

Blessing of Holy Oils

Exploring the meaning
through prayer and reflection



Suggestions for using this resource

The following pages contain the prayers used to bless the oils of the Sick and Catechumens and to consecrate the Oil of Chrism during the Chrism Mass.

It is within the liturgy and its prayers that the meaning of the Church's ministry with the sick, of initiation, of ordination and consecration is revealed.

You are invited to pray these prayers and reflect on them, listening for the wisdom and understanding they carry.

When this prayer and reflection take place in groups, the focus of the sharing is reflection and conversation rather than debate.

The following **process** is suggested:

- Choose which blessing prayer you are going to focus on.
- Create or enter a space conducive to prayer and reflection.
- Settle and ready yourself for prayer. Remember the presence of God and the movement of the Holy Spirit within you and around you.
- Pray the prayer you have chosen, perhaps using a lectio divina method. The questions below may help your reflection.
- If you are reflecting in a group take time to share your insights, listening for the differences which expand your own understanding.
- As a member of the Church, and in the light of your prayer and reflection, to what action or commitment do you feel the Holy Spirit calling you?
- Be still. What prayer does this reflection lead you to make?
- If you are reflecting in a group, some people may like to share their prayer to bring the time of prayer and reflection to a close.

Some **questions**:

1. What does this text reveal to you of:
 - God and God's mission and hopes for the world and humanity?
 - the Church community?
 - the ministry for which the oil is used?
2. What does the ritual surrounding the blessing of the oil reveal to you? How does it add to your understanding?
3. What do you hear God saying to you in this prayer?
4. What is God revealing to you about your life as a disciple?

Let us continue to pray for all people and ministries who will use or receive these holy oils.

The Holy Oils

Each year during Holy Week we come together as the Church of Maitland-Newcastle, led by our Bishop, to celebrate the Mass of the Chrism.

The **OIL OF CHRISM** is consecrated at this Mass. This Oil will be used for baptisms and confirmations, for ordinations of priests and bishops, and for the dedication of churches and altars.

During this Mass we also bless the **OIL OF CATECHUMENS**, mindful of our Elect and catechumens at whose initiation into the Church it will be used.

We also bless the **OIL OF THE SICK**, aware of the sick and suffering for whom it will bring comfort and strength.

At this solemn liturgy the priests of the diocese renew the promises of their ordination, renewing their commitment to serve the Church of Maitland-Newcastle in communion with the Bishop. We also renew our commitment to ministry that is ours through baptism and confirmation.

Blessing of the Oil of the Sick

During the Eucharistic Prayer, immediately before the Doxology and Great Amen, the Oil of the Sick is brought to the side of the altar to be blessed. Members of the Assembly who are holding the Oil of the Sick for their parish stand and hold up the oil for the blessing.

Bishop Bill: God of all consolation,
you chose and sent your Son to heal the world.
Graciously listen to our prayer of faith:
send the power of your Holy Spirit, the Consoler,
into this precious oil, this soothing ointment,
this rich gift, this fruit of the earth.
Bless this oil ✠ and sanctify it for our use.
Make this oil a remedy for all who are anointed with it;
heal them in body, in soul, and in spirit,
and deliver them in every affliction.

The Bishop takes the paten, and the Deacon takes the chalice, and, as both are raised, the Bishop says:

Bishop Bill Through him, and with him, and in him,
& Concelebrants: O God, almighty Father,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 all glory and honour is yours,
 for ever and ever.

All: Amen.



Blessing of the Oil of Catechumens

After the Prayer after Comunion the Oil of Catechumens is brought before the Bishop, and members of the Assembly who are holding the Oil of Catechumens for their parish raise the oil for the blessing.

Bishop Bill: Lord God,
protector of all who believe in you,
bless ✠ this oil
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.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.



Consecration of the Chrism

Immediately following the blessing of the Oil of Catechumens, the Oil of Chrism is brought before the Bishop who adds the perfume to the oil in silence. Afterwards, facing the concelebrating Priests, he says:

Bishop Bill: Let us pray
that God our almighty Father
will bless this oil
so that all who are anointed with it
may be inwardly transformed
and come to share in eternal salvation.



The Bishop breathes over the Oil of Chrism. Then extending his arms over the Oil, he continues:

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 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 the 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.

The concelebrating Priests extend their right hands over the Oil of Chrism in silence as the Bishop continues:

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.

Make this Chrism sign of life and salvation
for those who are to be born again in the waters of Baptism.
Wash away the evil they have inherited from sinful Adam,
and when they are anointed with this holy oil
make them temples of your glory,
radiant with the goodness of life
that has its source in you.

Through this sign of Chrism
grant them royal, priestly, and prophetic honour,
and clothe them with incorruption.

Let this be indeed the Chrism of salvation
for those who will be born again of water and the Holy Spirit.

May they come to share eternal life
in the glory of your Kingdom.

Through Christ our Lord. **All: Amen.**

