



Sacraments 35 & 36/36: The Last Rites & Sacramental Summary

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick should not be seen as identical with the Last Rites. Anointing is part of the Last Rites, which are actually three Sacraments: 1) Reconciliation, 2) Anointing, and 3) Eucharist. How much of each Rite is celebrated depends on how close to death the person is.

The Full Ritual is a celebration of all three Sacraments. I excuse everyone else from the room and hear the person's (possibly final) confession. The penance I give is normally something we can celebrate together when the family comes back into the room. After Absolving them, I can also then give the "Apostolic Pardon".

- Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May He open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy. *or:* By the authority which the Apostolic See has given me, I grant you a full pardon and the remission of all you sins.

We believe the last sense to go is hearing, so even if person is not able to talk anymore or cannot formulate words, the family can stay in the room as I explain forgiveness and absolve them. Then we celebrate the Anointing of the Sick. Finally, the Last Rite is the Eucharist, as "viaticum" (strength for the journey to Heaven).

If they are going to die at any second, I absolve them of their sins and give them the Eucharist. We can adjust from there as time allows. Again, as soon as someone is diagnosed with a possibly life threatening illness, call the priest to anoint. It is strength and holiness for the progression of the illness. And yes, you can ask for the Last Rights when in immediate death. If the person gets worse over time, they can be anointed again. If they get better, then worse again, they can be anointed again. If they have been in a nursing home or suffering from an illness, I normally want to anoint them at least once a year.

The Sacramental Nature of the World

Our understanding of the Sacraments only comes through the united meaning of the all Sacraments as based in the Incarnation of Christ. Jesus is a perfect union of both flesh and spirit. Our means to holiness and heaven are based in both flesh and spirit. Holiness and grace are communicated to our minds through a union of both earthly/natural things and heavenly/spiritual things.

And so for our Tripartite summary: (as taught by Fr. Paul Keller, O.P.)

	<i>Sacramentum Tantum</i>	<i>Res et Sacramentum</i>	<i>Res Tantum</i>
	-Ritual and Elements	-Abiding Reality	-Grace conferred
Baptism	Water and words	Character	cleanse of sin, member of Church
Confirmation	Chrism, Laying on of Hands	Character	active instrument of God
Eucharist	Bread and Wine, Mass	Real Presence	Union with Christ
Penance	contrite, confess, penance, absolve	contrite person	Forgiveness of Sins
Anointing	Oil, ritual words	unity with Christ	interior strength
Marriage	man and woman, vows	bond till death	holiness of married life
Holy Orders	Laying on of Hands	Character	ability to sanctify