

- “*And they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.*” This is one of the scriptural references whence comes the Church’s sacrament of anointing...
 - But even more explicitly—especially as it comes from the early Church—is a one from the letter of James: “*Is any 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 man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*” (James 5:14-15)
 - In the first quote, Mark uses the specific word for olive oil, and that’s what the Church continues to use for its holy oils—stored in the ambry in the back of the church.
 - The three holy oils, blessed by the Archbishop each year at the Chrism Mass, are: the oil of the sick, of catechumens and the sacred chrism.
 - The oil of catechumens is used for just that: to anoint those who are coming into the Church, but before baptism.
 - The oil of the sick, of course, for anointing of the sick and last rites.
 - And sacred chrism—which represents the “seal” of the Holy Spirit—is used in celebrating the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and ordination.
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- Now, the anointing of the sick is NOT “last rites”...though “last rites” INCLUDE anointing of the sick.
 - And anointing of the sick is reserved for those who are in some danger of death—a major operation, or even if simply going under general anesthesia. It can also be given to the elderly who have become weakened.
 - But it is not for minor illnesses or pains. So if you’re not elderly and simply have a cold, you don’t need anointing of the sick.

- I've outlined more info about that sacrament in the bulletin today, so pick one up if you haven't already. And, of course, all this and more is available in the Catechism.

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- Now our Gospel is that of Jesus choosing and sending out the apostles to spread the Word of God throughout the land and the world...much as God chose leaders, judges and prophets throughout the Old Testament to guide the Israelites.
 - And God the Father and Jesus choose some of the most unlikely of people for that task.
 - Moses—like St. Paul admits of himself—was a poor speaker. Gideon, a farmer. King David a shepherd. The prophet Amos today admits he was a shepherd and “dresser of sycamores”—a woodworker. And much the same of many other of the Old Testament notables.
 - And then Jesus chose for His apostles several fishermen, a tax collector, a nationalist (Simon the Zealot). Jesus Himself chose the life of a simple carpenter.
 - While Paul was likely a fairly well-off Pharisee at first, he gave it all up to follow Christ...working as a tentmaker.
 - This trend continues. While many popes were of aristocratic families, Pope John Paul had worked as an actor and a quarry laborer. John XXIII's family were sharecroppers in Italy. Pope Francis worked as a lab tech, a janitor and a bouncer.
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 - This all speaks to vocations—that one need not necessarily be highly educated or affluent to enter the service of God...and yet, neither do having those things preclude a person.
 - In fact, all are called to service to God and neighbor, and a few called as ordained ministers.

- And the ordained are not to become arrogant, for as Paul says: *“If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!”* (1 Cor 9:16)...and Jesus warns: *“Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required...”* (Luke 12:48)
 - Indeed, our very faith is itself a gift, given in various measure... and yet all may come to belief, for Paul also writes that God: *“... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* (1 Timothy 2:4)
 - We, as Christ’s disciples, simply do our best to bring all whom we encounter to Him by our fidelity, words and actions.
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- We rarely think about the amazing gift that God has given to us... we who are Christian, and especially we who have either been born into or later drawn into the Catholic faith.
- Paul writes today: *“He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world...”*
- We can extend that to understand that in God’s own plan. Like an architect whose plan is complete before a brick is laid, God’s plan was complete from the beginning, from all eternity...before stars or galaxies...even before time itself.
- And, in all that period...from then ‘til now and for all eternity, God has cherished YOU...and chose you as His special creation...to know Him through Jesus Christ...much as we hear in Jeremiah: *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you...”* (Jer 1:5)
- ...chose you to be—through baptism and fidelity—as Paul continues: *“...holy and without blemish before Him...destined... for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ in accord with the favor of His will...”*

- What does He require for this great gift? After all, all that we have is His gift to us. The only thing we have to give that is truly ours is our will.
- And so...simply to love Him freely—to love the Good—above all else, and to love our neighbor as ourselves...is that for which He longs.
- And what is the love of God? St. John tells us: *“This is the love of God: that we keep His commandments.”*

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- Yes, we are chosen...but this is an unmerited honor and privilege that we can ourselves cherish, or toss away...depending upon our own free choice...the choice of all who have been called by God throughout the millennia.
 - So, as Moses told the Israelites just before they were to cross over the Jordan: *“I have set before you life and death...; therefore choose life...loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you...that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers...”* (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)
 - ...that land which *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, [which] God has prepared for those who love Him.”* (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Reading I

[Am 7:12-15](#)

Amaziah, priest of Bethel, said to Amos,
"Off with you, visionary, flee to the land of Judah!
There earn your bread by prophesying,
but never again prophesy in Bethel;
for it is the king's sanctuary and a royal temple."
Amos answered Amaziah, "I was no prophet,
nor have I belonged to a company of prophets;
I was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamores.
The LORD took me from following the flock, and said to me,
Go, prophesy to my people Israel."

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14](#)

R. (8) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what God proclaims;
the LORD—for he proclaims peace.
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him,
glory dwelling in our land.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Kindness and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

The LORD himself will give his benefits;
our land shall yield its increase.
Justice shall walk before him,
and prepare the way of his steps.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Reading II

[Eph 1:3-14 or Eph 1:3-10](#)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ
with every spiritual blessing in the heavens,
as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world,
to be holy and without blemish before him.

In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ,
in accord with the favor of his will,
for the praise of the glory of his grace
that he granted us in the beloved.

In him we have redemption by his blood,
the forgiveness of transgressions,
in accord with the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us.

In all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us
the mystery of his will in accord with his favor
that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times,
to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth.

In him we were also chosen,
destined in accord with the purpose of the One
who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will,
so that we might exist for the praise of his glory,
we who first hoped in Christ.

In him you also, who have heard the word of truth,
the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him,
were sealed with the promised holy Spirit,
which is the first installment of our inheritance
toward redemption as God's possession, to the praise of his glory.

or

Eph 1:3-10

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ
with every spiritual blessing in the heavens,
as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world,
to be holy and without blemish before him.
In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ,
in accord with the favor of his will,
for the praise of the glory of God's grace
that he granted us in the beloved.

In him we have redemption by his blood,
the forgiveness of transgressions,
in accord with the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us.
In all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us
the mystery of his will in accord with his favor
that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times,
to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth.

Gospel

[Mk 6:7-13](#)

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits.

He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—

no food, no sack, no money in their belts.

They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic.

He said to them,

"Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave.

Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them."

So they went off and preached repentance.

The Twelve drove out many demons,

and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.