

## PART FIVE

# THE SACRAMENT OF UNCTION OF THE SICK



*"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders  
of the church, and let them pray over him,  
anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."*

*James 5:13*

HIS GRACE BISHOP METTAOUS,  
Abbott of El Syrian Monastery

The Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick is one of the holy Seven Sacraments of the church, through which 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 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.

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted this Sacrament when He said to His disciples: ***“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. ***“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).

Our teacher St. James advised the believers to practice this Sacrament when they are sick, and to ask healing from God, who says, ***“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). For this reason, St. James advises us, ***“Is anyone among you is sick, let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven”*** (James 5:13,14).

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 Necessity of Confessing before partaking of the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick



The Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, with all its beautiful associated prayers, provides for the healing of the soul, which in turn provides cure for bodily ailments. This is because of the strong link between the soul and the body, and if the soul is sick, the body will likewise suffer. For this reason, the Church always asks her children to firstly repent from their sins, so that the spirit and the soul will consequently be healed.

When the Lord Jesus Christ, glory be to Him, healed the lame man at Bethsaida, who had been sick for 38 years, He said to him: ***“Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you”*** (John 5:14). This implies that his illness was due to sin. Likewise, when the people lowered the paralytic man down from the roof top on a stretcher, the first words the Lord said to him was: ***“Your sins are forgiven”***, then, ***“Arise, take up your bed and walk”*** (Matthew 9:2-6). The Lord Jesus manifested that the cause of sickness was sin, and declared that the soul should be healed by repentance in order for the body to also be cured of any physical ailments. There is no objection of course, for calling a doctor when one is sick, but it is of great importance that the priest is called as that he may carry out the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick, and through faith, the sick will be healed, for God never abandons those who hope in Him.

A patient who relies only on medicine, denies himself the ability of God to heal him, just like King Asa, of Judah: ***“Asa became***

***diseased and his malady was very severe, yet in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians”*** (2 Chronicles 16:12-13), who was contrary to the good King Hezekiah who was close to death, and prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly until the Lord sent Isaiah the prophet to him saying: ***“Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears, surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. And I will add to your days fifteen years”*** (2 Kings 20:1-6).

The Church is not against medical healing, but approves ...

The Church completely rejects her patients seeking the psychics for healing, for this would mean that they rather the healing of the devil and deny the power and healing of God. For a person to seek the assistance of psychics means that they are totally and completely abandoning and denying Christianity. Our teacher St. Paul says about those people: ***“Some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons”*** (Timothy 4:1). We read in the Old Testament about King Ahaziah who fell sick and sent messengers to inquire of Bel-Zebub, the god of Ekron. Along the way, they were met by Elijah the prophet who said to them: ***“Thus says the Lord, is it because there is no God in Israel, that you are going to inquire of Bel-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus says the Lord, ‘You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die’”*** (2 King 1:2-4), and so Ahaziah died.

The Church is not against traditional medicine, but in fact supports it and approves it for the purpose of healing. It is also important to

remember that all medicine is comprised of certain herbs, which God created for the benefit of human kind: ***“God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving”*** (1 Timothy 4:3,4). The Lord said, through Jeremiah the prophet: ***“Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?”*** (Jeremiah 8:22). Hence, it is important for doctors to be consulted when one is sick, and to take medicine for physical healing.

In the book of Joshua, there is much said about doctors and medicine :

- Give the physician his dignity, for the Lord created him.
- Medicine comes from on high.
- God created medicine from the earth and the wise man does not hate it.
- My son do not neglect yourself if you get sick, but pray to the Lord who heals you. Refrain from all iniquities and make straight your deeds. Purify your heart from sin ... then make a place for the physician, as the Lord created him and will not leave you when you need him. (Joshua Bin Sirakh 38:1-15).
- Most of the medicines used by doctors are herbs and plants of the earth, produced by God for human benefit, as the Psalmist says: ***“Who makes grass to grow on the mountains. He***

*gives the beast its food and to the young ravens that cry”*  
(Psalm 147:7).

- When Hezekiah, King of Judah was recovering, the Lord ordered him to use natural remedies saying, ***“Let them take a lump of figs and apply it as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover”*** (Isaiah 38:21), and the boil was the ulcer that King Hezekiah was recovering from.
- The physician may advise the patient to rest, in order for them to have a quick recovery, just as Joshua advised: ***“Severe sickness is gone by sleep”*** (Joshua 31:2), but most of all, it is necessary to plead to God in order for them to receive healing and the regaining of health (Joshua 38:14)
- When the priest visits the house of the sick to perform the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick, it reveals the church’s love and care for her children in that the Church is emotionally sharing in the trials with the family. The church forms a bond with the family so that they become one body. Hence, if the family is suffering, the church suffers with them. This is a generous gesture by the church, and one that the faithful would not forget. For this reason, the family will become more and more attached to the church.
- For the sick to benefit from the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, it is necessary that they firstly confess, and then receive the Holy Communion as soon as possible afterwards. Hence, they will actually be partaking of three Sacraments, for their spiritual and physical healing.

- The most appropriate time for carrying out the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick is early in the morning, when everyone is still fasting (that is, the priest, the sick person, and other members attending). The priest must fast for nine hours beforehand, and the sick person for six. In extreme cases, however, when medicine is to be taken at regular intervals, the priest may give the sick person absolution to abstain for a lesser period of time.
- The priest must pray all of the seven prayers of the sacrament, for it is not proper for him to shorten any of the prayers, as this is against the Apostolic orders which were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and recorded in the Church's books.
- The order of the prayers of the Unction of the Sick (Kandeel Prayers) are very old and traditional. Church history mentions that St. Epifanius, Bishop of Cyprus, wrote and organised these prayers. In addition, St basil confirms that the 'Kandeel Prayers' were well known in the Church from the early days (Canon 91).





## **The Priest's duties during accomplishment of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick**

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- ✚ He accomplishes this sacrament in faith and hope that God will heal the sick. The priest is not only performing a church rite, but he is also praying with the spirit.
- ✚ He must long for the salvation of the sick person, and for his bodily healing, so he prays out of care and love, and not out of force or pressure.
- ✚ He cares to accept the confession of the patient in private, before performing the sacrament, to enable the sick person to be granted the forgiveness of sins as well as psychological healing, and hence enable the sick to be cured physically also.
- ✚ As long as the priest's time and health permits, he should not neglect or postpone any appointment to perform this Sacrament, regardless of whether the sick is rich or poor.
- ✚ The priest should continue caring for the needs of the sick person, until he is cured.
- ✚ The priest must be fasting before performing the Sacrament, and he must indicate to the relatives of the sick person how important it is that they also be fasting before performing the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick.
- ✚ As the Kandel oil is holy oil, upon which the Holy Spirit came, it is important not to leave it sitting in the dish in case it is

accidentally spilled. The priest should ensure that the oil, after prayers, is placed in a small bottle, and that the dish is wiped with cotton wool and burnt together with the cotton wicks which were used during the Kandeel prayers, before he leaves the house.

