

THE CARE AND RECEPTION OF THE SACRED OILS

Only the Sacred Oils blessed at the Chrism Mass are to be used in the following year. The new oils are to be received by the parish on Holy Thursday, and the old oils are to be disposed of properly.

How are the oils to be received?

A rite for the Reception of the Holy Oils Blessed at the Chrism Mass can be found at the USCCB's website: <http://old.usccb.org/liturgy/holyoils.shtml>.

The oils are presented as part of the procession of the gifts, before the bread and wine. The presentation can be accompanied by words of explanation followed by a sung response.

How are the oils to be disposed of reverently?

The Sacred Oils from the past year are to be burned—either in an oil-burning sanctuary light or in another oil lamp in the church, or in the new fire at the Easter Vigil. If such burning is not possible, the oils may be buried in the ground in a place that is unlikely to be disturbed.

What if we run out of oil during the year?

In the first place, there is no reason to anticipate that a parish would ever be without the Oil of Catechumens or Oil of the Sick: the priest may always bless oil for a particular celebration (note: such oil is not to be “stored” like oil blessed at the Chrism Mass; it is disposed of after the rite for which it was blessed in the manner described above). The Bishop will always bring chrism for confirmation, so having a sufficient supply of that oil should not be a problem.

What if there is a real emergency?

As mentioned above, it is the intention of the Church that the Sacred Oils are to be replaced each year with a fresh supply blessed at the Chrism Mass. Therefore, there really should be no recourse to “old oils” that are kept around. If for some reason oils from the previous year are available, they may validly (but not licitly) be used in a true emergency.

In extreme situations, more oil may validly (though not licitly) be added to the blessed oil to increase its volume—as long as the unblessed oil makes up less than 50% of the resulting mixture. However, this should not be done except *in necessity* (and not, for example, just to increase the amount of oil in the vessel for the sake of appearance). The provision applies to all three oils.

Bottom line: replace the oils; bless more for particular rites if needed (except for Chrism, of course); don't plan on adding more