

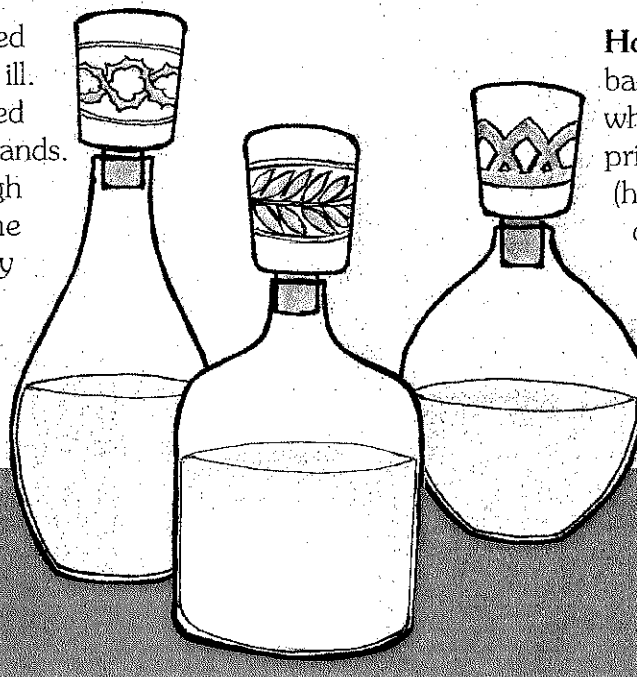
CATHOLIC CORNER

HOLY OILS

In the land where Jesus lived there are many olive trees. Jesus watched these trees grow and used their fruit. Olives produce olive oil. You have probably seen containers of olive oil in your grocery store.

Your church has three special containers of olive oil. These oils are blessed during Holy Week and kept in the church all year long. Each oil has a special name and important purpose.

The **Oil of the Sick** is used to anoint people who are ill. The sick person is anointed on the forehead and the hands. The priest prays, "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit." This oil reminds us of God's healing power.



Holy Chrism is used in baptism and confirmation; when men are ordained as priests, deacons, or bishops (holy orders); and when new churches are blessed. This special oil is mixed with balsam, which gives it a beautiful fragrance. The name *Christ* means "the anointed one."

The **Oil of Catechumens** is used when people are preparing for baptism. The priest places it on the person's hands or other parts of the body and says, "We anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power." This oil reminds us of God's strength.

The next time you are in church, look for these special containers of oil. If you are part of a baptism or present at a confirmation or the anointing of the sick at your parish, you will be able to see how the Church uses these holy oils.

Excerpt from the English translation of *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* © 1985, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL); excerpt from the English translation of *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum* © 1982, ICEL. All rights reserved.