## **The patient's duties during accomplishment of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick**

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- ✠ The sick person and his relatives must have strong faith in the work of God in this sacrament, just like the two blind men who had strong faith that Christ would heal them (Matthew 9:28), and the faith of Jairus (Luke 8:50), and the faith of the father who had an epileptic son (Mark 9:23), and the faith of the friends of the paralytic man (Matthew 9:2), and the faith of the bleeding woman (Luke 8:48).
  
- ✠ The sick must have faith and confidence in the priest, just as he has trust in his doctor.
  
- ✠ The sick person must practice the Sacrament of Confession before partaking in the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, and he must receive the Holy Communion as soon as possible afterwards. All Sacraments must begin with Confession and conclude with Holy Communion ...
  
- An adult who is baptised should confess before Baptism, and receive Holy Communion after it.

- An adult who is sick should confess before the Kandeel Prayers, and receive Holy Communion after it.
  - A couple getting married should confess before Matrimony, and receive Holy Communion after it.
  - In the occasion of any priestly ordination, confession is obligatory before ordination, and Holy Communion received at the end of the ordination mass.
- ✚ The sick must fast beforehand for as long as he can, as well as those attending
  - ✚ The sick must be clean in body and clothing, ready for the Sacrament.
  - ✚ The sick must promise God to live his whole life in His fear, His love and service, just like Simon Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:15), and like Mary Magdalen (Mark 15:40). As St. Paul said: ***“That those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and rose again”*** (2 Corinthians 5:15).
  - ✚ The sick must thank God after recovery, for His grace and providence.

## **Why is it that sometimes the sick does not recover after the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick?**

At times the sick person may not recover quickly after the Sacrament or may take a long time to heal, and at times the sick person may even die. There are many reasons for this, of which some are ...

- ✚ Lack of faith of the sick person, just like the people of Nazareth: “The Lord Jesus did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (Matthew 13:58).
- ✚ He may not be worthy of being healed due to his evil doings and reluctance to repent and return to God, who says, ***“Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding”*** (Jeremiah 3:22).
- ✚ Sickness may result in death, and death is the great recovery and salvation from all bodily pains.
- ✚ Sickness may be for chastisement and God may abolish it when its purpose is accomplished, just like Job who was sick for seven years. Likewise, Moses’ sister Miriam, was struck by leprosy when she spoke badly against Moses. Then Moses prayed for her saying: ***“Please, heal her, O God, I pray!’ and the Lord said to him, ‘Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and after that she may be received again’”*** (Numbers 12), that is, healed from leprosy.
- ✚ At times a person may not recover from, his illness, and this is divine wisdom, which we cannot understand or interpret: ***“Oh,***

*the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out” (Romans 11:33). St Paul had a thorn in his side and prayed for God to heal him, but the Lord refused, saying, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). God worked amazing miracles by the hands of St. Paul, “So that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.”*



## **RITE OF THE SACRAMENT OF UNCTION OF THE SICK**

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When the priest comes to perform the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, he must wear an Epitrachelion (priestly vestment), as he will be accomplishing two Sacraments together; the Sacrament of Confession and the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick.

During confession, which must take place before the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick, the sick person confesses honestly and with

true repentance, promising to walk with God after his recovery, and striving never to return to sin. Then the priest reads the absolution for him, after giving him advice, guidance and spiritual exercises which may be needed for his spiritual growth. The priest then advises him to receive the Holy Communion as soon as possible after the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick.. If he is too sick to go to Church, the priest can bring him the Holy Communion at home.

After Confession, all the family gathers to attend the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick and partake in its spiritually interesting prayers, once the censer has been filled with hot coals.

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. Also needed for accomplishing the Sacrament, is incense, a prayer book, and a box of matches.

The priest stands facing the East, and the sick is seated before him in reverence, facing the west; his body and clothing must be clean. The rest of the family members stand around the priest.

The priest then starts the seven prayers of the Kandeel.

## THE FIRST PRAYER

The priest lights the first wick of the Kandeel.

✠ The Kandeel commences with the Lord's Prayer.

✠ The priest prays the ‘Thanksgiving Prayer’, and the deacon and family members respond accordingly. The priest then places five spoonfuls of incense in the censer, with three signings of the cross, and then raises incense in the four directions, as usual.

✠ All in attendance pray Psalm 50, “***Have mercy on me O God.***”

✠ The priest says the ‘Prayer for the Sick’ : “*Remember O Lord the sick of Your people ... heal them, take away from them and from us all sickness ... As for us also, O Lord, the maladies of our souls heal them, and those of our bodies too, do cure us, O You, the true Physician of our souls and our bodies ... visit us with Your Salvation, by the grace ...*”.

✠ These are deeply spiritual prayers where the priest asks God to heal the soul, body and spirit, as He is the hope of those who are hopeless, the help of those who are helpless.

✠ The priest begins praying, “*O You, who gave Your grace to Your pure Apostles, O You the Lover of Mankind, ... rescue us from the sicknesses of the soul and body, when Your priests anoint them, as You said by Your disciple ...*” (James 5:14,15).

Each prayer of the Kandeel is divided into four parts. Each part concludes with the following : “*Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, Saint Mary*”, and the attendants respond, “*Lord have mercy.*”

NOTES:

1. Every quarter ends requesting the intercession of St. Mary, and this indicates the great appreciation and hope the Church has in St Mary's intercession, through our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.
2. At the end of every quarter, the attendants respond, "*Lord have mercy*" , asking God for mercy and forgiveness of their sins. Asking mercy from God is very acceptable before Him, and very important: "***Because Your loving kindness is better than life***" (Psalm 63:3). The priest says a glorification prayer beginning with: "*God is light and lives in light, praised by angels of light...*"

Then the priest prays the following litany while making the sign of the cross on the oil, at every quarter, and those in attendance respond with, "*Lord have mercy*" ...

- "*We ask God for the heavenly peace*" ... "*Lord have mercy.*"
- "*We ask God for the sanctification of this oil*" ... "*Lord have mercy.*"
- "*We ask God for the sanctification of this house and those who dwell in it*" ... "*Lord have mercy.*"
- "*We ask God for the sanctification of our Christians fathers and brothers*" ... "*Lord have mercy.*"



- “We ask God for the blessings of this oil and its sanctification” ... “Lord have mercy.”
- “We ask God for Your servant (...name\*)” ... “Lord have mercy.” \*The priest mentions the name of the sick person, and lifts his heart to God to heal him.

Then the priest completes the prayer until the end. On the oil, the priest says a silent prayer: *“O merciful Lord, healer of our souls and bodies sanctify this oil to become a healing from the profanity of soul and sufferings of body for whoever is anointed by it. To glorify Your holy name, glory and salvation be to You, we send You glory, honour and dominion, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”*

Through the sick person’s recovery by prayers, the name of the Lord will be glorified and people’s faith will be encouraged.

