the sacrament of the anointing of the sick" (see *CSL* 73).

More has changed than the sacrament's name. Our experience of the anointing of the sick has brought about a change in the way we think about it: (1) like all sacraments, it is a community celebration, (2) sickness involves more than bodily illness, and (3) anointing heals us through faith.

SACRAMENTS ARE COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

The practice of administering extreme unction to those who were at the point of death brought with it a certain privatization of the sacrament. While we have become more accustomed to the sacrament's new name, many Catholics still think of it as a private sacrament, administered by a priest to a single individual.

The public, communal sacrament is the sacrament celebrated to its fullest, however. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that when the sick are anointed they should be "assisted by their pastor and the whole ecclesial community, which is invited to surround the sick in a special way through their prayers and fraternal attention" (1516). "Like all the sacraments, the Anointing of the Sick is a liturgical and communal celebration....It is very fitting to celebrate it within the Eucharist" (1517).

More and more parishes today are scheduling celebrations of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick within the community eucharist. Pastors report that these communal celebrations educate the parish about the meaning of the sacrament and help to break down some of the fear that still remains from the days of extreme unction. These celebrations speak eloquently about key themes of Christian life: mortality, vocation, responsibility, limits, suffering and caregiving. The communal celebration of healing and trusting in God speaks loudly to a society that stresses individual responsibilities and tends to avoid discussing limits and mortality.

HEALING BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT

When I first learned about extreme unction and about how sick one would have to be in order to be anointed, I thought of "sickness" exclusively in terms of bodily illness. I never thought that there might be serious illnesses whose principal causes or manifestations were not physical. Nor did I realize as I do now the holistic unity of body, soul, and spirit.

Today we are all aware that tensions, fear, and anxiety about the future affect not only our minds but our bodies as well. These illnesses can be serious. They can move us to ask for the healing touch of Christ in the sacrament of anointing.



SACRAMENT OF SICK cont'd.

Persons with the disease of alcoholism or persons suffering from other addictions can be anointed. So can those who suffer from various mental disorders. The anxiety before exploratory surgery to determine if cancer is present is a situation in which Christ's power can be invoked in the sacrament. Often the spouse or principal caregiver of the person who is seriously ill also asks to be anointed when her or she, too, is seriously affected by the illness.

In these cases, the person does not have to wait until the illness is so grave that he or she is in the hospital or institutionalized to celebrate the sacrament. Sacraments are, after all, community celebrations. It is preferable to celebrate them in the context of family and parish even before going to the hospital. The sick person has a better opportunity to appreciate the prayers and symbols of the rite when in her or his customary worshipping community.

The anointing of the sick is a different kind of healing than a chemical placed into the body as medicine or a surgical intervention to cut out diseased tissue. Sacraments are acts of faith; they grace the whole person - body, soul and spirit. The blessing over the oil for anointing asks God to "send the power of your Holy Spirit, the Consolator, into this precious oil....Make this oil a remedy for all who are anointed with it; heal them in body, in soul, and in spirit, and deliver them from every affliction" (*Pastoral Care of the Sick*, p. 123).

WHAT GETS HEALED?

Does it work? Will I experience healing? These are the questions I am most frequently asked regarding the sacrament of anointing. And I always answer by saying yes. In my experience with this sacrament as a priest, healing always takes place. That healing, of course, is not restricted to mere physical healing.

When our attention is directed toward physical illness, it is

natural to think of the effects of the sacrament in terms of physical healing. Sacraments, however, are celebrations of faith, expressions of who we are before God. This understanding of sacrament, together with the realization that we are more than our physical bodies, has led us to look again at the effects of the sacrament of anointing.

The sacrament of the anointing of the sick helps us gain insight into the religious meaning of human suffering. A quote from the General Introduction to the ritual itself, *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, explains more: "Suffering and illness have always been among the greatest problems that trouble the human spirit. Christians feel and experience pain as do all other people; yet their faith helps them to grasp more deeply the mystery of suffering and to bear their pain with greater courage. From Christ's words they know that sickness has meaning and value for their own salvation and the salvation of the world. They also know that Christ, who during his life often visited and healed the sick, loves them in their illness" (1)

In the sacrament, we pray that the sick be healed in body, in soul, and in spirit. God alone knows what kind of healing the sick need most: that a would be healed; that a fear turn to confidence; that loneliness be embraced by the support of a praying community; that confusion in the face of all the whys - why me, why suffering, why now - turn to insight.

The sacrament of anointing does not remove the mystery of human suffering. Yet its celebration gives us a window into the mystery of a loving God. Our loving God raises up the crucified Son to display his victorious wounds, sitting triumphant at the Father's right hand.

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