

SUPPLEMENT TO THE THIRD PART, QUESTION 29

Of Extreme Unction, As Regards Its Essence and Institution

(In Nine Articles)

We must now consider the sacrament of Extreme Unction: in respect of which five points have to be considered: (1) Its essentials and institution; (2) Its effect; (3) Its minister; (4) on whom should it be conferred and in what parts; (5) Its repetition.

Under the first head there are nine points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether Extreme Unction is a sacrament?
- (2) Whether it is one sacrament?
- (3) Whether this sacrament was instituted by Christ?
- (4) Whether olive oil is a suitable matter for this sacrament?
- (5) Whether the oil ought to be consecrated?
- (6) Whether the matter of this sacrament should be consecrated by a bishop?
- (7) Whether this sacrament has any form?
- (8) Whether the form of this sacrament should take the shape of a deprecatory phrase?
- (9) Whether this is a suitable form for this sacrament?

Whether Extreme Unction is a sacrament?

Suppl. q. 29 a. 1

Objection 1. It would seem that Extreme Unction is not a sacrament. For just as oil is used on sick people, so is it on catechumens. But anointing of catechumens with oil is not a sacrament. Therefore neither is the Extreme Unction of the sick with oil.

Objection 2. Further, the sacraments of the Old Law were figures of the sacraments of the New Law. But there was no figure of Extreme Unction in the Old Law. Therefore it is not a sacrament of the New Law.

Objection 3. Further, according to Dionysius (Eccl. Hier. iii, v) every sacrament aims at either cleansing, or enlightening, or perfecting. Now Extreme Unction does not aim at either cleansing, or enlightening, for this is ascribed to Baptism alone, or perfecting, for according to Dionysius (Eccl. Hier. ii), this belongs to Confirmation and the Eucharist. Therefore Extreme Unction is not a sacrament.

On the contrary, The sacraments of the Church supply man's defects sufficiently with respect to every state of life. Now no other than Extreme Unction does this for those who are departing from this life. Therefore it is a sacrament.

Further, the sacraments are neither more nor less than spiritual remedies. Now Extreme Unction is a spiritual remedy, since it avails for the remission of sins, according to James 5:15. Therefore it is a sacrament.

I answer that, Among the visible operations of the Church, some are sacraments, as Baptism, some are sacramentals, as Exorcism. The difference between these is that a sacrament is an action of the Church that reaches to the principal effect intended in the administration of the sacraments, whereas a sacramental is an action which, though it does not reach to that effect, is nevertheless directed towards that principal action.

Now the effect intended in the administration of the sacraments is the healing of the disease of sin: wherefore it is written (Is. 27:9): "This is all the fruit, that the sin... should be taken away." Since then Extreme Unction reaches to this effect, as is clear from the words of James, and is not ordained to any other sacrament as an accessory thereto, it is evident that Extreme Unction is not a sacramental but a sacrament.

Reply to Objection 1. The oil with which catechumens are anointed does not convey the remission of sins to them by its unction, for that belongs to Baptism. It does, however, dispose them to receive Baptism, as stated above (IIIa, q. 71, a. 3). Hence that unction is not a sacrament as Extreme Unction is.

Reply to Objection 2. This sacrament prepares man for glory immediately, since it is given to those who are departing from this life. And as, under the Old Law, it was not yet time to enter into glory, because "the Law brought nobody [Vulg.: 'nothing'] to perfection" (Heb. 7:19), so this sacrament had not to be foreshadowed therein by some corresponding sacrament, as by a figure of the same kind. Nevertheless it was somewhat foreshadowed remotely by all the healings related in the Old Testament.

Reply to Objection 3. Dionysius makes no mention of Extreme Unction, as neither of Penance, nor of Matrimony, because he had no intention to decide any question about the sacraments, save in so far as they serve to illustrate the orderly disposition of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as regards the ministers, their actions, and the recipients. Nevertheless since Extreme Unction confers grace and remission of sins, there is no doubt that it possesses an enlightening and cleansing power, even as Baptism, though not so copious.

