

MASS OF CHRISM



If, according to the Fathers of the Church, the olive tree stands as an image of the Father and its fruits as an image of the Son, then the oil that which flows out in all directions as the ultimate and purest extract of tree and fruit stands as an image of the Holy Spirit. The use of blessed oil in the Church's sacramental practice is the outward sign of the saving power of the promised Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, Who sanctifies the People of God.

Each year at the Chrism Mass, the bishop (as pastor of the local Church), blesses the oils that will be used throughout the year in the Church's sacramental celebrations.

The *Oil of Catechumens* is used to anoint those preparing for baptism. As athletes of old covered their bodies with oil before entering the arena to prevent their opponent from grasping them and throwing them to the ground, so catechumens are anointed to remind them that the Christian life involves an ongoing struggle with Satan for which the Spirit strengthens them.

The *Oil of the Sick* is used to anoint those who are seriously ill. Here the oil acts as a spiritual salve in which the Spirit effects healing of body and soul. For those who are dying, the last anointing fortifies the end of their earthly life like a solid rampart for the final struggles before entering the Father's house.

The *Holy Chrism* is used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. Here the oil signifies the sanctifying power of the Spirit, Who at baptism gives to those regenerated of water and the Spirit a share in Christ's priesthood and royal and prophetic mission, Who at confirmation strengthens the baptized to give witness to the faith of Christ before the world, and Who at Holy Orders consecrates the hands of the priest to raise up and to distribute the transformed Gifts of the Eucharistic sacrifice, Christ's own Body and Blood.