



Go Make Disciples

DIVINE WORSHIP

ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY

CARE OF THE HOLY OILS

Pastoral Guidelines for Clergy

Each year during the Chrism Mass, the Archbishop consecrates the Sacred Chrism and blesses the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens for use throughout the Archdiocese. These oils are sacred signs of the Church's sacramental life and accompany many of the most important moments in the lives of the faithful: baptism, confirmation, anointing of the sick, and the dedication of churches and altars.

Because the Holy Oils are intimately connected to the sacramental ministry of the Church and the pastoral care of souls, they should always be treated with reverence and care. The Church's law and liturgical tradition provide clear guidance for their proper use, reservation, and disposal.

As we approach the celebration of the Chrism Mass, priests and chaplains are asked to review the following norms and practices to ensure that the Holy Oils are handled with the dignity befitting their sacred purpose.

The Holy Oils

- The Church requires the use of proper oils blessed or consecrated by the bishop for the celebration of the sacraments (Canon 847 §1).
- The Sacred Chrism (SC) is required for Confirmation and Holy Orders and pertains to the validity of the sacraments.
- Only oils derived from olive plants or other plants and recently blessed or consecrated by the bishop may be used.
- The Holy Oils blessed at the Chrism Mass should ordinarily be used throughout the coming year for sacramental celebrations.
- Oils from the previous year may be used only in cases of true necessity, when newly blessed oils are not available.
- Holy Oils may never be diluted with additional oil under any circumstances.
- Perfumes or other substances may not be added to the oils.
- Holy Oils may never be used for non-sacramental purposes.

Responsibility for the Oils

- The pastor or priest chaplain bears primary responsibility for the reverent care, proper storage, and appropriate use of the Holy Oils entrusted to the parish or institution (Canon 847 §2).
- Pastors obtain the Holy Oils from the Archbishop through the annual Chrism Mass distribution.
- Only the quantity reasonably needed for the coming year should be taken.
- Pastors should ensure that oils are available both in the parish church and in the pastoral oil stock used for visits to the sick and homebound.

Reservation of the Oils

- The Holy Oils are to be reverently reserved in a dignified and secure ambry or repository within the church.
- The ambry is traditionally located in the sanctuary or baptistry, though other suitable places in the church may be used if appropriate.
- The ambry should be secured or locked to ensure proper safeguarding.
- Each vessel must be clearly labeled according to its contents:
 - SC — Sacred Chrism
 - OI — Oil of the Sick
 - OC — Oil of Catechumens
- Only the consecrated or blessed oils themselves should be kept in the ambry.
- The oils should be maintained in vessels that are clean, dignified, and suitable for sacred use.

Vessels for the Oils

- Oils should be kept in vessels designed specifically for sacred oils, commonly referred to as oil stocks.
- These vessels should be worthy of their liturgical purpose and securely closed to prevent spillage or contamination.
- Oil vessels should be carefully cleaned before new oils are placed in them each year.
- The pastoral oil stock used for the Anointing of the Sick should likewise be maintained carefully and refilled as needed.

Distribution and Collection of Holy Oils

Revised Archdiocesan Process:

- To facilitate a more efficient and responsible distribution of the Holy Oils across the Archdiocese, the following procedure will be observed:
- Each parish will indicate how many bags of oils it requires prior to the Chrism Mass using an online survey.
- Each bag will contain:
 - 2 × 2 oz bottles of Sacred Chrism (SC) (Parishes requesting more than 1 bag of oils will receive only 1 × 2 oz bottles of Sacred Chrism (SC) in extra bags.)
 - 2 × 2 oz bottles of Oil of the Sick (OI)
 - 1 × 2 oz bottle of Oil of Catechumens (OC)
- Only a priest or a deacon may collect Holy Oil in the Connor Center after the Chrism Mass. A layperson may show a permission signed by the pastor indicating they are picking up the oil for the parish.
- Parishes with mission churches should request only the amount of oil reasonably needed for sacramental ministry throughout the year.
- In many cases, a minimal quantity of oil may be shared with mission churches as needed. Individual missions do not necessarily need to receive their own bag of oils if the needs of the mission can be met from the parish supply.
- Upon returning to the parish after the Chrism Mass, on Holy Thursday or at another appropriate time before the Easter Vigil, the oil should be transferred to the parish oil stocks and placed in the ambry or other appropriate place of reservation.
- Any oil remaining in the bottles may be stored securely in the sacristy for later use when refilling oil stocks or pastoral oil cases.

Bottle Reuse and Recycling

- ***The glass bottles received at the Chrism Mass should not be discarded.***
- These bottles are intended to be reused and recycled for future Chrism Mass distributions.
- On the day of the following year's Chrism Mass, priests should return the bottles from the previous year, including their caps, to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.
- Returning the bottles allows the Archdiocese to clean and reuse them, helping to reduce costs and promote responsible stewardship.

Disposal of Old Oils

- Before receiving the newly blessed oils each year, pastors should collect any remaining oils from the previous year, including oils remaining in parish stocks and pastoral oil cases.
- Old oils should be disposed of reverently, preferably by burning, or burying in the ground.
- The oils should never be discarded in ordinary trash or waste containers.
- It is a longstanding custom in some places to burn the old oils in the Easter Vigil fire, which is a fitting and reverent practice when possible.
- Beginning in 2027, bottles containing unused holy oil will be accepted at the cathedral on the day of Chrism Mass. All unused oil will be reverently disposed of.

The reverent care of the Holy Oils reflects the Church's deep respect for the sacramental life entrusted to her. By observing these norms, priests and parish communities help ensure that these sacred oils, so closely connected with the saving work of Christ, are treated with the dignity they deserve.

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