



SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

November 15, 2021

Dear Parishioners:

Last year at this time when we were in the thralls of Covid19, two celebrations had to be canceled: the Mass of Anointing and the Communal Penance Service. The priests still did individual anointings and we continued hearing confessions, albeit outdoors.

Anointing of the Sick is administered to heal those afflicted by illness. It is primarily spiritual but can also be physical. Canon 1004 of the Code of Canon Law says: "1. The anointing of the sick can be administered to a member of the faithful who, having reached the age of reason, begins to be in danger due to sickness or old age. 2. This sacrament can be repeated if the sick person, having recovered, again becomes gravely ill or if the condition becomes more grave during the same illness." The ritual itself adds: "A sick person may be anointed before surgery whenever a serious illness is the reason for the surgery. Elderly people may be anointed if they have become notably weakened even though no serious illness is present." It is not a sacrament of the dying but of the sick. When one is dying it is time for viaticum (final Holy Communion), the food for that final journey, and for commending the dying person's soul to the Lord. At that time, they also receive an apostolic blessing with a plenary indulgence. This means a fast track to heaven.

Another aspect of the reform of the sacraments was to have communal celebrations of sacraments, including the Anointing of the Sick and Penance. All sacraments are communal of their very nature, so it is most fitting that they be celebrated with the community present. The Body of Christ gathers to strengthen the members of the body that are weak due to illness.

On Saturday, December 4, at 10:00 a.m. we will be celebrating a Mass of Anointing. During that Mass, the priests of the parish will anoint all those in need of the sacrament. Even if you do not need to be anointed, I invite all of you to come to pray for and with those who will be receiving this sacrament. It is the way all of us can minister to our brothers and sisters in need of the healing presence of Christ.

We also plan to have a Communal Penance Service before Christmas. Because I have not yet been able to coordinate the date with the other parishes, I have not yet finalized the date. That is why it is not included in the Christmas schedule that we recently mailed to you. As soon as the date is confirmed, it will be found on the website and in the parish bulletin.

May you have blessed Advent.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork
Pastor