One of the attendants reads the Catholic Epistle of St. James (5:10-20), which includes beneficial instructions for the sick ...

- The priest’s invitation to pray for those who are sick: ***“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up”*** (James 5:14-15).
- The necessity of Confession before the Kandeel. ***“And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven”*** (James 5:15), for

repentance and confession heal the spirit, and provides the way for physical healing.

- The necessity of enduring tribulation, just like our fathers the prophets, such as Job and many others.
  - The necessity of praying when in trouble and when suffering: ***“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray”*** (James 5:13).
  - The power of earnest, fervent prayers, such as those of Elijah the great prophet (5:16-17).
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- ✠ The attendants sing the hymn of “Agios” (Holy God), which is the angelic heavenly praise of the Cherubim.
  - ✠ The priest prays the Litany of the Gospel, after placing a spoonful of incense into the censer. An attendant then reads the Psalm and Gospel.
  - ✠ ***“O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger ... O Lord heal me for my bones are troubled”*** (Psalm 6:1,2)
  - ✠ The Gospel reading is taken from John (5:1-17), and speaks about the paralytic man who was sick for 38 years. He lay on his bed being abandoned by all, however, the Lord did not leave Him, but went to him and healed him: ***“Rise, take up your bed and walk”*** (John 5:8).
  - ✠ The church wants to enliven the spirit of hope and faith in the heart of the sick person, even if he has been sick for a long

period of time. The Lord will not leave Him, even if He delays. We must have patience and endurance, and be thankful at all times to God.

✝ The priest says the Three Major Litanies:

- (1) Prayer for Peace of the Church, for the Lord to preserve the church, as it is the body of Christ, and we are members in this body. The Church's peace is peace for us all.
- (2) Prayer for Fathers of the Church, we ask God to grant them power and wisdom for the leadership of the church, and correct interpretation of the word of truth.
- (3) Prayer for the Congregations, so that all our gatherings, whether they be spiritual or educational, may be granted without obstacle or hindrance. The priest also prays for blessings upon the house of God where he is praying :  
*“Houses of prayer; Houses of purity; Houses of blessings, grant them unto us O Lord.”*

✝ All recite the Orthodox Creed declaring their faith in the Holy Trinity, for faith is the foundation of healing.

The priest says a certain prayer which includes various supplications

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- Healing for the sick : *“Lord, grant Your servant (...name ) healing.”*

- Forgiveness of his sins : *“Lord, forgive him his sins, whatever he may have committed during his life.”*
- We ask healing from the Almighty God, who purified the lepers, and healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman, and raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow, and Lazarus.
- The Church asks for the healing of the sick person, but surrenders the whole matter to God : *\*“If You wish to raise him from sickness some time later, grant him help to endure without complaint ... and if You want to receive his spirit, may this be by the hands of luminous angels who rescue him from the devils of darkness.”* (\* It is preferable to say this statement inaudibly, so that the sick person is not affected).

The Church teaches us to completely surrender ourselves to the will God, just as our beloved Lord Jesus Christ did with His Father : ***“Father, take this cup away from Me, nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will”*** (Mark 14:36).



## THE SECOND PRAYER

The priest lights the second wick.

✠ The Second Prayer commences with the Lord's Prayer.

✠ The priest then prays the Litany for the Travellers, so that the Lord may graciously accompany them in their journeys, by His angel. May God be a partner with us in all that we do, so that all our deeds may be good deeds. If a person does not have any goodness and his deeds are not righteous, they cannot expect God to accompany them or help them, for as St. Paul says: *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them”* (Ephesians 5:11). The Litany of the Travellers is said while the priest is offering incense.

The Pauline Epistle to the Romans is then read: *“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak...”* (15:1-7). The reading is :

- An invitation for the strong members of the family to bear the sick in love, and without complaint.
- An invitation for the sick to bear their illness with patience, and hence not lose the blessing of endurance.
- An invitation for the believers to be like-minded towards one another in love, so that God may be glorified.

✝ Then the Trisagon of glorification is sung.

✝ The priest says the Litany of the Gospel, while raising incense, and one of the attendants reads the Psalm and the Gospel. The Psalm is read on behalf of the sick, as if they are crying out to the Lord to hear his prayer, and the Gospel from St John tells the story of the repentance of Zacchaeus, in order to encourage the sick to repent from all sins, and learn to give in order to be granted salvation: ***“Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come to You. Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble, incline Your Ear to me”*** ... ***“Today salvation has come to this house...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost”*** (Psalm 101:1-2 and Luke 19:9)

✝ The priest then says the following supplications :

• *“O Lord ... who accepts the repentants...”*

• *“Who said, ‘The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out’” (John 6:37)*

“Who forgave the adulteress’ sins...”

“Accept Your servant and forgive his sins, for sins many times result in illness, and their forgiveness gives health to the spirit and the body...”

“Keep him for the rest of his life following in Your Commandments.”

It is very important for the sick person to be convinced and promise to live with God in righteousness and holiness after his recovery, for he must know that his recovery is a gift from God, just like when God added fifteen years to the life of Ezekiah the King. So that together with St. Paul, the sick person may declare: **“And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me”** (Galatians 2:20) and healed me from my sickness and pain.

## THE THIRD PRAYER

The priest lights the third wick.

✠ The Third Prayer commences with the Lord’s Prayer.

✠ The priest prays the Litany of Waters, or Plants, or Fruits, according to the season.

- From 12 Baounah to 9 Babah, the Litany of Waters is prayed

- From 10 Babah to 10 Tubah, the Litany of Plants is prayed
- From 11 Tubah to 11 Baounah, the Litany of Fruits and  
Airs is prayed

✠ The Pauline Epistle is read from 1 Corinthians (12:28-13:1-18), which speaks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and then goes on to explain the most excellent way that all Christians should follow, which is love. St Paul says, ***“Love suffers long, does not envy, does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not rejoice in iniquity”***, such as in seeing people sick, but hopes the best for all people, whether it be recovery, success, and blessings.

✠ Then the Trisagon of glorification is sung.

✠ The priest then says the Litany of the Gospel, while raising incense. The Litany of the Gospel is said seven times during the Rite of Unction of the Sick, as well as the following repeated seven times : ***“Those who are sick heal them, for You are the life of us all, the salvation of us all, the hope of us all, the healing of us all and the resurrection of us all.”*** An attendant then reads the Psalm and the Gospel : ***“O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure, for Your arrows pierce me deeply, and Your hand presses me down”*** (Psalm 37:1-2). It carries the Psalmist’s grievance of the heavy chastening of God which might come as sickness or tribulation, and asks for relief. He does not refuse the chastisement of God but asks for His mercy without anger. The Gospel is read is from the Gospel of St Matthew, which speaks about the mission of the twelve disciples sent to preach and institute of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick.



