

rites of the blessing of oils

Consecrating the Chrism, blessing of Oil of Catechumens, and Oil of the Sick

The chrim Mass is one of the principal expressions of the fullness of the bishop's priesthood and signifies the close unity of the priests with him. During the Mass, (which ideally he concelebrates with priests in his charge), the bishop consecrates the chrim and blesses the other oils.

This rite is based on a commonly used Roman Catholic rite, adapted slightly for Liberal Catholics.

Usage

Those newly baptized are anointed and confirmed with the chrim consecrated by the bishop. Catechumens are prepared for baptism with the second oil.

The sick are anointed for their recovery with the third oil.

The Christian liturgy has assimilated this Old Testament usage of anointing kings, priests, and prophets with consecratory oil because the name of Christ, whom they prefigured, means "the anointed of the Lord."

Chrim is a sign: by baptism Christians are plunged into the paschal mystery of Christ; they die with him, are buried with him, and rise with him; they are sharers in his royal and prophetic priesthood. At confirmation Christians receive the spiritual anointing of the Spirit who is given to them.

By the oil of catechumens the effect of the baptismal cleansing is extended. Before they go to the font of life to be reborn the candidates for baptism are strengthened to renounce sin and the devil.

By the use of the oil of the sick, to which Saint James is a witness, the sick receive a remedy for the illness of mind and body, so that they may have strength to bear suffering and resist evil and obtain the forgiveness of sins.

The Oils

The oil to be used is virgin or extra virgin olive oil.

Chrim is made of oil and perfumes or other sweet smelling matter. Friars Balsam is most commonly used.

The preparation of the chrim may take place privately before the rite of consecration or may be done by the bishop during the liturgical service.

The Minister

The consecration of the chrim belongs to the bishop alone.

If the use of the oil of catechumens is to be sent for use by others, it is blessed by the bishop with the other oils during the chrim Mass.

In the case of the baptism of adults, however, priests have the faculty to bless the oil of catechumens before the anointing in the designated stage of the service. Priests may only bless the oils used for this service only, not retaining any.

The oil used for anointing the sick must be blessed for this purpose by the bishop or by a priest who has this faculty from the College of Bishops.

Serving clergy will be supplied the Holy Oils by their Ordinary.

Time of Blessing

The blessing of the oil and the consecration of the chrism are best celebrated by the bishop at the chrism Mass celebrated on Maundy Thursday morning. Although in practice oils can be consecrated at any suitable time.

Place of the Blessing in the Mass

According to the tradition of the Latin liturgy, the blessing of the oil of the sick takes place before the end of the Eucharistic prayer, the blessing of the oil of catechumens and the consecration of the chrism, after communion.

For pastoral reasons however, the Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church celebrates the entire rite of blessing after the liturgy of the word, according to the order described below.

BLESSING OF OILS AND CONSECRATION OF THE CHRISM

Preparations

For the blessing of oils the following preparations are made in addition to what is needed for Mass:

At the sacristy or credence table:

- vessels of oils;
- balsam or perfume for the preparation of the chrism if the bishop wishes to mix the chrism during the liturgical service;
- bread, wine, and water for Mass, which are carried with the oils before the preparation of the gifts.

In the sanctuary:

- table for the vessels of oil, placed so that the people may see the entire rite easily and take part in it;
- chair for the bishop, if the blessing takes place in front of the altar.

Rite of Blessing

The chrism Mass should always be concelebrated. It is desirable that there be some priests from the bishop's flock and are his witnesses and the co-workers in the ministry of the holy chrism. Out of necessity, sometimes concelebration may not be possible by small independent churches. The Mass proceeds until the Liturgy of the Word (Homily). Then:

The deacon who takes part in the blessing of oils walks ahead of the concelebrating priests to the altar.

The priests and ministers together with the faithful who will carry the bread, wine, and water, go in procession to the sacristy or other place where the oils and other offerings have been prepared. They return to the altar, bringing the elements and oils with them.

During the procession through the church, the choir leads the singing of the hymn "O Redeemer" or some other appropriate song, in place of the offertory song.

