

With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.

LUKE 24: 31

VAITICUM FOR THE DYING

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VIATICUM FOR THE DYING

I. INTRODUCTION

The Rite of Viaticum is “food for the passage through death to eternal life.” (*PCS*, 175) It is considered the sacrament that is proper to the dying Christian. Viaticum presents a sign that the Christian follows the Lord to eternal glory and the banquet of the heavenly kingdom.

II. VIATICUM

- VI 1.** When a person is nearing death but still conscious, the faithful are to be encouraged to call upon a priest to administer the last sacrament of the Church, the final reception of Holy Communion known as Viaticum. A deacon or duly appointed layperson may also administer viaticum in case of need (see *PCS*, 29; *CIC*, c. 911 §2).
- VI 2.** Catechesis is to be given in every parish community so that the faithful understand Viaticum and its significance as the last sacrament of the Church and bread for the journey to the banquet of heaven.

III. LITURGICAL RITES

- VI 3.** Those who minister to the sick are to use the parts of the ritual, *Pastoral Care of Sick* (*PCS*), appropriate to their ministry. They are to make prudent adaptations in those areas specified by the ritual in order to accommodate the condition of the sick person, the circumstances of the family and the cultural customs of those who participate in the rites.

IV. CATECHETICAL PREPARATION

- VI 4.** Parishes are to offer catechesis about the nature of the sacrament and its purpose. Specifically, the faithful are to be educated to ask for the Sacrament of Anointing as soon as illness arises so that they may receive it with faith and devotion and avoid the wrongful practice of delaying the sacrament to the moment of death. All who care for the sick should be taught the meaning and purpose of the sacrament and have an

understanding of the different roles people have in celebrating the sacrament (see archdiocesan Health Care Ministry Policies: HC, VIII, “Pastoral Care”).

V. DOCUMENTATION

VI 5. While not required by universal law, the creation and maintenance of sick call registers at parishes and hospitals is strongly recommended as a useful aid to coordinating pastoral care of the sick (see Sacramental Records: SR, V “Sick Calls”).

“Parishes are encouraged to transfer closed sick call registers to the Archdiocese Archives.” (see *Sacramental Records: SR, V “Sick Calls”*)