The Lord Christ said to His pure Apostles, *“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons, freely you have received, freely give.”*

NOTES:

The service of Unction of the Sick is given free, so that even the poor can call the priest to perform the Sacrament when they are sick.

However, those who are willing to give a gift to the church may do so at another time, as a thanksgiving offering, but not as wages for the priest.

✠ The priest prays the following supplications, where he :

- Asks forgiveness of sins of the sick person, and all those attending, including himself.
- Asks the Lord to guide us and help along the path which leads to eternal life, and not eternal condemnation.
- Asks the Lord to heal and fortify the sick person’s body and intentions, so that he does not return to sin and fall sick again.
- Asks the Lord to hear his plea, and heal and have mercy on His servant, in the same way as the Lord heard Ezekiah in his misery, and did not reject his supplication.

## THE FOURTH PRAYER

The priest lights the fourth wick.

✠ The fourth Prayer commences with the Lord's Prayer.

✠ The priest prays the Litany of the Leaders.

### NOTES:

The order of Prayers is the same as those in the Baptismal Rite and Laqqan :

1. The sick
2. Travellers
3. Waters
4. Leaders
5. The Departed
6. Oblations
7. Catechumens

✠ The Pauline Epistle to the Romans is read, which speaks about enduring pain without complaint, in order to be granted the crown of longsufferance: ***“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”*** (Romans 8:14-21), and, ***“For our light affliction, which is put for a moment is***

*working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).*

NOTES:

The sufferings we face are often a means by which God cleanses us from our sins and iniquities, and when we are cleansed, we proceed forth into eternity, just like gold that has been purified by fire.

✝ Then the Trisagon of glorification is sung.

✝ The priest then says the Litany of the Gospel, while raising incense, which is then followed by the Gospel reading by an attendant. ***“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness, according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, cleanse me from my sin...”*** (Psalm 50:1-2). This is a cry of a suffering person who is aware of their sin, and begging the Lord for mercy and forgiveness of his sins, for the healing of his body and spirit. The Gospel is from St Luke, which tells of the mission of the seventy disciples in preaching and healing the sick: ***“Heal the sick who are there, and say to them: The Kingdom of God has come near you.”*** The reading also confirms the Institution of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, as commanded and established by the Lord Jesus Christ to His apostles.

✝ The priest prays the following supplications, where he :

1. Asks God, who is the physician of the sick, to heal our sicknesses and forgive our iniquities.
2. Asks God to accept the repentance of the sinners and heal their illnesses.
3. Asks God to heal and forgive the sick person, and grant health to his body. He also asks God to comfort him and relieve him from all his sufferings and sorrows.
4. Believes in the power of the almighty Lord, who is able to do all things.
5. Asks God to provide refuge for the repentants, hope for the hopeless, and comfort for those in tribulation.



## THE FIFTH PRAYER

The priest lights the fifth wick.

- ✠ The fifth Prayer commences with the Lord's Prayer.
- ✠ The priest prays the Litany of the Departed, so that the Lord may repose their souls and have mercy upon them.
- ✠ The Pauline Epistle to the Galatians (2:16-20) is read, which speaks about the necessity of strong faith in Jesus Christ, which is well pleasing to Him. A person must be crucified with Christ, in terms of putting to death all lusts and passions which cause him to perish, and thereby rise with Christ and be granted the joys of eternal life.
- ✠ Then the Trisagon of glorification is sung.
- ✠ The priest then says the Litany of the Gospel, while raising incense, which is then followed by the Gospel reading by an attendant: ***“Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Your name. The righteous shall surround me, for You shall deal bountifully with me”*** (Psalm 141:7). The suffering patient cries to the Lord to bring him out of the prison of sickness, so he may thank Him and praise Him, and glorify Him for His providence. The Gospel from St John (14:1-9), tells about how the Lord comforts the sick by saying, ***“Let not your heart be troubled...”***. In complete surrender, the Church teachers her children that, even after repentance if a person dies,

they will be granted the inheritance of eternal life, for the Lord Jesus said: ***“In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself that where I am, there you may be also.”*** This is the goal and the climax of a person’s struggle in this life, eternity with Christ.

Christ asks us to keep His Commandments, so that they may keep us from falling into sin, and so guarantee us eternal life. In the story of when the rich young man asked the Lord Christ, ***“What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”*** The Lord answered him, ***“You know the Commandments...”*** (Mark 10:17-18).

God gives us His Holy Spirit the Comforter who comforts and encourages us in all our tribulations, sicknesses, and sorrows so that we are able to endure trials gratefully, and without complaint.

✠ The priest prays the following supplications, asking the Lord to :

. *“Heal Your servant (...name) from his sickness”*

. *“Save him from all evil”*

. *“Raise him to be healthy and well by Your mercy, so that he may thank You and glorify You, together with all Your people in Your Church, from whom he has been deprived of because of his illness, and so being well, he will abide in Your church all the days of his life.”*

## THE SIXTH PRAYER

The priest lights the sixth wick.

✝ The sixth Prayer commences with the Lord's Prayer.

✝ The priest prays the Litany of the Oblations.

✝ The Pauline Epistle to the Colossians (3:12-17) is read, which tells of the Apostle Paul urging us to be adorned by the virtues of tender mercies, humbleness, meekness, long-suffering, forgiveness, love, peace, thanksgiving, and praise, so that we may be as saints without blemish.

✝ Then the Trisagon of glorification is sung.

✝ The priest then says the Litany of the Gospel, while raising incense, which is then followed by the Gospel reading by an attendant: ***“Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me when I was in distress. Have mercy on me and hear my prayer”*** (Psalm 4:1). The Gospel is then read from St Luke, which tells the story of the sinful woman who repented and washed the feet of the Lord Jesus with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Christ forgave her and gave her peace and joy instead of grief and worry, which was caused by sin. This Gospel presents a living example of true repentance so the sick person may learn and present a pure living repentance, so that they may be granted forgiveness of sins, and peace in their spirit. The saints often refer to repentance as being ‘the mother of life’.

✝ The priest says the following supplications, whereby he asks the Lord to :

*“Remember Your servant (...name) by Your mercy”*

*“Visit him with Your salvation”*

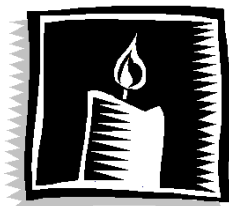
*“Take away from him all sickness”*

*“Grant him back to Your Church (from which he has been deprived of because of sickness), and make him healthy, and grant healing in soul, body and spirit”*

*“Raise him up from sickness so that he may glorify You, and witness to Your love and providence.”*

**NOTES:**

The sick person must thank God for healing him, and tell of how much the Lord has done for him. He must serve God and the church, just as St Peter’s mother-in-law served Christ after he healed her: ***“...So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them”*** (Luke 4:39).





