



PREPARATION FOR A SICK CALL

I INTRODUCTION

The room where the sick-call will take place ought to be the best in the house.; it should be clean and well ventilated; all unnecessary things such as dishes, medicines, etc. should be removed. **NO ANIMALS** are to be allowed in the room. A change of linens before the sacraments are to be administered is highly recommended. It is evident that the patient should be washed and properly groomed and that the parts to be anointed be clean and presentable.. Since the house becomes the dwelling place for Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist (at least for a short time), all those who are present are expected to show by their conduct a reverent comportment (one is not to chat with the priest nor converse for any but the most serious motives). Those present should be attired appropriately; their clothes should be neat and clean and in conformity with the code of modesty (i.e., women and girls must wear modest dresses and have their heads covered). The proper comportment for all present during the administration of the sacraments is to kneel. It is also proper to genuflect when entering or leaving the room if the Blessed Sacrament is present. When the priest is at the door, someone should meet him there with a lighted candle; the rest of the family members should be in the room already kneeling in prayer. **NO ONE SHOULD SPEAK WITH THE PRIEST** unless strictly necessary. They should remain kneeling in silent prayer until the priest bids them to leave the room at the time he will hear the patient's confession. They remain out of the room during the confession. Needless to say, if the penitent is somewhat deaf or speaks loudly, it will be necessary to be farther away than simply the adjoining room. During this time it is advisable to kneel and pray for the patient. All kneel for the blessing which the priest imparts before he leaves. **IF THE PRIEST STILL HAS THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IT IS NOT BECOMING TO DETAIN HIM WITH CONVERSATION.**

II. MATERIAL PREPARATIONS:

A. CHAIR:

A chair should be placed at the head of the bed facing the foot of the bed. This, of course, is to facilitate the priest in hearing the patient's confession

B. TABLE = THE TEMPORARY ALTAR:

- 1. THE TABLE ITSELF:** A table is required for the administration of the sacraments. The table is to be arranged so as to serve as a temporary altar. It should be placed against the wall either opposite the head of the bed or against a wall that is perpendicular to the bed in order that the patient need not turn his head awkwardly to see the crucifix that is placed upon this temporary altar. The table should be approximately the height of an altar which is thirty-nine (39) inches; it should be at least eighteen to twenty-four (18-24) inches wide and twenty-four to thirty-six (24-36) inches long.
- 2. WHITE CLOTH:** The table must be entirely covered with a clean white cloth - preferably of pure linen. This cloth must cover the entire surface of the table and should drape down on both sides as well as the front of the table.
- 3. CRUCIFIX AND CANDLES:** On the table (the center against the wall) must be a crucifix (not simply a cross but a crucifix which is a cross and the corpus). There must be two (2) candlesticks - one on either side of the crucifix. These candlesticks should be of polished brass and the candles must be of (at least fifty-one per cent) beeswax.
- 4. HOLY WATER:** On the table towards the right corner should be a bottle containing holy water. (N.B. no Catholic home should be found without holy water)
- 5. PITCHER OF FRESH WATER:** On the table should be a small pitcher containing fresh water which will be used by the priest as the ablution after giving Holy Communion.



III. THE CEREMONIES

The foregoing preparations must be made well in advance of the arrival of the priest. The patient needs several minutes to prepare for the reception of the sacraments and should not be disturbed during this preparation. Likewise, after the reception of the sacraments the patient should be given some time to make a proper thanksgiving. The head of the household (or one appointed by him) should help the priest (if need be) when he administers Extreme Unction (e.g. help in removing and replacing the bedclothes, turning the head of the patient etc.) Anyone else who is present should kneel in devout and silent prayer.

As the priest approaches the house someone should light the candles (all three - two on the altar and one with which to greet and escort the priest). A disturbance is caused by waiting until the priest is in the room before the candles are lighted. It is worse still if, after the priest is in the room, one is obliged to hunt for matches or the other items required for the administration of the sacraments.

IV. PRAYERS

ACT OF CONTRITION

O My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all of my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all good and deserving of all of my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to confess my sins to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

PRAYER OF RESIGNATION

O My God, I lovingly accept from Thy divine goodness whatever sufferings, anxieties or sorrows it may please Thee to permit me to endure during my present illness. I offer to Thee all of my thoughts, words, deeds and sufferings in union with Thy Most Sacred Heart, the Immaculate Heart of Thy Most Blessed Mother and all of the angels and the saints. I conform my will to Thy divine will. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. I desire to live and die in the bosom of the Holy Roman Catholic Church and in perfect submission to Thy most holy will. Amen

