



DISPOSAL OF HOLY OILS

Sacred Chrism, the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens all have olive oil as their base. Sacred Chrism, with its distinctive scent, is olive oil with an additive called “fragrance” or “perfume” which has a balsam base with its distinctive scent.

The Church asks that the Holy Oils be disposed of each year and replaced with new Holy Oils. Canon law requires that old oils not be used in the administration of the sacraments and asks that each pastor “obtain the holy oils from his own bishop...and preserve them diligently with proper care.” (Canon 847 §.2)

The Holy Oils can never be diluted under any circumstances with additional oil, even in order to fill an oil stock or container or to display the oils in an ambry or a repository.

Fresh supplies of all Holy Oils can be obtained by using the order form on the Office of Divine Worship webpage. These oils will be distributed each year after the Chrism Mass.

Holy Oils should be reverently and carefully disposed of annually. The Book of Blessings (1127) says that Holy Oils should be burnt, however the main ingredient of olive oil has a very low combustion level. In other words, olive oil does not burn well. If you have a small amount, you can soak cotton balls in the oils and burn them in the Easter Vigil fire. Otherwise they can be burnt separately at any other time, ensuring that they are not burnt together with refuse.

If burning is not an option, the oils can be buried. Some parishes bury the Holy Oils on sacred ground. All church grounds have been blessed, so perhaps this is a worthy option. If your church has a well-tended cemetery, this is an easy task. Very small amounts can also be poured into the *sacrarium*.

If a parish does not have the facilities or resources to burn or bury old oils (as with all other sacred items) they may be brought to the Pastoral Center to the Office of Divine Worship and we will arrange their proper disposal.