## THE SEVENTH PRAYER

The priest lights the seventh and final wick.

✠ The seventh Prayer commences with the Lord's Prayer.

✠ The priest prays the Litany of the Catechumens.

✠ The Pauline Epistle to the Ephesians (6:10-18) is read, which tells of how the sick must be strong in their hope, and should not allow illness to weaken their faith. Hope in healing is half the recovery, so, ***“My brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might ... Take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand ...”*** and St Peter warns us, ***“For the devil your adversary walks about like a lion, seeking whom he may devour”*** (1 Peter 5:8), and the devil will devour those who are fainthearted and in despair. Therefore, pray always, and hope that your prayers will be granted that the Lord gives you spiritual and physical healing.

✠ Then the Trisagon of glorification is sung.

✠ The priest then says the Litany of the Gospel, while raising incense, which is then followed by the Gospel reading by an attendant: ***“Look on my affliction and my pain and forgive all my sins...Oh, keep my soul and deliver me. Let me not be ashamed for I put my trust in You”*** (Psalm 24:17-18). This psalm reflects the feeling of those who are ill. He is asking

the Lord not to reject him because he has his trust in the Lord, for He promised us saying, ***“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him. I will set him on high because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation”*** (Psalm 91:14-16). The Gospel which is read from St Matthew (6:14-18), advises those who are sick to forgive others the trespasses done against him, so that the Lord may also forgive them and consequently healed them of their illnesses, which may have been caused by sin. As the Lord said to the paralytic man, ***“Your sins are forgiven; Arise take up your bed and go to your house”*** (Matthew 9:2-6).

- ✠ The priest supplicates unto the Lord to, ***“See Your servant (...name), and raise him from the bed of his sickness.”***
- ✠ Then the priest says the prayer of the laying on of hands. Here the priest places the cross on the sick person and prays the following supplication: ***“...Not by the laying on of our hands on his head, we who are Your sinful priests, but rather we entreat the forgiveness of his sins by the holy hand of this Gospel ... accept the repentance of your servant (...name).”***
- ✠ Then the following supplication is prayed: ***“Heal Your servant (...name) from his physical illness and grant him a correct life which glorifies and gives thanks to Your greatness, O lover of mankind...”***

NOTES:

It is so important for a person to live a correct life, without blemish or blame. How excellent for him to have the complimenting aspects of strong Orthodox faith, and a virtuous life.

✝ The priest prays the Orthodox Creed over the oil. After each part, the attendants respond, “Glory be to the Father ... Now and forevermore, Amen.” This is followed by the ‘Gloria’ and the Lord’s prayer. Then the Orthodox Creed is said, followed by ‘Lord have mercy’ chanted 41 times.

NOTES:

1. It is very important that the sick person declares his Orthodox faith, for this is pleasing to God, for, “***Without faith it is impossible to please Him***” (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is important for our healing as the Lord Jesus said to Jairus who’s daughter Christ healed, “***Do not be afraid, only believe, and she will be made well***” (Luke 8:50). Also, the Lord said to the two blind men who asked Him to open their eyes: “***Do you believe that I am able to do this?...then He touched their eyes***” (Matthew 9:28), and to the father who asked Christ to heal his sick son, the Lord said, “***If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes***” (Mark 9:23).
2. It is also important that the sick persevere in asking for God’s mercy, by repeating ‘Lord have mercy’ 41 times, so that God

will have compassion on him, forgive his sins, and heal his psychological and physical illnesses.

✠ The praise of the Cherubim is said: ‘Holy, holy, holy...’ followed by the Lord’s prayer.

✠ Then the priest prays the three Absolutions :

1.        “*Lord, who has given authority ...*”

2.        “*You, O Lord, who bowed the heavens ...*”

3.        “*Master, Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son and Logos of God the Father ...*”

✠ He requests absolution and forgiveness for the sick person, from the compassionate and merciful God.

✠ The priest says the Blessing and concludes with the Lord’s Prayer. First he anoints the sick person with oil with a cross on his forehead, chest and hands ...

1.        The forehead is anointed because being the head, it is the center of the senses and thoughts.

2.        The chest is anointed because it contains the heart, for King Solomon said, “***Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life***” (Proverbs 4:23).

3. The hands are anointed because they are the instruments of work and deeds.

✠ The priest anoints the person with signs of the cross, in the name of the Holy Trinity, who sanctifies and blesses all things.

✠ The attendants are anointed by oil in the same manner, under one condition - that they are fasting. The woman who is menstruating should not be anointed by oil.

✠ The sick person must receive Holy Communion as soon as possible, after partaking in the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, for Holy Communion is the essence of life.

✠ The sick person must endeavour to anoint himself with the oil for seven consecutive days, believing in the power of God, and the power of prayer. This perseverance shows his faith in the effectiveness of the Sacrament, and his obedience to the church rite. Faith and obedience are essential ingredients for recovery. Just as the sick persevere in taking medicine for their recovery, so too must they be diligent in anointing themselves with oil.

### NOTES:

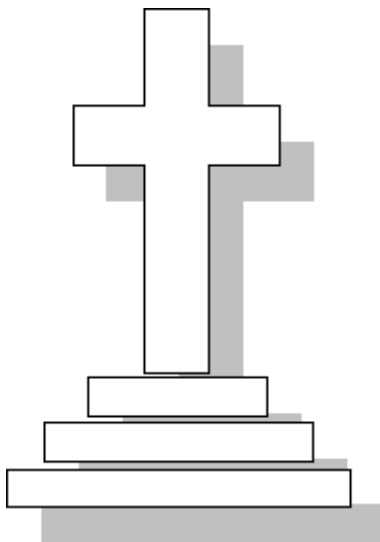
1. A question always arises: How should the holy oil remaining after the Sacramental Rite and anointment, be treated?

Answer: The priest may take the remaining oil and leave a little oil in the dish for the patient to anoint himself for seven consecutive days, as specified in the Rite of Sacrament of

Unction of the Sick. Seven, being a perfect number, and so the sick person's diligence to anoint himself with the oil, proves his faith in the effectiveness of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, and his care and obedience for Church orders. This ritual is effective, and helps the sick to recover through the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Sometimes every house of the believers keep a special bottle in which to place the oil of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, as a continuous blessing in the home. It is kept in a safe place so that the oil does not spill, and is used only when necessary.
3. After completion of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, the priest must filter the oil from the seven wicks by pressing them strongly, then the cotton wicks must be burned so that they are not trodden on. He then empties the remaining oil from the dish into a bottle, which has been kept for only that purpose, and wipes the remaining oil on the dish with cotton wool. The cotton is then burned together with the wicks.
4. No unbeliever should be anointed by the oil of Unction of the Sick, as it is holy sacramental oil given only to the baptised. If a non-believer asks to be anointed, a common oil is brought and the priest makes the sign of the cross on it three times, prays the Litany of the Sick, and then anoints the sick person.
5. No one should be anointed directly after Holy Communion, as Holy Communion is the perfection and seal of all Sacraments.
6. We notice in the Rite of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, that there are a great quantity of readings from the Holy Bible (7

Pauline, 7 Psalms, and 7 Gospels, apart from all the prayers and supplications). If the sick person is attentive to the prayers, these readings and prayers are a great source of consolation, patience, endurance, peace, and comfort, as well as providing the gift of healing that is accomplished in God's time. The sick person then feels he can surrender himself to God, and so his feelings of worry and anxiety are replaced with peace and calm, for ***“Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope”*** (Romans 15:4).



