



**A Liturgy of Anointing  
at the time of an assisted death**

*A liturgy prepared by The Reverend Alan Hall  
June 4, 2020*

*[Name of the one who is dying],*  
you have lived.

*[Adapt the following to reflect the person's life]*

You have lived with joy and with sorrow.  
You have lived with integrity and with honour.  
You have lived with struggle and with triumph.  
You have lived with skill and intelligence,  
with an enquiring and probing mind.

You have lived with vocational commitment  
to education and to literacy  
to fairness and justice in our communities.

You have lived with faith, ever evolving, changing, learning, questioning.

You have lived as son, husband, father, grandfather, friend.

We give thanks for your life, *[name]*.  
We give thanks to you for you!  
We give thanks to God for the blessing that you are  
and will always be.

*[As the oils of anointing were prepared the presider says . . . ]*

There are hundreds of references to anointing in the bible. It is an act of empowerment by the Holy Spirit, of the glory of God and of holiness, it is an act claiming the sacredness of life and presence with and within of the Holy. It is a conferrence of grace.

Frankincense is the resin of the Boswellia tree. It was burnt in the ancient Temple, symbolizing a connection between here and there. The Hebrews are thought to have learned how to burn it while in exile in Egypt. Frankincense is symbol of the eternal holy grace of life.

*O God, Source of all consolation, who wills healing of being and wholeness of spirit,  
listen favourably to our prayer of faith:*

*Send forth from the Realms your Holy Spirit upon this  
oil of frankincense,  
oil which you have brought forth from the verdant earth:*

*that with it we may affirm and give thanks for the life of [name]  
and all that is good and right in him, with him, and through him.*

Anoint each one: *[each person present is named and anointed]*

*I anoint you in the name of God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
affirming the blessed essence of life*

*that we celebrate with [name of the one who is dying].*

*With gratitude and thanksgiving we hold [name of the one who is dying],  
now and always, world without end.*

*[This psalm was selected by the one who is dying.]*

From Psalm 103

Bless God, my soul,  
and all my being, bless God's holy name.

*Bless God, my soul,  
and forget not all God has done for us.*

Bless God, who forgives us, who heals all our infirmities,  
who redeems our life and crowns us with mercy and love,  
who fills our life with good things . . . .

*O God, you showed your ways to Moses,  
your deeds to the children of Israel.*

You are compassionate and merciful,  
slow to anger and extravagant in love . . . .

*For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is your steadfast love toward those who revere you.*

As far as the east is from the west,  
so far have you put away our sins from us.

*As a father has compassion for his children,  
so you have compassion for those who revere you.*

As a mother comforts her child, so you comfort us, O God.

*For you know how we were made.  
You remember that we are dust.*

Bless God, O my soul!

In time we all return to the earth,  
to the dust from which we were made.

*[Name of the one who is dying], is your time now.  
Your body can no longer sustain you.*

Medical science, medicine, sheer will and determination ultimately cannot change this.

It is your time now to go from here to there.

Myrrh is the traditional oil of death. Jesus' body was anointed with myrrh by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

*O God, Source of all consolation, who wills healing of being and wholeness of spirit,  
listen favourably to our prayer of faith:*

*Send forth from the Realms your Holy Spirit upon this  
oil of myrrh,  
oil which you have brought forth from the verdant earth:*

*By your holy blessing may [name of the one who is dying], anointed with this oil,  
be freed from all that  
constrains, restricts, or distracts,  
that in the fullness of this time  
he may go forth from here to there, from now to then,  
in you and with you,  
with all who have gone before him.*

*Safeguard him now and forever more.*

*Amen.*

Anoint the one who is dying:

*[Full baptismal names of the one who is dying]  
I anoint you in the name of God,  
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.*

*From dust you have come  
and now to dust you shall return.*

*Go in Peace.*

And to those present:

*Peace be with you,  
[name each one]  
Peace.*

The Liturgy of Anointing was written and presided over at bedside by the Reverend Alan Hall, The United Church of Canada. At the conclusion of the anointing the doctor assisting the death stepped to the bedside and, from the same table as the oils resided, administered the pharmaceuticals that assisted the death.