

# Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

## Guidelines for Blessed Oils

Promulgated by Bishop John M. D'Arcy  
March 2001

*"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."  
(Consecration of the Chrism)*

1. Sacred Oils, oils blessed at the Chrism Mass at the Cathedrals, are only to be used by ordained ministers for the administration of sacraments. No one else is allowed to use Sacred Oils for any kind of anointing, whether sacramental or non-sacramental.
2. Priests should not bless oils in liturgical celebrations for devotional use. This confuses our people and draws their attention away from the true meaning and use of the Sacred Oils.
3. The Anointing of the Sick is a holy sacrament, deeply meaningful to our people, especially when it is accompanied by proper catechesis or instruction. One point must always be clear. In the Catholic Church, only the ordained priest may confer this sacrament. No one else may use the oil of the sick or anoint another with it. (*Canon 1003*)
4. Sometimes in prayer services, oils which are not blessed are used in devotional ways as a sacramental. This also causes confusion. I strongly urge that this not be done because of the confusion. However, if it is done, it must be clearly explained that these are not blessed oils, and that the people are not receiving a sacrament.
5. There should be no anointing with oil, outside of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, blessed or non-blessed, in our hospitals because of the confusion it creates. If this is done by a lay minister, even with the best of intentions, people can think they have received the Sacrament of the Sick when they have not.
6. The oils which are "preserved diligently with proper care" (Canon 847) must be replaced every year with new oils from the bishop, blessed at the Chrism Mass. Old oils should be disposed of reverently by pouring into the ground, or burning. Canon 847.1: "In administering the sacraments in which holy oils must be used, the minister must use oils pressed from olives or other plants and, without prejudice to the prescript of Canon 999,2, consecrated or blessed recently by a bishop; he is not to use old oils unless it is necessary.
7. Blessed or consecrated oils may not be diluted with other oils for the sake of filling oil stocks that will be displayed in an ambry. I recommend that the oil vessels in your ambry be of a size which fits the amount of oil your parish would use in a year. When anointing with oil, use the oil which is stored in your ambry whenever possible.
8. At the Chrism Mass, only the pastor or those whom he has delegated, may receive the Sacred Oils. They are to be returned to the parish church.

All oils are to be kept at the parish church with the exception of the Oil of the Sick. Canon 1003.3 states: "Any priest is permitted to carry blessed oil with him so that he is able to administer the sacrament of the anointing of the sick in a case of necessity."