## **General Kandeel on the last Friday of Lent**

It is a known fact that all sacraments are accomplished in the Church, with the exception of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick as the sick may be too weak to come to church so the priest officiates it in the home. However, 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 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, because the Church cares for the prayers of this great week and concentrates its prayers and contemplations on the passion of Christ and the blessings of the mystery of redemption and act of salvation. Hence, the General Kandeel must take place before the holy Passion week, just as in the same way the General Funeral takes place following the Palm Sunday Mass and prior to the Pascha prayers. As no funeral rites are allowed to take place during Passion Week, for



the above mentioned reasons, the church performs the General Funeral so that if anyone passes away during Passion Week, they would have already been prayed on.

- ✠ The General Kandeel is performed in the Second Chorus between the raising of morning incense, and the holy Mass of the last Friday of Lent.
  
- ✠ The Church chooses this particular time of performing the rite at the end of Lent, because all the believers are reaching their spiritual climax, through abstinences, attendance at the holy Masses, and partaking in many prayers. The prayers of the rite are powerful, therefore at this particular time of the year, because even the Lord Jesus confirmed that, ***“This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting”*** (Mark 9:29).
  
- ✠ Prayers of the General Kandeel are performed in the plural forms, hence, instead of the priest saying: *“Lord heal Your servant (...name), he says: “Lord heal Your attending servants.”*
  
- ✠ At the end of the General Kandeel all the congregation are anointed with the oil of Sacrament of Unction of the Sick. Firstly, the priests anoint each other, then they anoint the deacons, and then the congregation. Then prayers begin for celebrating the last holy Mass in Lent.

NOTES:

As the anointing must always take place before the holy Mass and not after, if anyone came to Church after the anointing, the priest may anoint them before the Mass. Anointing may take place after the Mass, but as long as those who are being anointed have not had Holy Communion.

**Officiating the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick in homes during Holy Lent**

Some believers are accustomed to asking the priest, during the Holy Lent, to perform the Sacrament in their homes, as a means of blessing, even though they may not have a family member sick and in need of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick. Because so many people request this, the priests are obliged to visit the homes, but because of time constraints, are unable to perform all seven prayers. Therefore they only end up praying one or two of the prayers in each home. They are also obliged to perform the Sacrament any time of the day or night, even if people are not abstaining from food. All these practices are incorrect, and must be stopped because :

- ✠ The Sacrament of Unction of the Sick must be performed for a person who is genuinely sick and in need of this sacrament.
  
- ✠ The priest must pray all of the seven specified prayers of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick, as seven is a perfection number and the seven readings and seven prayers have effective power. Even David the Prophet said, “*Seven times a day I praise You*” (Psalm 119:164). The prayers, being God’s word,

pierce the heart like arrows, making them effective and powerful in a person's life. The Apostle Paul said: ***“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernment of the thoughts and intents of the heart”*** (Hebrews 4:12).

- ✚ In order for the prayers and readings of the word of God to be fruitful, they must be done reverently and without hurry or abbreviating.
- ✚ 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.
- ✚ Many people consider that the priest coming to the house is a blessing, especially during the period of Lent, which is a time of spiritual revival. They consider that the priest visiting the house is a way to encourage the household to continue in praying and fasting, and always practice the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession. There is no objection to the priest visiting and blessing homes, but there is no need for him 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 Prayer of Blessing of the House, resembles one of the prayers of the Sacrament of Unction of the Sick.

## PRAYER OF BLESSING HOMES

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- ✠ It can be done at any time, in the homes of the believers. It is not a necessary requirement, however, 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.
- ✠ The prayer itself is not very long, and this is helpful for the priest who may need to pray this blessing in several homes. The priest can say this prayer at any time because abstinence is not necessary.
- ✠ If the priest is called to bless the home during Holy Lent, he may pray the Prayer of Blessing the House. A jug of water is necessary during the prayers, so that the priest can pray upon it and at the end of the prayer, bless the household and the house with the water as a blessing. The priest may also anoint the members of the household with the oil of Sacrament of Unction of the Sick (a bottle which he keeps), if they are abstaining from food, but if the prayer takes place at night and the household are not fasting, then the priest may anoint them with any simple oil, (from a bottle which he keeps), or from a small plate of oil placed near the water and was present during the Prayer of Blessing Homes. Hence, the oil and water becomes sanctified through prayer and the word of God.

- ✠ The Prayer of Blessing the House is powerful and a great source of blessing, for it asks the Lord Jesus Christ to dwell in the home and bless it according to His promise : *“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them”* (Matthew 18:20).
- ✠ The Prayer of Blessing the House strongly resembles the Prayer of Unction of the Sick, and there are certain prayers from the Prayer of Unction of the Sick that are used in the Prayer of Blessing the House.
- ✠ Following the prayers, the priest sprinkles the holy water which had been prayed upon, on the household members, and throughout the house.



## **THE RITE OF THE PRAYER OF BLESSING HOMES**

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- ✠ The family places a jug of water on the table beside which the prayers will take place, and coals are heated for placing in the censer.
- ✠ Then facing east, the priest begins prayers with the Lord’s Prayer, followed by the Prayer of Thanksgiving. The deacons and household members respond accordingly.

