The Chrism Mass and the care of holy oils

The blessing of holy oils within the celebration of Mass has a long history in the Roman Rite. The first indication of this practice is found in the eighth-century *Old Gelasian Sacramentary*, in which the holy oils of the catechumens, the sick, and Sacred Chrism were blessed at a special Mass at midday on Holy Thursday. The *Gregorian Sacramentary* of roughly the same period placed the blessing of the holy oils within the context of the solemn celebration of the Lord’s Supper. This latter practice spread throughout Europe in the late eighth and ninth centuries, and became normative in the liturgical books of the late medieval and Tridentine eras.

In the 1955-56 liturgical reforms to Holy Week, Pope Pius XII restored the Chrism Mass of the *Old Gelasian Sacramentary*, placing it on the morning of Holy Thursday. Celebrating this liturgy at the start of the Sacred Triduum offered the advantage of highlighting the important role of the oils in the sacramental life of the Church. It also gave the faithful the opportunity to
Archdiocesan Distribution of Holy Oils

The manner in which holy oils are distributed throughout the Archdiocese will be slightly changed this year:

At St. Patrick’s Cathedral

Six-ounce bottles of holy oils will be prepared and distributed by the seminarians to clergy and official parish representatives at the conclusion of the Chrism Mass. Old oils will not be accepted at the Cathedral.

At St. Joseph’s Seminary

During Holy Week, seminarians will distribute the prepared bottles of holy oil according to the following schedule:

- Wednesday, April 1 - 10:30-4:30
- Thursday, April 2 - 10:30-2:30
- Saturday, April 4 - 10:30-2:30

Parishes with larger vessels of oil may also fill them at the Seminary at these times. Old oils will be accepted at the Seminary for proper disposal.

participate in the Chrism Mass at their local cathedral with their bishop and to attend the solemn celebration of the Lord’s Supper later that evening at their parish.

In 1970, the “Renewal of Priestly Promises” was added to the Chrism Mass at the request of Blessed Pope Paul VI. This addition, along with the conciliar restoration of the practice of concelebration, gave the Chrism Mass an added significance: namely, it became expressive of presbyteral unity and communion with the diocesan bishop, who blesses the oils that his priests will use in their sacramental ministry. This focus serves to complement the Chrism Mass’s other themes of initiation (Oil of Catechumens), redemptive suffering (Oil of the Sick), and the consecration of God’s People as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation” [1 Peter 2:9] (Oil of Chrism).

The current norms describing the care of oils that are blessed within the Chrism Mass may be summarized as follows:

- Only oils pressed from olive plants or from other plants may be used in the administration of the sacraments (CIC, 847.1).

- Holy oils may never be employed for non-sacramental use (Ecclesiae de mysterio, 9.1).

- The care of holy oils is the responsibility of the pastor, who should obtain new oils from his bishop annually (CIC, 847.1).

- Old oils may be used only in cases of necessity (CIC, 847.1).

- Old oils should be either burned (Book of Blessings, 1127) or buried. It is a custom in some places to burn old oils and oil-saturated cottons in the new fire of the Easter Vigil.

- Vessels for the holy oils should be worthy of their function and be kept sealed so that their contents cannot be spilled and remain fresh (Book of Blessings, 1126).

- Holy oils may be reserved in a special place either in the sanctuary or the baptistry (Built of Living Stones, 117).

- The ambry or repository for the oils should be secured and locked (Book of Blessings, 1127; CIC, 847.2).
New Guidelines for Music at Funeral Rites

Guidelines for the use of music within funeral rites have been published by the Office of Liturgy in association with the archdiocesan Commission on Liturgical Music and with the approval of Cardinal Dolan. These guidelines are intended to assist family and friends of the deceased, music directors, and celebrants in the selection of music for funeral liturgies that will reflect Christ’s Paschal Mystery and the Church’s hope in eternal life. The guidelines also include a description of sacred music and its role in the liturgical life of the Church. This document may be accessed and downloaded at: nyliturgy.org/archdiocesan-liturgical-guidelines.