Objection 1. It would seem that Extreme Unction is not one sacrament. Because the oneness of a thing depends on its matter and form, since being and oneness are derived from the same source. Now the form of this sacrament is said several times during the one administration, and the matter is applied to the person anointed in respect of various parts of his body. Therefore it is not one sacrament.

Objection 2. Further, the unction itself is a sacrament, for it would be absurd to say that the oil is a sacrament. But there are several unctions. Therefore there are several sacraments.

Objection 3. Further, one sacrament should be performed by one minister. But the case might occur that Extreme Unction could not be conferred by one minister: thus if the priest die after the first unction, another priest would have to proceed with the others. Therefore Extreme Unction is not one sacrament.

On the contrary, As immersion is in relation to Baptism, so is unction to this sacrament. But several immersions are but one sacrament of Baptism. Therefore the several unctions in Extreme Unction are also one sacrament.

Further, if it were not one sacrament, then after the first unction, it would not be essential for the perfection of the sacrament that the second unction should be performed, since each sacrament has perfect being of itself. But that is not true. Therefore it is one sacrament.

I answer that, Strictly speaking, a thing is one numerically in three ways. First, as something indivisible, which is neither actually nor potentially several—as a point, and unity. Secondly, as something continuous, which is actually one, but potentially several—as a line. Thirdly, as something complete, that is composed of several parts—as a house, which is, in a way, several things, even actually, although those several things go together towards making one. In this way each sacrament is said to be one thing, in as much as the many things which are contained in one sacrament, are united together for the purpose of signifying or causing one thing, because a sacrament is a sign of the effect it produces. Hence when one action suffices for a perfect signification, the unity of the sacrament consists in that

action only, as may be seen in Confirmation. When, however, the signification of the sacrament can be both in one and in several actions, then the sacrament can be complete both in one and in several actions, even as Baptism in one immersion and in three, since washing which is signified in Baptism, can be completed by one immersion and by several. But when the perfect signification cannot be expressed except by means of several actions, then these several actions are essential for the perfection of the sacrament, as is exemplified in the Eucharist, for the refreshment of the body which signifies that of the soul, can only be attained by means of meat and drink. It is the same in this sacrament, because the healing of the internal wounds cannot be perfectly signified save by the application of the remedy to the various sources of the wounds. Hence several actions are essential to the perfection of this sacrament.

Reply to Objection 1. The unity of a complete whole is not destroyed by reason of a diversity of matter or form in the parts of that whole. Thus it is evident that there is neither the same matter nor the same form in the flesh and in the bones of which one man is composed. In like manner too, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and in this sacrament, the diversity of matter and form does not destroy the unity of the sacrament.

Reply to Objection 2. Although those actions are several simply, yet they are united together in one complete action, viz. the anointing of all the external senses, whence arises the infernal malady.

Reply to Objection 3. Although, in the Eucharist, if the priest die after the consecration of the bread, another priest can go on with the consecration of the wine, beginning where the other left off, or can begin over again with fresh matter, in Extreme Unction he cannot begin over again, but should always go on, because to anoint the same part a second time would produce as much effect as if one were to consecrate a host a second time, which ought by no means to be done. Nor does the plurality of ministers destroy the unity of this sacrament, because they only act as instruments, and the unity of a smith's work is not destroyed by his using several hammers.

Objection 1. It would seem that this sacrament was not instituted by Christ. For mention is made in the Gospel of the institution of those sacraments which Christ instituted, for instance the Eucharist and Baptism. But no mention is made of Extreme Unction. Therefore it was not instituted by Christ.

Objection 2. Further, the Master says explicitly (Sent. iv, D, 23) that it was instituted by the apostles. Therefore Christ did not institute it Himself.

Objection 3. Further, Christ showed forth the sacraments which He instituted, as in the case of the Eucharist and Baptism. But He did not bestow this sacrament on anyone. Therefore He did not institute it Himself.

On the contrary, The sacraments of the New Law are more excellent than those of the Old Law. But all the sacraments of the Old Law were instituted by God. Therefore much more do all the sacraments of the New

Law owe their institution to Christ Himself.

Further, to make an institution and to remove it belongs to the same authority. Now the Church, who enjoys the same authority in the successors of the apostles, as the apostles themselves possessed, cannot do away with the sacrament of Extreme Unction. Therefore the apostles did not institute it, but Christ Himself.

