



Ask, Father James:

What are the Spiritual Benefits of Anointing?

The New Testament Greek word for “anoint” is chrio, which means “to smear or rub with oil.” Chrism, a mixture of oil and balsam, consecrated is used for anointing at baptism and in other rites of Catholic Church, such as at confirmation and ordination of priests and bishops. There is supernatural hidden power in anointing and it is encouraged that all baptized persons frequently approach their priest for anointing. Although anointing is not a “magic potion” but when a person is anointed by God through the hands of the priest, they receive the Holy Spirit and are conferred with “grace” - divine empowering (2 Corinthians 1:21).

In Biblical times, people were anointed with oil to signify God’s blessing or God’s confirmation of their call to be priest, prophet or king. Jesus Christ was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit to be Messiah who is to spread the Good News and free those who have been held captive [That is, to bring forgiveness of sins] (Luke 4:18). Jesus asked the apostles to anoint people including the sick. “They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them” [Mark. 6:13]. James, one of the Apostles encouraged the early Christians to continue this practice; He says; “Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders (presbyters) of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven [James. 5:13–15]. This power was mediated to the apostles and in turn to their priest successors in the church.

We were all anointed with Holy oil at our baptism and confirmation and at other times. Anointing cleanses, it protects, it makes us ready for battle, and to be victorious. Through the rituals of laying on of hands we experience the touch of God to heal and restore us and this makes a fundamental change in the person's life because the divine become present to them. The Anointing brings healing and deliverance and enables one to connect to the mysteries and blessings God endows us with. It also disposes us for spiritual and material resources leading to prosperity, like David said; God has Anointed My Head with Oil; and My Cup Overflows (Psalm 23:5). God wants to anoint His victorious children with “the oil of gladness” (Hebrews 1:8-9).

In my pastoral ministry, I have always encouraged and offered people the opportunity to get the anointing for God's protection over their lives and over their homes and for God's protection in their vehicles and also, especially for warding off the enemy and danger around us. When anointing oil is used with prayer, Jesus is the Sanctifier and the Healer. The oil represents the Holy Spirit, and when one is anointed, the Holy Spirit came upon them as it did upon the spiritual leaders in the Bible (1 Samuel 16:13).

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