Substitute Musician List

A list of substitute parish musicians has been added to the Liturgy Office website. This list is provided as a service and resource to pastors and liturgical ministers. Inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by the Office of Liturgy. The list of substitute musicians may be accessed at: nyliturgy.org/sacred-music.

“Preparing for the Scrutinies” Seminar at St. Joseph’s Seminary - March 6

On Friday, March 6, from 7:00-8:30pm, St. Joseph’s Seminary will host a presentation on the Rite of the Scrutinies. The talk will be given by Fr. Matthew Ernest, S.T.D., professor and director of liturgy at St. Joseph’s Seminary and director of the archdiocesan Liturgy Office. The presentation will include a discussion of the history, theology, and spirituality of the scrutiny rites. Catechumens, elect, sponsors, RCIA coordinators and others are invited to learn more about this beautiful tradition of Lenten prayer and preparation. Registration for this seminar may be found at: nyliturgy.org/workshops. This workshop is being co-sponsored by the archdiocesan Catechetical Office and the Office of Liturgy.
“Being a Church Musician in the Modern World” Workshop - June 8

Church musicians are invited to a workshop at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Manhattan, to be held on June 8, from 6:00-9:00pm. This workshop will focus on the practicalities and challenges of serving as a church musician in the modern world. The workshop will be led by Astrid Baumgardner, director of Career Services for the Yale School of Music. The cost of the workshop is $10 for pre-registrants and $15 at the door. For more information, go to: nyliturgy.org/workshops. This workshop is being co-sponsored by the archdiocesan Commission on Liturgical Music and the New York Chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians.

Liturgical Q and A: Multilingual Celebrations of Mass

The Office of Liturgy sometimes receives questions concerning the available options for Masses that are celebrated by multilingual communities. The USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship has recently addressed this topic in its “Guidelines for a Multilingual Celebration of Mass.” This document offers a commentary on the individual parts of the Mass and gives general norms concerning the use of music at these liturgies. Among its recommendations, the guidelines indicate:

- the invitation to pray before the Collect (“Let us pray”) may be announced in the different languages spoken by the members of the assembly. The Collect, however, should be prayed in only one language;

- one of the readings preceding the Gospel should be proclaimed in the language understood by the majority of the assembly. However, another reading (if there are two) may be proclaimed in a language understood by a representative group of those assembled;

- the verses of the responsorial psalm may be sung in the languages of the gathered community;

- following papal practice and the long-standing tradition of the Western and Eastern churches, the Gospel may be read in more than one language. In this case, there should be only one procession, introduction, and incensation, and the proclamation of the Gospel should not be broken up into different languages.

The guidelines may be downloaded in their entirety at: www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/frequently-asked-questions
**Smaller Editions of the Roman Missal**

The USCCB’s Committee on Divine Worship is considering the possibility of approving the publication of a smaller-sized version of the *Roman Missal* for use on Sundays and Solemnities. It is envisioned that this volume would be of a more manageable size for celebrants and servers. The two books under review are:

- *A Book of the Chair*, which would contain only the presidential prayers for Sundays and Solemnities;

- *A Roman Missal for Sundays and Solemnities*, which would contain the complete texts of the Propers and Ordinary of the Mass for the celebration of Mass on Sundays and Solemnities only.

The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) has asked (arch)diocesan offices of worship and liturgy to respond to these proposals. In the Archdiocese of New York, clergy are invited to submit reactions to the potential publication of these volumes by contacting the Office of Liturgy.

**Upcoming Events**


**Pueri Cantores Music Festival for Youth.** April 25. St. Paul’s Church (Treble Choirs) and St. Malachy’s Church (High School Choirs) in Manhattan. More information: pcchoirs.org

**Sacra Liturgia USA.** June 1-4. International conference on liturgical formation in light of the new evangelization. St. Catherine of Siena Church and Hunter College (Manhattan). More information: sacraliturgiausa.org