I answer that, There are two opinions on this point. For some hold that this sacrament and Confirmation were not instituted by Christ Himself, but were left by Him to be instituted by the apostles; for the reason that these two sacraments, on account of the plenitude of grace conferred in them, could not be instituted before the mission of the Holy Ghost in perfect plenitude. Hence they are sacraments of the New Law in such a way as not to be foreshadowed in the Old Law. But this argument is not very cogent, since, just as Christ, before His Passion, promised the mission of the Holy Ghost in His plenitude, so could He institute these sacraments.

Wherefore others hold that Christ Himself instituted all the sacraments, but that He Himself published some, which present greater difficulty to our belief, while he reserved some to be published by the apostles, such as Extreme Unction and Confirmation. This opinion seems so much the more probable, as the sacraments

belong to the foundation of the Law, wherefore their institution pertains to the lawgiver; besides, they derive their efficacy from their institution, which efficacy is given them by God alone.

Reply to Objection 1. Our Lord did and said many things which are not related in the Gospel. For the evangelists were intent on handing down chiefly those things that were necessary for salvation or concerned the building of the ecclesiastical edifice. Hence they related the institution by Christ of Baptism, Penance, the Eucharist and orders, rather than of Extreme Unction and Confirmation, which are not necessary for salvation, nor do they concern the building or division of the Church. As a matter of fact however an anointing done by the apostles is mentioned in the Gospel (Mk. 6:13) where it is said that they “anointed the sick with oil.”

Reply to Objection 2. The Master says it was instituted by the apostles because its institution was made known to us by the teaching of the apostles.

Reply to Objection 3. Christ did not show forth any sacrament except such as He received by way of example: but He could not be a recipient of Penance and Extreme Unction, since there was no sin in Him: hence He did not show them forth.

Whether olive oil is a suitable matter for this sacrament?

Suppl. q. 29 a. 4

Objection 1. It would seem that olive oil is not a suitable matter for this sacrament. For this sacrament is ordained immediately to the state of incorruption. Now incorruption is signified by balsam which is contained in chrism. Therefore chrism would be a more suitable matter for this sacrament.

Objection 2. Further, this sacrament is a spiritual healing. Now spiritual healing is signified by the use of wine, as may be gathered from the parable of the wounded man (Lk. 10:34). Therefore wine also would be more suitable a matter for this sacrament.

Objection 3. Further, where there is the greater danger, the remedy should be a common one. But olive oil is not a common remedy, since the olive is not found in every country. Therefore, since this sacrament is given to the dying, who are in the greatest danger, it seems that olive oil is not a suitable matter.

On the contrary, oil is appointed (James 5:14) as the matter of this sacrament. Now, properly speaking, oil is none but olive oil. Therefore this is the matter of this sacrament.

Further, spiritual healing is signified by anointing with oil, as is evident from Is. 1:6 where we read: “. . . swelling sores: they are not . . . dressed nor fomented with oil.” Therefore the suitable matter for this sacrament is oil.

I answer that, The spiritual healing, which is given

at the end of life, ought to be complete, since there is no other to follow; it ought also to be gentle, lest hope, of which the dying stand in utmost need, be shattered rather than fostered. Now oil has a softening effect, it penetrates to the very heart of a thing, and spreads over it. Hence, in both the foregoing respects, it is a suitable matter for this sacrament. And since oil is, above all, the name of the liquid extract of olives, for other liquids are only called oil from their likeness to it, it follows that olive oil is the matter which should be employed in this sacrament.

Reply to Objection 1. The incorruption of glory is something not contained in this sacrament: and there is no need for the matter to signify such a thing. Hence it is not necessary for balsam to be included in the matter of this sacrament, because on account of its fragrance it is indicative of a good name, which is no longer necessary, for its own sake, to those who are dying; they need only a clear conscience which is signified by oil.

Reply to Objection 2. Wine heals by its roughness, oil by its softness, wherefore healing with wine pertains to Penance rather than to this sacrament.

Reply to Objection 3. Though olive oil is not produced everywhere, yet it can easily be transported from one place to another. Moreover this sacrament is not so necessary that the dying cannot obtain salvation without it.

