



St. Mina Coptic Orthodox Church
Pre-Service Training Seminars



Lecture 7:

*THE SACRAMENT OF
THE UNCTION OF
THE SICK*

**“For God is not the author of
confusion, but of peace”**
(1 Corinthians 14:33)



Overview of the Holy Sacraments

1. The Sacrament of Baptism
2. The Sacrament of Confirmation
3. The Sacrament of Eucharist
4. The Sacrament of Holy Orders (Priesthood)
5. The Sacrament of Repentance & Confession
6. The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick
7. The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Overview of the Sacrament:

- Through the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick the sick who are faithful, are healed from psychological and physical diseases. The priest anoints the person with the holy oil from which they obtain the grace of remedy from God.
- It is called the **Sacrament of Lamps** , for the early Christians used to place oil in a lamp, from which hung seven other lamps. Each lamp was lit at the beginning of every prayer. This rite still exists, however, the seven lamps were replaced by seven wicks, made from cotton wool, which sit in a plate of oil.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Overview of the Sacrament:

- The number seven signifies the seven spirits of God, which are mentioned in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 3:1). The Spirit of God dwells and sanctifies the oil in order to heal those anointed by it. It is advisable that the wicks be placed in the sign of the cross, in the plate of oil.
- The priest is the one who prays, and it is God who heals, for the sacrament is not a person's work but the work of God.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Institution of the Sacrament:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament: *“Heal the sick, cleanse the leper”* (Matthew 10:8), and, *“Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, heal the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The Kingdom of God has come near to you’”* (Luke 10: 8-9).
- For the Lord Jesus came that we may have life, and that we have it more abundantly (John 10:10), so He healed the sick, raised the invalid, opened the eyes of the blind, purified the lepers and the lame, after having saved them and forgiven them their main cause of sickness, which is sin.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Institution of the Sacrament:

- Jesus went about doing good and healing all those who were oppressed by the devil (Acts 1:38)
- As Malachi prophesied about Him saying, *“But to you who fear My Name, the Son of Righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings”* (Malachi 4:2).
- Our fathers the Apostles practiced it according to the orders of their Master, as the Bible says, *“So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them”* (Mark 6:12,13)





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Institution of the Sacrament:

- *"I am the Lord who heals you"* (Exodus 15: 26).
- Also, David the Psalmist thanks God saying, *"Bless the Lord, O my soul....Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction"* (Psalm 103: 1-4), and,
- *"O Lord my God, I cried out to You and You have healed me"* (Psalm 29:20),
- and also the prayer of Jeremiah the prophet: *"Heal me O Lord, and I shall be healed"* (Jeremiah 17:4).





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Healing and forgiveness of sin:

- *"Is any among you sick? Let them call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and 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 5:14-5).
- From these words of St. James the purpose of the sacrament is vividly clear. It is bodily healing and forgiveness of sins. And as the priest anoints with Holy Unction, he says that this sacrament is for the **"healing of the soul and the body"**.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Healing and forgiveness of sin:

- Historically, it is proven that the sacrament of Unction was celebrated in conjunction with the sacrament of Repentance and Confession.
- Holy Unction does not replace Repentance and Confession. In essence, the forgiveness of sins comes through faith in God, sincere repentance, and confession of sins.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Administering of the Sacrament:

- The sacrament of Holy Unction is celebrated every time a Christian needs it. The sacrament is not an obligatory, but a voluntary sacrament.
- It is good, though, for all Christians to draw near to this sacrament. This is why our Church has laid down that the sacrament be celebrated in Church on the last Friday of the Holy Lent.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Rite of the Sacrament:

- When the priest comes to perform the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, he will be accomplishing two Sacraments together; the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession as well as the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick.
- Confession must occur before starting the sacrament of unction of the sick.
- On the table is placed a dish which contains some pure oil (preferably olive oil) with seven pieces of cotton wool shaped like wicks. Each wick is lit at the start of each prayer.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Rite of the Sacrament:

- The priest stands facing the East, and the sick is seated facing the west. The rest of the family members stand around the priest.
- The priest then starts the **seven** prayers of the Kandeel. The Prayer starts by the Thanksgiving prayer and Psalm 50 (for repentance).
- Each prayer consists of the following:
 - 1- A litany (Oushia)
 - 2- Reading from the Pauline Epistle.
 - 3- The Litany of the Gospel.
 - 4- A reading from the Holy Gospel.
 - 5- A special prayer.
 - 6- The Lord's prayer.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Rite of the Sacrament:

- The first & last prayers have extra or different prayers to be said...for example: the first prayer has some prayers and supplications that the priest is asking for God's mercy and salvation to the person and the place.
- Also in the first prayer we read the Catholic Epistle from James (5:10-20), instead of the Pauline Epistle
- In the last prayer, there are 4 different prayers to be said by the priest after the gospel reading, then they recite the Orthodox creed with 41 times "Kirialison"
- After that the priest prays the absolutions for the sick person and anoints him/her with the Holy oil.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Rite of the Sacrament:

- The order of Prayer of the litanies is the same as those in the Baptismal Rite and Laqqan :
 1. The sick
 2. Travelers
 3. Waters
 4. Leaders
 5. The Departed
 6. Oblations
 7. Catechumens
- Once a year the Church performs this Sacrament in the Church, and it takes place on the last Friday of the holy Lent (that is, the Friday before Passion Week). It is called the ‘General Kandeel’.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Rite of the Sacrament:

– The General Kandeel serves the purpose of:

- Reminding people of the importance and significance of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, for the healing of every believer.
- Serving all those believers who have not called the priest privately at home.
- Anointing all the believers prior to Passion Week, for it is not permissible to perform the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick during the Holy Week.

– The Sacrament of Unction of the Sick must be performed for a person who is genuinely sick and in need of this sacrament.



The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Rite of the Sacrament:

- The priest and the person who accepts the Sacrament must be abstaining from food for certain hours before accomplishing the Sacrament. Hence, performing the Sacrament in the early morning whilst people are still fasting, is the most appropriate time.
- During visits to homes during Holy Lent, there is no need for the priest when doing this to pray part of the prayers of the Unction of the Sick. Instead, he should pray the ritual prayers of 'Blessing the House'; prayers which ask the Lord to dwell within the house and keep the members of the household from all evil.





The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick

❖ Rite of the Sacrament:

– The Prayer for blessing houses:

- It is different from the Holy Sacrament of Unction, so it can be done at any time in the homes of the believers. It is not a necessary requirement, that the members of the household, and the priest fast, for this rite is not a Church sacrament.
- This Prayer can be done at any time, and as often as people like.
- This prayer is not just restricted to those with new homes, but all people, as a source of blessing in the home.

