

## USE OF BLESSED OILS AS SACRAMENTAL

### I. Historical and Theological Background

Throughout the history of the Church one practice that is consistent is the use of oils as a sacramental in praying for healing of persons suffering from bodily or mental disorders. The blessing for oil to be used as a sacramental is found in the Book of Blessings "Order for the Blessing of Food or drink or Other Elements Connected with Devotion." (#1781 - #1798)

The purpose of sacramentals is to extend or enliven the sacraments. They continue the work of the sacrament or prepare a person for their reception. "Sacramentals . . . depend on prayerful petition, the spiritual preparedness of the recipient, . . . and the mediation of the minister's faith and love." Dictionary of the Liturgy.

This ministry may be encouraged in those places where people seek to witness to the healing ministry of Jesus and where an understanding of the difference between the Sacrament of Anointing the Sick and the sacramental of using blessed oil has been clarified.

### II. Diocesan Policy

Usually the ministers of sacramentals are priests and, in many cases, deacons. However, lay people with appropriate qualities may be the ministers of some sacramentals. This is the case with blessed oil. Drawing from the inference in the blessing itself, lay persons who bring the oil to the church for the blessing would be the appropriate ministers.

Lay persons who use the oils outside their own homes and in the name of the Church in a public way are to be persons of faith and devotion who live lives in accord with the teaching of the Church and serve as witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ. This means that they should attend church regularly and participate in the life of the Church. In charismatic communities where ministers are raised up to serve in particular ministries through the prayer of the community, the choice of the persons who use the blessed oil as a sacramental in the name of the Church is the responsibility of that community of prayer.

Lay persons who are called forth to be ministers of the blessed oil as a sacramental, are to receive from the pastor the appropriate catechesis and training for the ministry.