Objection 1. It would seem that the oil need not be consecrated. Because there is a sanctification in the use of this sacrament, through the form of words. Therefore another sanctification is superfluous if it be applied to the matter.

Objection 2. Further, the efficacy and signification of the sacraments are in their very matter. But the signification of the effect of this sacrament, is suitable to oil on account of its natural properties, and the efficacy thereof is due to the Divine institution. Therefore its matter does not need to be sanctified.

Objection 3. Further, Baptism is a more perfect sacrament than Extreme Unction. But, so far as the essentials of the sacrament are concerned, the baptismal matter needs no sanctification. Neither therefore does the matter of Extreme Unction need to be sanctified.

On the contrary, In all other anointings the matter is previously consecrated. Therefore since this sacrament is an anointing, it requires consecrated matter.

I answer that, Some hold that mere oil is the matter of this sacrament, and that the sacrament itself is perfected in the consecration of the oil by the bishop. But this is clearly false since we proved when treating of the Eucharist that that sacrament alone consists in the consecration of the matter (q. 2, a. 1, ad 2).

We must therefore say that this sacrament consists in the anointing itself, just as Baptism consists in the washing, and that the matter of this sacrament is conse-

crated oil. Three reasons may be assigned why consecrated matter is needed in this sacrament and in certain others. The first is that all sacramental efficacy is derived from Christ: wherefore those sacraments which He Himself used, derived their efficacy from His use of them, even as, by the contact of His flesh, He bestowed the force of regeneration on the waters. But He did not use this sacrament, nor any bodily anointing, wherefore in all anointings a consecrated matter is required. The second reason is that this sacrament confers a plenitude of grace, so as to take away not only sin but also the remnants of sin, and bodily sickness. The third reason is that its effect on the body, viz. bodily health, is not caused by a natural property of the matter: wherefore it has to derive this efficacy from being consecrated.

Reply to Objection 1. The first consecration sanctifies the matter in itself, but the second regards rather the use of the matter considered as actually producing its effect. Hence neither is superfluous, because instruments also receive their efficacy from the craftsman, both when they are made, and when they are used for action.

Reply to Objection 2. The efficacy which the sacrament derives from its institution, is applied to this particular matter when it is consecrated.

The Reply to the Third Objection is gathered from what has been said.

Objection 1. It would seem that the matter of this sacrament need not be consecrated by a bishop. Because the consecration of the Eucharistic elements surpasses that of the matter in this sacrament. But a priest can consecrate the matter in the Eucharist. Therefore he can do so in this sacrament also.

Objection 2. Further, in material works the higher art never prepares the matter for the lower, because the art which applies the matter is more excellent than that which prepares it, as stated in Phys. ii, text. 25. Now a bishop is above a priest. Therefore he does not prepare the matter of a sacrament which is applied by a priest. But a priest dispenses this sacrament, as we shall state further on (q. 31). Therefore the consecration of the matter does not belong to a bishop.

On the contrary, In other anointings also the matter is consecrated by a bishop. Therefore the same applies to this.

I answer that, The minister of a sacrament produces the effect, not by his own power, as though he were the principal agent, but by the efficacy of the sacrament which he dispenses. This efficacy comes, in the first place, from Christ, and from Him flows down to others in due order, viz. to the people through the

medium of the ministers who dispense the sacraments, and to the lower ministers through the medium of the higher ministers who sanctify the matter. Wherefore, in all the sacraments which require a sanctified matter, the first consecration of the matter is performed by a bishop, and the application thereof sometimes by a priest, in order to show that the priest's power is derived from the bishop's, according to Ps. 132:2: "Like the precious ointment on the head," i.e. Christ, "that ran down upon the beard of Aaron" first, and then "to the skirt of his garment."

