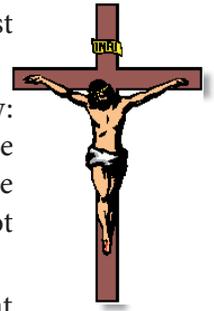

Preparing for Last Rites In An Emergency Or During Serious Illness

After calling the doctor, 911, or an ambulance if that is appropriate, notify your parish priest immediately. Use cell phones to call all at the same time if others are able to help.

Be ready to tell the priest much of the same information that the ambulance will need to know: the person's name, complete address, age, relationship with those with whom he lives, and describe to the best of your ability the nature of the illness. If there is a possibility that the patient will be moved quickly by ambulance to a hospital, tell the priest. Be sure to tell the priest whether or not the patient is conscious. Stay in contact with him by cell phone if you can.



If the person has become ill while not in bed (collapsed, fallen, etc.), ask the doctor or 911 what should be done. Extreme caution should be taken in attempting to move the one in danger of death. Decisions regarding moving should be left to medical personnel (doctor, rescue team, ambulance crew, etc.)

While awaiting the arrival of the priest and caring for the patient, those present should predispose the patient (if possible) for receiving the sacraments by prayer and reflection. They should help the patient to pray as much as possible and they themselves should pray as much as is possible.

If there is enough time, a table should be prepared with a clean covering. On the table there should be a crucifix, two lighted candles, a container with holy water, and, if the patient is able to receive Communion, a glass of water and a spoon. If the priest uses cotton to wipe his fingers after anointing, the cotton should be destroyed by fire at a later time.

On a small table, which is situated so as to be seen by the patient, and covered with fresh linen, place the Sick Call Set and have crucifix inserted in a slot at top of the base. Place a Sacramental candle in each candle stick holder. Also, have on the table a glass of water, a spoon, the communion cloth, and the bottle which is supplied, filled with Holy water."

If the Sacrament of Extreme Unction is to be administered, a member of the family should meet the priest at the door with a lighted candle, and conduct him to the sick room. If Father has the Blessed Sacrament for Holy Viaticum, all should kneel in respectful silence as Father enters until he passes. In addition to the above have a small plate containing crumbs of bread, and make up five small balls with the absorbent cotton furnished in the set.

If conditions permit, the patient should be given time for Confession and private conversation with the priest. Otherwise it is appropriate for family and others to be present during the Sacraments to pray, to show the concern of the Church at that time, and to show their care.

When the priest leaves, he should be escorted to the door in the same manner as he was received. Kneeling is not necessary if Father no longer carries the Blessed Sacrament.

During A Serious Illness – Not An Emergency

Much the same as above: Flowers and other devotions can cheer and prepare the patient for prayer.

All present should by prayer and reflection, predispose themselves for the arrival of the priest and the patient's reception of the Sacraments. An atmosphere of quiet and preparedness should prevail when the priest arrives. If the Last Rites are to be administered, the patient should have been bathed, with particular care to cleanse the places of anointing.

When a person is confined at home because of any infirmity, notify the parish priest as soon as possible. Tell him the person's name, complete address, age, relationship with those with whom he lives, and describe to the best of your ability the nature of his infirmity.

During the time when the person is confined, it is appropriate to request that the Sacraments of the Eucharist, Penance, or Extreme Unction, or all. The propriety of time and occasion should be discussed with the priest depending on how serious the illness is.

Except for times when the patient desires time for Confession and private conversation with the priest, meaningful people in the patient's life should be encouraged to be present. Such people would be family, friends, health care professionals, representatives of the parish community, and the person's place of work.