



Chrism Mass

March 26, 2024 | 5:45 PM | Church of the Holy Spirit

DEPARTMENT FOR PASTORAL MINISTRIES | MARCH 2024



Throughout the liturgical year, the Church has various liturgical celebrations that involve the use of oil – but not just any oil – olive oil, specifically – and not just oil off the shelf, but oil that has been blessed or consecrated.

All are invited to attend the Chrism Mass, or Mass of the Holy Oils, celebrated once a year in each diocese worldwide. At this Mass, not only are the oils blessed and consecrated, but all the priests of each individual diocese gather around their Bishop to renew their priestly vows, as well as concelebrate the Eucharist with him. This is meant to manifest the priests' communion with their Bishop. This Mass was originally envisioned to be celebrated on the morning of Holy Thursday. In many dioceses, that is still the case. When it is very difficult for the clergy and the people to gather with the Bishop on this day, the Chrism Mass may be anticipated on another day, near Easter.

What are the oils called and what are they used for?

The Oil of the Sick is self-explanatory by its name. It is meant for anointing those who are sick, especially the elderly, and those facing major surgery. "Through the Sacrament of Anointing the Church supports the sick in their struggle against illness and continues Christ's messianic work of healing. All who are united in the bond of a common Baptism and a common faith are joined together in the body of Christ since what happens to one member affects all. The Sacrament of Anointing effectively expresses the share that each one has in the sufferings of others." (Pastoral Care of the Sick, 98) "Anointing with oil: the practice of anointing the sick with oil signifies healing, strengthening, and the presence of the Spirit." (Pastoral Care of the Sick, 107)

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The oil of Catechumens is meant for the anointing of adults and children who have never been baptized. Infants are anointed with this oil in the preparatory rites immediately before their Baptism. This takes place after the Prayer of Exorcism and the child is anointed on the breast. For adults in the catechumenate process, "a rite of anointing may be celebrated wherever this seems beneficial or desirable. This anointing with oil symbolizes their need for God's help and strength so that, undeterred by the bonds of the past and overcoming the opposition of the devil, they will forthrightly take the step of professing their faith and will hold fast to it unfalteringly throughout their lives." (RCIA, 99) This anointing may be celebrated several times during the course of the catechumenate.

The Sacred Chrism is used for various rites of the Church. It is used for Confirmation during the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation, and its first use is during the Easter Vigil. It is used for the Sacrament of Confirmation throughout the year as Bishops travel the Archdiocese to confirm many young people, teenagers and young adults, as well as other adults confirmed apart from the Easter Vigil. It is used to anoint the hands of candidates for their ordination to the priesthood, and for Bishops at their ordination as Bishops of dioceses. When a parish builds a new sanctuary and/or installs a new altar, the Sacred Chrism is used to anoint the walls of the Church and consecrate this building as a temple to the Lord. The altar is anointed by pouring oil in five spots on the altar, usually the four corners and the center as a symbol of the five wounds of Christ. It is then anointed (rubbed) with this oil.

Each oil to be blessed is held by three large urns of distinctive colors. The Sacred Chrism has a very fragrant balsam oil mixed into it. After the blessing, the oils are withdrawn to a separate space for bottling to be given to each priest in the diocese for use in the parish and in their individual ministries.

We invite you to join us at the Chrism Mass this March 26, 2024 at 5:45 pm in the Church of the Holy Spirit located on [8134 Blanco Rd, San Antonio, TX 78216](https://www.google.com/maps/place/8134+Blanco+Rd,+San+Antonio,+TX+78216/@29.508,-98.508,15z).