Reply to Objection 1. The sacrament of the Eucharist consists in the consecration of the matter and not in its use. Consequently, strictly speaking, that which is the matter of the sacrament is not a consecrated thing. Hence no consecration of the matter by a bishop is required beforehand: but the altar and such like things, even the priest himself, need to be consecrated, all of which can be done by none but a bishop: so that in this sacrament also, the priest's power is shown to be derived from the bishop's, as Dionysius observes (Eccl. Hier. iii). The reason why a priest can perform that consecration of matter which is a sacrament by itself, and not that which, as a sacramental, is directed to a

sacrament consisting in something used by the faithful, is that in respect of Christ's true body no order is above the priesthood, whereas, in respect of Christ's mystic body the episcopate is above the priesthood, as we shall state further on (q. 40, a. 4).

Reply to Objection 2. The sacramental matter is not one that is made into something else by him that uses it, as occurs in the mechanical arts: it is one, in

virtue of which something is done, so that it partakes somewhat of the nature of an efficient cause, in so far as it is the instrument of a Divine operation. Hence the matter needs to acquire this virtue from a higher art or power, since among efficient causes, the more prior the cause the more perfect it is, whereas in material causes, the more prior the matter, the more imperfect it is.

Whether this sacrament has a form?

Suppl. q. 29 a. 7

Objection 1. It would seem that this sacrament has no form. Because, since the efficacy of the sacraments is derived from their institution, as also from their form, the latter must needs be appointed by the institutor of the sacrament. But there is no account of the form of this sacrament being instituted either by Christ or by the apostles. Therefore this sacrament has no form.

Objection 2. Further, whatever is essential to a sacrament is observed everywhere in the same way. Now nothing is so essential to a sacrament that has a form, as that very form. Therefore, as in this sacrament there is no form commonly used by all, since various words are in use, it seems that this sacrament has no form.

Objection 3. Further, in Baptism no form is needed except for the sanctification of the matter, because the water is "sanctified by the word of life so as to wash sin away," as Hugh states (De Sacram. ii). Now the matter of this sacrament is already consecrated. Therefore it needs no form of words.

On the contrary, The Master says (Sent. iv, D, 1) that every sacrament of the New Law consists in things and words. Now the words are the sacramental form. Therefore, since this is a sacrament of the New Law, it seems that it has a form.

Further, this is confirmed by the rite of the Universal Church, who uses certain words in the bestowal of this sacrament.

I answer that, Some have held that no form is essential to this sacrament. This, however, seems derogatory to the effect of this sacrament, since every sacrament signifies its effect. Now the matter is indifferent

as regards its effect, and consequently cannot be determined to any particular effect save by the form of words. Hence in all the sacraments of the New Law, since they effect what they signify, there must needs be things and words. Moreover James (5:14,15) seems to ascribe the whole force of this sacrament to prayer, which is the form thereof, as we shall state further on (ad 2: Aa. 8,9). Wherefore the foregoing opinion seems presumptuous and erroneous; and for that reason we should hold with the common opinion that this, like all the other sacraments, has a fixed form.

Reply to Objection 1. Holy Writ is proposed to all alike: and so, the form of Baptism, which can be conferred by all, should be expressed in Holy Writ, as also the form of the Eucharist, which in regard to that sacrament, expresses faith which is necessary for salvation. Now the forms of the other sacraments are not contained in Holy Writ, but were handed down to the Church by the apostles, who received them from our Lord, as the Apostle declares (1 Cor. 11:23): "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you," etc.

Reply to Objection 2. The words which are essential to the form, viz. the prayer of deprecation, are said by all; but other words which pertain to the well-being thereof, are not said by all.

Reply to Objection 3. The matter of Baptism has a certain sanctification of its own from the very contact of our Saviour's flesh; but the form of words sanctifies it so that it has a sanctifying force. In like manner when the matter of this sacrament has been sanctified in itself, it requires sanctification in its use, so that it may sanctify actually.

Whether the form of this sacrament should be expressed by way of assertion or of petition?

Suppl. q. 29 a. 8

Objection 1. It would seem that the form of this sacrament should be expressed by way of assertion rather than of petition. Because all the sacraments of the New Law have a sure effect. But sureness of effect is not expressed in the sacramental forms except by way of assertion, as when we say: "This is My body" or "I baptize thee." Therefore the form of this sacrament should be expressed as an assertion.

Objection 2. Further, the intention of the minister should be expressed in the sacramental forms because it

is essential to the sacrament. But the intention of conferring a sacrament is not expressed except by an assertion. Therefore, etc.

