

The Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick

Study Questions... Please consider these study questions as the most important themes of our course, and be prepared to address them on Monday, June 8, 2026, from 10:15-11:45am.

- 1) In general, what are sacraments? What is meant by material and formal components of the sacraments? What is meant by the categorization of Penance and Anointing of the Sick as the Sacraments of Healing (as distinct from Initiation and Edification)?
- 2) Why do humans sin? What usually happens when we sin? What is the basic biblical history of sin, and do we still have a sense of sin today, or have we lost it? Why are St. Paul and St. Augustine such important thinkers about the reality and dynamics of sin?
- 3) What does law have to do with sin, and how can thinkers like St. Thomas Aquinas help us in considering law (eternal, natural, divine positive and civil) as a way of understanding a recovery of the sense of sin, and how does law form us to know what is right and wrong?
- 4) Why do we say morality is objective? If morality is objective, why is individual human freedom so important in determining the rightness or wrongness of an action?
- 5) What is the relationship between actual and sanctifying grace, and how might the two types of grace work together in approaching the sacrament of Penance?
- 6) What are the acts of the penitent that make up the *materia (quasi materia)* of the sacrament of Penance? Why are they necessary for the sacrament to be validly ministered?
- 7) What is the form of the sacrament of Penance? Who can minister the sacrament of Penance? What are some reasons the Church says confession has to be audible, and not electronically carried out?
- 8) What is the basic historical development of the sacrament of Penance, from the Bible to the current day? What are the basic environmental conditions and expectations of both the penitent and minister, as well as others in the general area (people in line) of the sacrament? Are there limits to asking for the sacrament of Penance, based on reasonable expectations? How might bishops and priests make themselves more available for the sacrament of Penance?
- 9) What is the difference between the disposition of Perfect Contrition and Imperfect Contrition (also known as Attrition)? What kind of contrition is needed for the valid reception of the sacrament of Penance? Are there situations where contrition is sufficient for forgiveness of sins, even if a priest is not available for confession?
- 10) What kinds of information would be helpful before recommending that someone receive the sacrament of Anointing the Sick? Once you determine a person could be a good candidate, what are some practical steps that would help a person to receive this Sacrament well, and why? How often should a person receive the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick?
- 11) What is the matter and form of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick? Where can this sacrament be found in the Bible?