When the procession comes to the altar, the bishop receives the gifts. The deacon

presents the vessel of oil for the chrism to the bishop, saying in a loud voice: "***The oil for the holy chrism***". The bishop takes the vessel and places it on the table or the altar.

The deacon presents the vessel of oil for the catechumens to the bishop, saying in a loud voice: "***The oil for the holy oil of catechumens***". The bishop takes the vessel and places it on the table or the altar.

The deacon presents the vessel of oil for the sick to the bishop, saying in a loud voice: "***The oil for the holy oil for the sick***". The bishop takes the vessel and places it on the table or the altar.

BLESSING OF THE OIL OF THE SICK

The bishop raises the vessel containing the oil and says this prayer:

"Lord God, loving Father, you bring healing to the sick through your Son Jesus Christ. Hear us as we pray to you in faith, and send the Holy Spirit, man's Helper and Friend, upon this oil, which nature has provided to serve the needs of mankind.

May your blessing + come upon all who are anointed with this oil, that they may be freed from pain and illness and made well again in body, mind, and soul. Father, may this oil be blessed for our use in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen"

After the blessing, the vessel with the oil of the sick is returned to its place.

BLESSING OF THE OIL OF CATECHUMENS

The oils to be blessed are placed on a table suitably located in the centre of the sanctuary. (If necessary this may be done on the altar).

The concelebrating priests stand around the bishop on either side, in a semicircle, and the other ministers stand behind him. The bishop then blesses the oil of catechumens, if it is to be blessed, and consecrates the chrism.

When everything is ready, the bishop faces the people, and with his hands extended, says the following prayer:

"Lord God, protector of all who believe in you, bless + this oil at and give wisdom and strength to all who are anointed with it in preparation for their baptism. Bring them to a deeper understanding of the gospel, help them to accept the challenge of Christian living, and lead them to the joy of new birth in the family of your Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen"

CONSECRATION OF THE CHRISM

Then the bishop pours the balsam or perfume in the oil and mixes the chrism in silence, unless this was done beforehand.

After this he says:

"Let us pray to God our almighty Father so that all who are anointed with it may be

inwardly transformed and come to share in eternal salvation”.

Then the bishop breathes over (gently blows over) the opening of the vessel of chrism. With his hands extended, he says the following consecratory prayer:

“God our maker, source of all growth in holiness, accept the joyful thanks and praise we offer in the name of your Church. In the beginning, at your command, the earth produced fruit-bearing trees.

From the fruit of the olive tree you have provided us with oil for holy chrism. The prophet David sang of the life and joy that the oil would bring us in the sacraments of your love.

After the avenging flood, the dove returning to Noah with an olive branch announced your gift of peace. This was a sign of a greater gift to come. Now the waters of baptism wash away the sins of men, and by the anointing with olive oil you make us radiant with your joy.

At your command, Aaron was washed with water, and your servant Moses, his brother, anointed him priest. This too foreshadowed greater things to come. After your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, asked John for baptism in the waters of Jordan, you sent the Spirit upon him in the form of a dove and by the witness of your own voice you declared him to be your only, well-beloved Son. In this you clearly fulfilled the prophecy of David, that Christ would be anointed with the oil of gladness beyond his fellow men”.

All the concelebrants extend their right hands toward the chrism, without saying anything, until the end of the prayer.

And so, Father, we ask you to bless + this oil you have created. Fill it with the power of your Holy Spirit through Christ your Son. It is from him that chrism takes its name and with chrism you have anointed for yourself priests and kings, prophets and martyrs.

And so, Father, by the power of your love, make this mixture of oil and perfume a sign and source + of your blessing. Pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on our brothers and sisters who will be anointed with it. Let the beauty of holiness shine on the world from every place and thing signed with this oil.

Above all, Father, we pray that through this sign of your anointing you will grant increase to your Church until it reaches the eternal glory where you, Father, will be the all in all, together with Christ your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

The Mass continues to the end. After the final blessing of the Mass, the bishop puts incense in the censer, and the blessed oils are censed on the altar.

The clergy process away from the sanctuary.

The closing hymn ‘O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness’ is sung.