Objection 3. Further, in some churches the following words are said in the conferring of this sacrament: "I anoint these eyes with consecrated oil in the name of the Father," etc., which is in keeping with the forms of the other sacraments. Therefore it seems that such is the form of this sacrament.

On the contrary, The form of a sacrament must

needs be one that is observed everywhere. Now the words employed according to the custom of all the churches are not those quoted above, but take the form of a petition viz.: “Through this holy unction, and His most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed, by sight,” etc. Therefore the form of this sacrament is expressed as a petition.

Further, this seems to follow from the words of James, who ascribes the effect of this sacrament to prayer: “The prayer of faith,” says he (5:15), “shall save the sick man.” Since then a sacrament takes its efficacy from its form, it seems that the form of this sacrament is expressed as a petition.

I answer that, The form of this sacrament is expressed by way of a petition, as appears from the words of James, and from the custom of the Roman Church, who uses no other than words of supplication in conferring this sacrament. Several reasons are assigned for this: first, because the recipient of this sacrament is deprived of his strength, so that he needs to be helped by prayers; secondly, because it is given to the dying, who are on the point of quitting the courts of the Church, and rest in the hands of God alone, for which reason they are committed to Him by prayer; thirdly, because

the effect of this sacrament is not such that it always results from the minister’s prayer, even when all essentials have been duly observed, as is the case with the character in Baptism and Confirmation, transubstantiation in the Eucharist, remission of sin in Penance (given contrition) which remission is essential to the sacrament of Penance but not to this sacrament. Consequently the form of this sacrament cannot be expressed in the indicative mood, as in the sacraments just mentioned.

Reply to Objection 1. This sacrament, like the others mentioned, considered in itself, is sure of its effect. yet this effect can be hindered through the insincerity of the recipient (though by his intention he submit to the sacrament), so that he receives no effect at all. Hence there is no parity between this sacrament, and the others wherein some effect always ensues.

Reply to Objection 2. The intention is sufficiently expressed by the act which is mentioned in the form, viz.: “By this holy unction.”

Reply to Objection 3. These words in the indicative mood, which some are wont to say before the prayer, are not the sacramental form, but are a preparation for the form, in so far as they determine the intention of the minister.

Whether the foregoing prayer is a suitable form for this sacrament?

Suppl. q. 29 a. 9

Objection 1. It would seem that the foregoing prayer is not a suitable form for this sacrament. For in the forms of the other sacraments mention is made of the matter, for instance in Confirmation, whereas this is not done in the aforesaid words. Therefore it is not a suitable form.

Objection 2. Further, just as the effect of this sacrament is bestowed on us by the mercy of God, so are the effects of the other sacraments. But mention is made in the forms of the other sacraments, not of the Divine mercy, but rather of the Trinity and of the Passion. Therefore the same should be done here.

Objection 3. Further, this sacrament is stated in the text (Sent. iv, D, 23) to have a twofold effect. But in the foregoing words mention is made of only one effect, viz. the remission of sins, and not of the healing of the body to which end James directs the prayer of faith to be made (James 5:15): “The prayer of faith shall save the sick man.” Therefore the above form is unsuitable.

I answer that, The prayer given above (a. 8) is

a suitable form for this sacrament, for it includes the sacrament by the words: “By this holy unction,” and that which works in the sacrament, viz. “the mercy of God,” and the effect, viz. “remission of sins.”

Reply to Objection 1. The matter of this sacrament may be understood in the act of anointing, whereas the matter of Confirmation cannot be implied by the act expressed in the form. Hence there is no parity.

Reply to Objection 2. The object of mercy is misery: and because this sacrament is given when we are in a state of misery, i.e. of sickness, mention of mercy is made in this rather than in other sacraments.

Reply to Objection 3. The form should contain mention of the principal effect, and of that which always ensues in virtue of the sacrament, unless there be something lacking on the part of the recipient. Now bodily health is not an effect of this kind, as we shall state further on (q. 30, Aa. 1, 2), though it does ensue at times, for which reason James ascribes this effect to the prayer which is the form of this sacrament.