- ✝ Whilst the Verse of Cymbals is sung, the priest places five spoonfuls of incense into the censor, and proceeds around the house and its rooms, raising incense.
- ✝ Psalm 50 *“Have mercy upon me O God”* is prayed, followed by the priest placing more incense into the censor and prays the Litany for the Sick, asking the Lord to heal any illness members of the household may have, and to grant them at all times psychological, physical and spiritual health, *“O You the true physician of our souls and bodies, who looks after all people, visit us with Your salvation...”*
- ✝ The priest then prays the Prayer for the Catechumens : *“Again let us ask God the Pantocrator, the Father of our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, we ask and entreat Your goodness, O Lover of Mankind, remember O Lord the Catechumens of Your people, have mercy upon them. Confirm their Orthodox faith in You...”*
- ✝ The members respond, *“Lord have mercy”*. Then the priest completes the rest of the Prayer: *“Uproot all traces of idolatry from their hearts. Your law, Your fear, Your commandments, Your truths, and Your holy precepts, establish in their hearts. Grant that they know the steadfastness of the preaching they have received. And in the set time may they be worthy of the washing of the new birth for the remission of their sins; as You prepare them to be a temple of Your Holy Spirit, by the grace, compassion and love of Your Only Begotten Son...”*

✠ The following supplications are prayed :

- *“O Lord, Holy God, fearful and glorified in all His deeds with unperceivable power, whose judgments are unsearchable, who created heaven by His word and fixed earth on water, who settled the mountains by measure, and the hills by scales ... We ask You Lord to hear us and have mercy upon us”* Members respond, *“Lord have mercy.”*
- *“You who assigned to the sea its limits and fixed islands and great waters, who touches mountains and they smoke. We ask You our Lord to bless this place which Your servant (...name) chose for his dwelling ... We ask You Lord to hear us and have mercy upon us”* Members respond, *“Lord have mercy.”*
- *“O You who are clothed with light, who stretched out the heavens like a tent and made the waters above the firmament ... We ask You our Lord to hear us and have mercy upon us”* Members respond, *“Lord have mercy.”*
- *“O You who founded the earth and created the waters and separated them from the dry land by Your great power. We ask You our Lord bless this home which Your servant (...name) chose for his dwelling and have mercy upon us”* members respond, *“Lord have mercy.”*
- *“O Lord God of hosts, healer of all sickness and all maladies, look down from Your heavens and respond to our*

*supplication and bless Your servant (...name), and this place he chose for his dwelling. Take away from him all intrigues of devils and cast away from him all unclean evil spirits and rebuke them. We ask You our Lord to hear us and have mercy upon us”* Members respond, *“Lord have mercy.”*

- *“O You who sits upon the Cherubim and looks to the depths. Before whom trembles the angels, archangels, principalities, powers, authorities and thrones. You who is feared by the heavens and the earth and the seas. Lord bless Your servant (...name) and all his works, accomplish it by success, grace and blessing. Make his path straight in Your pleasure and end his days in goodness and righteousness, through the intercessions of the Virgin Theotokos and all the martyrs and righteous saints. We ask You Lord to hear us and have mercy upon us”* Members respond, *“Lord have mercy.”*
- Then the following praise is sung in the ‘Adam Chant’ : *“God is light, and lives in light, and is praised by the angels of light, Light shone from Mary, and Elizabeth delivered the forerunner. And the Holy Spirit awakened David saying, ‘Rise and praise for the light shone.’ So David arose and took his spiritual harp, went to the Church, the house of angels and praised the Holy Trinity saying, Through Your light we see light, let Your mercy come to those who know You ... O True light, that enlightens every man that comes into the world. You came to the world because of Your love to mankind, and all the creation rejoiced at Your coming. You saved Adam from temptation and our mother Eve from the pangs of death, You granted us the Spirit to be Your children. We praise and bless You with the angels. Truly*



*You are blessed O You Christ our God, with Your good Father and the Holy Spirit, for You have come and saved us.”*

- After each supplication, the priest makes the sign of the cross, and the household members respond saying, “*Lord have mercy.*”
- “*We ask You O Lord for the heavenly peace...*” “*Lord have mercy.*”
- “*We ask You O Lord for this home and its sanctification...*” “*Lord have mercy.*”
- “*We ask You O Lord for our Pontiff Pope ... , and his partners in the Apostolic ministry, our metropolitans and bishops and all the clergymen...*” “*Lord have mercy.*”
- “*We ask You O Lord for this city of ours...*” “*Lord have mercy.*”
- “*We ask You O Lord for the healing of the sick and all those who are affected by unclean spirits...*” “*Lord have mercy.*”
- “*We ask You O Lord for those who are travelling, whether by sea, rivers, lakes, roads or by any other means...*” “*Lord have mercy.*”
- “*We ask You O Lord for the air of heavens, the blessings of the Nile waters, and the fruits of the earth...*” “*Lord have mercy.*”

- . *“We ask You O Lord to visit the whole world with Your mercy...” “Lord have mercy.”*
  
- . *“We ask You O Lord for the repose of all the souls of our fathers, and brethren who are reposed in the Orthodox faith...” “Lord have mercy.”*
  
- . *“We ask You O Lord for our Oblations and those who have offered them, and those by whom they have been offered, and those offered for them, and for those who desire to offer to You but cannot...” “Lord have mercy.”*
  
- . *“We ask You O Lord for the grace of purification, by the act of the Holy Trinity...” “Lord have mercy.”*
  
- . *“We ask You O Lord for this water to become healing for souls and bodies and spirits, and for casting out all power of the adversary...” “Lord have mercy.”*
  
- . *“We ask You O Lord for those in need of help and power from God...” “Lord have mercy.”*
  
- . *“We ask You O Lord for our steadfastness in the Orthodox faith...” “Lord have mercy.”*
  
- . *“We ask You O Lord for keeping us in Your holy hand, through the intercession of our Lady and pride of humankind, the Theotokos and pure St. Mary, and all the martyrs and saints...” “Lord have mercy.”*

- ✠ The hymn of the ‘Golden Censer’ is sung, followed by, “*We kneel before You...*”.
- ✠ The Pauline Epistle to the Romans (8:14-21) is read. “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are Sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out “Abba, Father”. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the Son of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope, because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*” “*The grace of God the Father be with you all. Amen.*”
- ✠ The Trisagon of glorification is sung, followed by the Litany and reading of the Gospel, “*Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come to You. Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble. Incline Your ear to me, In the day that I call, answer me speedily*” (Psalm 101:1-2). *Gospel according to St Luke...* “*Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not*

*because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him: “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down for today I must stay at your house.” But when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner”. Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold”. And Jesus said to him: “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Glory be to God forevermore, Amen.”*

✠ Then the following supplication is prayed: *“O Lord our Saviour, who accepted entering the house of Zacchaeus and granted salvation to him and to all those in his house. Keep now Your servants who live in this house, from every harm, preserve them without falling, by the prayers and supplications lifted to You by us and them, through us the unworthy servants. Bless their dwelling in this house and guard their lives without temptation, for to You is every glory, honour, dominion and worship, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit now and unto the end of ages. Amen.”*

✠ The priest prays the three Major Litanies of Peace, the Fathers, and the Congregations, followed by the Orthodox Creed.

