

Mass during which the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is celebrated (also, on the 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time)

March 3, 2019

St. Patrick

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We heard from the New Testament Letter of St. James—

**“Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.”**

Early last summer, about twenty minutes before the 5:15 p.m. Sunday Mass here, the church only had a sprinkling of folks, scattered through the pews. Toward the rear of the church, I saw three persons—a young man and, probably, his parents. I didn't think that I had seen them before and went up to them and introduced myself, welcoming them. They were Betty and Larry Cain, and their son Dillon. They said that they came from Louisiana.

They told me that Dillon was going to be admitted to LeBonheur Hospital the next morning. A handsome 20-year-old young man who didn't look like he was ill, Dillon, they went on telling me, suffered from frequent seizures of epilepsy. He was going to spend the week, getting treatment for his epilepsy.

I told them that I would be praying for him and, if he wanted it, I would celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick after Mass, if they asked me. As I was greeting folks on the front steps after Mass, Dillon came up to me and told me that he wanted to be anointed. So, back in the church, I anointed him, with his parents right beside him.

Two months ago, in early January, I received a card from the Cain family. They have given me permission to share it with you. The card reads: “We are so appreciative of you sharing the sacrament of the anointing of the sick with Dillon back in June and also for welcoming us back when we revisited in September. Dillon's medicine for his epilepsy has kept his seizures away. We look forward to visiting you church again upon our follow-up visit with the doctor in April.”

Dillon is now able to drive a car again. He's back in college.

In the note they called it “our time of worry.” After the anointing back in June, I gave Dillon and his parents an assignment. Right after I left St. Patrick's, I was going to visit a parishioner who had been very ill for several months. I was going

to bring him Communion. I asked Dillon to pray for him by name, asking for his healing. That evening, I asked that parishioner and his wife to pray for Dillon by name. I knew they would do it.

You know, Friends, that's why we celebrate the holy anointing together in prayer. We're in this together. Dillon needed the medical care, but he also needed the support of prayer. It's not that one extra prayer is going to influence God, turning the scale on behalf of healing. No, in God's providence, we're in this together as church, praying that each person receives the healing that s/he most needs now. How that works out, we give up control and are called to trust our God.

We've seen how the strong support of prayer, together with quality medical care, has brought recently a return of health to parishioners here at St. Patrick's. We're called to be church and truly share with others in their "time of worry." As St. James teaches us today, **"The fervent prayer of the righteous is very powerful."**

Feebly, humbly, and with trust, St. Patrick's, let's make that prayer today.