



# Seeds of Faith

An initiative of Raphoe Diocese— supporting families

October November 2013

## Family Life

What do you do when your child falls and hurts herself? If your child is feeling sick how do you comfort him? As parents or guardians we know that a child needs to be held and cuddled. Cut knees need to be cleaned and plasters carefully put on. How many of us have been asked for plasters for the tiniest little scratch because our children believe they are almost magical in their ability to make things better! There are times when we all need a friendly word, a hug, a word of encouragement or even just somebody to make us a cup of tea.

In this issue we are looking at the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. When someone is anointed the oil is put on their forehead and their hands. It is very significant that oil is used. In ancient times oil was used to strengthen warriors. In the same way we use it a sign of strengthening someone to deal with the challenges they face. Touch is significant too. God did not make us simply spirits. God gave us the gift of our bodies. The sacrament of anointing recognises the goodness of our bodies. Like a parent, the church recognises our need for healing touch.

Take a moment to look at your hands. Think of all your hands have done today. Think of the work they have done, the strength they have shown, the tenderness they have offered. Our hands are wonderful and it is right that they should be blessed and anointed in the sacrament of the sick. Think now of your head. Consider all the thoughts and ideas that whirl in your head, all the information that your brain processes in a day, all the moments of joy, beauty, struggle, challenge and delight that your mind registers every day. Think of your face, think of the face of your child—all the emotions that are expressed there, the smiles and frowns, the eyes that search deeply, ears that listen to what is said and what is left unsaid, the mouth that expresses what is going on in the heart and mind. How right it is that the Anointing of the Sick should touch, bless and anoint our head!

We are created in the image and likeness of God. The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick reminds us of this in our time of darkness and struggle. It is not a sacrament to be afraid of. It does not mean that we are dying. It is a sacrament that tells us again that God loves us, that Jesus is with us, walking the journey with us and that, wherever the journey takes us we will not be alone. We come to God just as we are for this sacrament—no fancy outfits, no parties planned, just as we are and just the way God loves us.

We would love to hear your comments. What's useful for your family? Would you like to receive this newsletter each month by email? Please email address [bairbre.seedsoffait@gmail.com](mailto:bairbre.seedsoffait@gmail.com)

## Praying as a family

Take some time together as a family to look at your hands.

- How have your hands shown love today?
- Have there been times today when your hands have been used in an angry or even aggressive way?
- Have your hands been used in a healing way today – maybe when somebody has been sad or hurt or felt sorry for doing something?
- Who are the people you turn to when you need support and strength?
- Thank God for all the people in your life who help you feel happy when you are sad, better when you are sick, strong when you are frightened and loved when you are lonely.



## Gospels for October and November

Our Gospel activity this time around is a kind of wordsearch. Below are 16 short lines: two from each of the gospel passages on the list for the coming Sundays. Find the two that belong to each Sunday and write in the letters on the table below. You can try this by reading the text in your bible – or by listening really carefully as the Gospel is read at Mass! For added value, older children might look back after a few weeks and try to recall what each Gospel story was from the texts that belonged to it.

A: The time is near at hand. B: Today you will be with me in paradise. C: Increase our faith. D: To God, all are alive. E: The one who humbles himself will be exalted. F: God will always answer the prayers of his friends. G: Jesus, take pity on us. H: He climbed a sycamore tree. I: We have only done our duty. J: Never lose heart. K: Your endurance will win you your lives. L: Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom. M: God, be merciful to me, a sinner. N: Today salvation has come to this house. O: He is God not of the dead but of the living. P: He threw himself at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.



06/10/13	Luke 17:5-10	Letters	___	&	___
13/10/13	Luke 17:11-19	Letters	___	&	___
20/10/13	Luke 18:1-8	Letters	___	&	___
27/10/13	Luke 18:9-14	Letters	___	&	___
03/11/13	Luke 19:1-10	Letters	___	&	___
10/11/13	Luke 20:27-38	Letters	___	&	___
17/11/13	Luke 21:5-19	Letters	___	&	___
24/11/13	Luke 23:35-43	Letters	___	&	___



### Sacred Space

You could fill your sacred space during October with the handprints suggested down below and spend this month praying for all the people who bring love, strength and healing into your life.

During November you could collect crisp dry leaves and on them, using a marker, write the names of all the people you want to remember who have died

Dear Jesus

When life is difficult be with us.  
Help us to understand  
that you walk with us  
every step of the way.  
Give us strength to support others,  
to love them like you love them,  
to offer hope and healing.  
And help us recognise  
when we need support too  
that you are there for us  
in the helping hands of others.

Amen

Why not make a collage of hands!  
Draw round your hands or use paint to  
make hand prints. Write names on the  
hands—all the people who help you  
to feel happy, well, strong and loved.



### Stepping Stones on the Journey of Faith

- Anointing of the Sick is one of the seven sacraments. This beautiful sacrament builds upon the fact that we all need gentle reassurance and care when life is difficult.
- In this sacrament the forehead and hands are anointed with holy oil and prayers are said by a priest or bishop.
- When someone receives Anointing of the Sick we pray that they will receive peace and strength.
- It is a prayer for healing and some will experience physical healing through it.
- For others the healing that is given is spiritual and psychological, giving them the strength to face the challenges of their illness and perhaps even of death.
- Because this sacrament unites the person with Jesus who suffered and died for us and overcame death in His resurrection people can experience a deep sense of connection with Jesus.
- No matter how dark or difficult place we find ourselves in Jesus understands our struggle and is with us in it. This knowledge can bring people deep peace and strength. They will never be alone—He is always with them.
- Even in the early Church we hear them speak about Anointing—in the letter of St James he says, “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.” (James 5:14)
- We remember how Jesus reached out to people to touch and heal them. We think of Jesus healing a leper in Luke 5:12-16, and Jesus healing Jairus’ daughter and the woman who touched his cloak in Luke 8:40—56
- As followers of Jesus we believe we are called to bring healing and hope to the lives of those around us.



Sometimes when we need healing in our lives it helps to talk to someone. The sacrament of reconciliation is also a sacrament of healing and many people find great peace, strength and comfort in this sacrament. A wonderful book to help you understand what confession or reconciliation is about is Fr Paul Farren’s “Confession—looking into the eyes of God”

Groups which provide support in times of difficulty include

Rainbows, a service which offers support to children and teenagers who are experiencing loss through bereavement or separation.  
[www.rainbowsireland.com](http://www.rainbowsireland.com)

ACCORD which offers relationship counselling [www.accord.ie](http://www.accord.ie)

The Samaritans [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org) who offer a listening ear whatever the source of your trouble or distress.