✠ The priest then says the following supplication: *“O our Lord and God, great in His thoughts and splendid in His deeds, the creator of all the visible and invisible creation, who keeps His covenant and mercy to those who love Him with all their hearts, those who keep His covenant and commandments. Who accepts the tears and has compassion on those in tribulation. For this reason You were incarnated as a servant, to grant healing to our bodies. Who said to the paralytic man, **”See you have been made well. Sin no more.”** You who spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and told him to wash. You granted him the light of vision by Your word. You who shook the rocks of the torment of the adversary, You silenced the waves of the sea of this world, and calmed the heavy waves of lusts, You O lover of mankind and King, who granted us to be clothed in a white garment made from water and spirit, now send Your grace that purifies us from suffering, by receiving this water and sprinkling it on us and our houses, our possessions and our properties. Yes O good Lord, visit us in our sickness and heal the maladies of our souls and bodies through the intercession of the Theotokos, the pure St Mary, and by the power of the honourable Cross, and supplications of the heavenly hosts and Your martyrs and saints and Cross-bearers. Amen.”*



NOTES:

1. The priest prays for the healing of the whole family from every sickness and weakness.
2. The priest prays for the home and the city according to the words of Jeremiah the prophet: ***“And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it, for in its peace you will have peace”*** (Jeremiah 29:7).
3. In the Pauline Epistle to the Romans, the Church asks the members of the family to walk in the Spirit, not in bodily lusts, ***“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”*** (Romans 4:8).
4. The Gospel reading tells of Christ blessing the house of Zacchaeus by staying there: ***“Today salvation has come to this house”***. The priest prays for the blessing and salvation of the family in the house where the prayers are being performed.

5. The Orthodox Creed is said, for the soul must be founded on the Orthodox faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. The soul should be filled with spiritual virtues.
6. The priest says a number of supplications and prayers to ask that the water prayed on, becomes a source of healing for souls and bodies, and a means of casting out all the power of the adversary from the home and those dwelling within, and for the Lord to watch over them from all the temptations of the adversary.
7. The whole house is sprinkled with the water, so that the house may be blest, and all works of evil abolished and forbidden entry, through the power of God working in these prayers.

## **THE PRAYER OF ABO TERBO (ST. TERBO)**

- ✠ This prayer may be done for Christians as well as non Christians
- ✠ It is more prevalent amongst those dwelling in villages, rather than the cities, and this is mainly due to the simplicity of faith of the villagers.
- ✠ The prayer is done for those who have been bitten by dogs who may have rabies.
- ✠ The prayer is done instead of the 21 injections which are given to the person, who was bitten, in the abdominal area. The prayers, through faith are very effective and powerful. And so

the person bitten can benefit from both the effective prayers, and appropriate medication.

The first person by whom the prayers were made effective, was a saint by the name of 'Abo Terbo' (St. Terbo). 'Terbo' in Greek means 'the healer'. This saint lived during the days of Emperor Diocletian, who tortured him severely, before finally throwing him in prison, where the saint remained until the Emperor died. Diocletian was succeeded by the righteous Christian king Constantine, who released all the Christians from prison and pain, and restored peace and Christendom in the empire. Accordingly, all the Christians returned to their homes praising the Lord and preaching His name in all places.

It happened one day that as Abo Terbo was walking, a ferocious dog with rabies drew near the saint as if to attack him. The saint prayed fervently to be saved from the dog, and so hearing his prayers, the Lord sent His angel to rescue him. The angel ordered him to stretch out his rod upon the dog, and so doing, the dog died immediately. The Lord then granted Abo Terbo the gift of healing people who have been attacked or bitten by dogs infected with rabies. Whosoever calls upon the Lord in the name of Abo Terbo will be saved.

Many miracles have been performed in his name, one of which is the story of a poor woman who had an only son, bitten by a ferocious dog. After they prayed to the Lord to heal the boy, through the prayers of Abo Terbo, the boy was healed.

The effective and powerful prayer of Abo Terbo is very popular in country villages.



## **THE RITE OF THE PRAYER OF ABO-TERBO**

- ✠ The person who was bitten by the dog, goes to the priest, bringing seven pieces of unleaven bread, seven pieces of cheese, seven dates, a bottle of water, and a bottle of oil.
- ✠ The priest then gathers seven children. (Note, however, that only the priest performs the rite, without the assistance of the youths).
- ✠ The priest begins with the Prayer of Thanksgiving, then raises the Pauline incense, while the deacons sing the Verses of the Cymbals.
- ✠ The second Pauline Epistle to the Corinthians (2:12-17) is then read: ***“Now thanks to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place, for we are to God the fragrance of Christ among the believers and the non-believers...”***
- ✠ The Trisagon of glorification is sung, followed by the priest saying the Litany of the Gospel before one of the deacons reads the Psalm and the Gospel: ***“Restore us O God of our salvation...Show us Your mercy, O Lord and grant us Your salvation, will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You. Alleluia”*** (Psalm 85:7). The Psalmist is asking God to show His mercy and grant salvation, by healing the sick person, so that all the people may rejoice and praise the Lord.

✝ The Gospel reading from St Matthew tells of the Phoenician woman who asked the Lord to heal her daughter, and although a Gentile and an unbeliever, she showed strong faith and humility. Therefore, the Lord Jesus said to her, “*“O woman great is your faith ... let it be to you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed from that very hour”* (Matthew 15:21-28).

NOTES:

Many people who come requesting the Prayer of Abo Terbo from the priest for themselves or even for their cattle, are non-Christians, but they always display strong faith in the power and effectiveness of the prayers, just like the unbelieving Phoenician woman to whom the Lord granted her according to her heart’s desire because of her faith. Likewise, the Lord grants healing and the heart’s desire to those people who believe in the strength and power of the Abo Terbo prayers, prayed by the priest.

✝ The priest prays the Three Major Litanies, followed by the Orthodox Creed.

✝ The priest then reads the life story of Abo Terbo, as well as mentioning the miracle of healing of the poor woman’s son. Many prayers are also said, such as, “*O God of Abo Terbo, support Your servants who eat from this pastry and drink from this water. Heal them Lord and cast away the poison of this beast from this person. Do not make him anxious or*

*frightened or confused, and may no evil affect him, nor the poison of this dog harm him ...”*

✠ The following four Psalms are read:

***“The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want”*** (23)

***“May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble”*** (19)

***“Blessed are the undefiled in the way”*** (118)

***“I will lift up my eyes to the hills”*** (121)

✠ The priest then says the following supplication: *“Have mercy on Your servant (...name) and heal him from the dog so that he does not suffer or become sick from the poison of the dog’s mouth.”*

✠ The seven children hold each others’ hands and proceed around the sick person seven times saying: *“Believe You are healed and saved of your sickness by the power and joy of the giving and graceful God, O You the healer, glory be to you. Amen.”*

### NOTES:

If the priest does not find children, he may do without them in prayer.

✠ When the seven rounds are finished, every child cuts a piece of the bread, the cheese, and a date and places it near the person who was bitten.

- ✠ Now the priest divides the pastry, the cheese and the dates.
- ✠ The priest makes the sign of the cross on the water and the oil, before anointing the person who was bitten, by the oil, and sprinkling him with the water.
- ✠ For the next seven days, the person who was bitten, must eat of the bread, the cheese and dates each morning, must drink of the water, and continue anointing the infected area.
- ✠ Through the grace of God, and the prayers of Abo Terbo, the person who is bitten will recover. Amen.