

repositories, one for each oil. Thus the oil from the smaller vessels not used on a given visit to the sick is to be poured back into the larger vessel, or the several smaller vessels that are carried to the sick are to be reserved in the same repository." (*Sacristy Manual*, published by Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, p. 68, also see *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, 22)

## OIL OF CATECHUMENS (OC)

12. The Oil of Catechumens is blessed by the bishop. "...Priests are granted the faculty of blessing the Oil of Catechumens before the anointing at the appropriate stage in the Catechumenate." (*The Order of Blessing the Oil of Catechumens and of the Sick and of Consecrating the Chrism*, 7) (Also see *RCIA*, 101) This means the priest may bless the oil of catechumens for a particular use only and not to provide oil for display purposes.

## CONCLUSION

Renewal of the liturgy requires the opening up of our symbols, especially the fundamental ones of bread and wine, water, the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. "Just as Christ invited those who heard him to share his personal union with the Father through material signs, so Christ leads the Church through these same signs in the liturgy from the visible to the invisible. As a result, effective liturgical signs, have a teaching function and encourage full, conscious, and active participation, express and strengthen faith, and lead people to God. Poorly utilized or minimal signs do not enliven the community's faith and can even diminish active participation. It must likewise be kept in mind that the liturgy and its signs and symbols do not exercise merely a teaching function. They also touch and move a person to conversion of heart and not simply to enlightenment of mind." (*Built of Living Stones* 26) The use of the oils in the sacramental rites is encouraged in a generous manner. These actions can engage and unify the entire assembly and lead the People of God to an authentic appreciation of symbol.

00000  00000

## Instruction on the Proper Care and Use of the Holy Oils



## INTRODUCTION

"The Chrism Mass, which [the bishop] concelebrates with Priests from various regions of the diocese and during which he consecrates the sacred Chrism and blesses the other oils, is among the principal manifestations of the fullness of the Bishop's Priesthood and is considered to be a sign of the close bond of the Priests with him. For it is with the sacred Chrism consecrated by the Bishop that the newly baptized are anointed and those to be confirmed are signed. It is with the Oil of Catechumens that catechumens are prepared and disposed for Baptism. Finally it is with the Oil of the Sick that those who are ill are comforted in their infirmity." (*The Order of Blessing the Oil of Catechumens and of the Sick and of Consecrating the Chrism*, 1)

## GENERAL COMMENTS

1. The use of the proper oils involves the validity of the sacrament celebrated; therefore it is important that the proper oils be used. "In administering the sacraments in which holy oils must be used, the minister must use oils pressed from olives or other plants [and] he is not to use old oils unless it is necessary (Canon 847). It is not permitted to dilute the holy oils with additional olive oil in order to fill the oil stocks that will be displayed. (see 5 below)
2. "Each year when the bishop blesses the oils and consecrates the chrism, the pastor should see that the oil oils are properly disposed of by burning and that they are replaced by the newly blessed oils." (*Book of Blessings*, 1127)

\*\*\*\*\*+\*\*\*\*\*

3. "The pastor is to obtain the holy oils from his own bishop and is to preserve them diligently with proper care." (Canon 847) "The oils used for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, holy orders and anointing of the sick according to ancient tradition are reverently reserved in a special place in the church. This repository should be secured and protected by a lock." (*Book of Blessings*, 1125) It is a laudable practice to display oils in larger more dignified containers. (See *Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter*, 1994, Volume XXX, August/September 1994)

4. The plastic bottles containing the oils given to the parishes after the Chrism Mass, are not for display purposes or liturgical use. The plastic containers are used to transport the oils or for non-public storage. If the oils are to be displayed they should be displayed in dignified vessels. When being used in the liturgy the oils should be in proper vessels, not in the plastic containers. "Vessels and implements used in the liturgical celebration should be of such quality and design that they speak of the importance of the ritual action... vessels for holy oils... are presented to the assembly in one way or another and speak well or ill of the deed in which the assembly is engaged." (*Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, 97) "The vessels used to hold the holy oils, should be worthy of their function and be closed in such a way as to prevent the oils from being spilled and to insure that they remain fresh." (*Book of Blessings*, 1126)

5. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has stated that unblessed oil may be added to blessed oil only in the case of necessity. This would exclude diluting the oils merely in order to increase the volume of oils for display. (See *Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter*, 1994, Volume XXX, August/September 1994) In order to provide parishes and institutions of the Archdiocese with sufficient oil for use in the liturgy and for display purposes, a larger amount of the holy oils will be provided to those parishes and institutions which make a request.



6. The oils blessed at the Chrism Mass may be received in a ritual way in the parish during the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. The oils are presented during the presentation of the gifts. The oils should be brought forward "in suitable vessels," not in the plastic containers. (See: <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year-and-calendar/triduum/order-for-the-reception-of-the-holy-oils>)

7. The oils used during the celebration of baptism, confirmation and anointing of the sick should not be wiped off the person anointed.

### SACRED CHRISM (SC)

8. The Consecration of the Chrism belongs exclusively to a Bishop. (*The Order of Blessing the Oil of Catechumens and of the Sick and of Consecrating the Chrism*, 6)

### OIL OF THE SICK (OI)

9. In case of true necessity the priest may bless additional oils for the anointing of the sick. "In addition to a bishop, the following can bless the oil to be used in the anointing of the sick: ... 2) any presbyter in a case of necessity, but only in the actual celebration of the sacrament." (Canon 999) This means the priest may bless oil for the anointing of the sick for a particular use, not to provide oil for display purposes.

10. "There is no universal practice here, but it seems quite clear that the oils, even in their smallest vessels, are not to be kept permanently in a priest's jacket, in the rectory, or in a safe or cabinet of the less-frequented sacristy. ... Reverence for the oils and for the church they serve necessitate the reservation of all of the parish oils in one common repository or three individual