

# The Sacraments

## Anointing the Sick, Last Rites or Holy Unction

Consider for yourself a ritual of blessing for yourself with oil. Oil represents that which is essential and is pressed out of the olive under great pressure. It is representative of the Holy Spirit within you.

What would your intention and wish be for yourself in dying, in sickness, in disintegration and lack of wholeness of mind, body and spirit? Write your own prayer for healing and death.

You are dying all the time. Inherent in the process is both struggle and surrender, resistance, fear and then acceptance and relaxation. Consider doing a ritual of Holy Unction for all the small deaths of your life so that they are done with intention and devotion. Honor every dying and every birth. Every death results in greater integration and wholeness that incorporates and includes all previous stages and states of consciousness.

May death come gently towards you,  
Leaving you time to make your way  
Through the cold embrace of fear  
To the place of inner tranquility.

May death arrive only after a long life  
To find you at home among your own  
With every comfort and care you require.

May your leave-taking be gracious,  
Enabling you to hold dignity  
Through awkwardness and illness.

May you see the reflection  
Of your life's kindness and beauty  
In all the tears that fall for you.

As your eyes focus on each face,  
May your soul take its imprint  
Drawing each image within  
As companions for the journey.

May you find for each one you love  
A different locket of jewelled words  
To be worn around the heart  
To warm your absence.

May someone who knows and loves  
The complex village of your heart  
Be there to echo you back to yourself  
And create a sure word-raft

To carry you to the further shore.

May your spirit feel  
The surge of true delight  
When the veil of the visible  
Is raised, and you glimpse again  
The living faces  
Of departed family and friends.

May there be some beautiful surprise  
Waiting for you inside death,  
Something you never knew or felt,  
Which with one simple touch  
Absolves you of all loneliness and loss,  
As you quicken within the embrace  
For which your soul was eternally made.

May your heart be speechless  
At the sight of the truth  
Of all your belief had hoped,  
Your heart breathless  
In the light and lightness  
Where each and every thing  
Is at last its true self  
Within that serene belonging  
That dwells beside us  
On the other side  
Of what we see.

~John O'Donohue

