

I know I am repeating myself on this subject, but it seems that the message is still not getting across despite how often I have explained all of this before.

The Sacrament of the Sick *isn't* what used to be called “the Last Rites” – we no longer use that phrase. Rather it involves the reception of holy communion and anointing with the Oil of the Sick as a source of sacramental strength and encouragement in the face of ill-health or undergoing surgery. In the event that a person is dying, hopefully they will have requested the sacrament before their condition becomes such that they are no longer able to receive holy communion (food for the journey - *viaticum*). That said...

- If you are going into hospital, please contact me to request the Sacrament of the Sick *before you are admitted*. It doesn't matter how serious (or otherwise) your condition might be, if you would like to receive the Sacrament of the Sick, contact me and ask *while you are still at home*.
- Once you are admitted to hospital you come under the care of the Catholic chaplain and his chaplaincy team and so, if for some reason you haven't received the Sacrament of the Sick and would like to, or if you simply wish to be visited and receive holy communion, *please ask the nursing staff to notify the Catholic chaplain* to let him know who you are, where you are.
- *If you are admitted to James Cook (South Tees) Hospital*, there is a priest-chaplain and chaplaincy team assigned to the hospital. We priests have been specifically asked to leave communion visits and the administration of the Sacrament of the Sick to the chaplain in order to avoid confusion or duplication. The presumption, therefore, is that we are doing as we were asked.
- *If you are admitted to University Hospital (North Tees)* you are in a completely different diocese (Hexham & Newcastle). I have no idea what their chaplaincy system is, but I think the local parish priests take it in turn to be on-call should anyone require the Sacrament of the Sick or a communion visit, but in order to avoid delay or confusion *please ask the nursing staff to notify the Catholic chaplain* when you are admitted so that he knows who you are and where you are, and certainly to contact the priest on-call should you urgently require his services.

Thank you,

