

CHRISM MASS

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS FROM THE BISHOPS' COMMITTEE ON THE LITURGY NEWSLETTER, VOL. XXXIX, MARCH/APRIL 2003

THE CHRISM MASS

The text for Holy Thursday begins with a rubric formerly located at the beginning of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper prohibiting all Masses without a congregation on Holy Thursday (*Missale Romanum*, "Rubrics for Holy Thursday, Chrism Mass" (CM, no. 1). The General Instruction of the Roman Missal seems to encourage priests to concelebrate at both the Chrism Mass and the Mass of the Lord's Supper when it says in paragraph 204: "A priest who has concelebrated the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday may also celebrate or concelebrate the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper."

Two new rubrics are inserted indicating that the blessing of the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of the Catechumens and the consecration of the Chrism are done according to the Order described in the Roman Pontifical (CM, no. 2). In our present Sacramentary this rite is found in the appendix. While the rubrics indicate that this Mass is usually celebrated in the morning, indication is given that if it is difficult for the clergy and people to gather then the Chrism Mass may be anticipated on another day near Easter (CM, no.3). Both of these rubrics appeared in the text of the blessing in Appendix II of our present Sacramentary. They also appear in no. 275 of the *Ceremonial of Bishops*.

The time for the blessing of oils has also been addressed in a newly composed rubric indicating that the blessing of the Oil of the Sick may take place before the end of the Eucharistic prayer. This positioning goes back to the *Gelasian* and the *Gregorian Sacramentaries*. Within the Eucharistic Prayer, the greatest prayer of consecration, a new wave of blessing is poured forth on the oil to be used for the sick. The blessing of the Oil of Catechumens and the consecration of the Chrism takes place after Communion. For pastoral reasons, the entire rite of blessing may take place after the liturgy of the word (CM, no. 5).

After the reading of the Gospel, the Bishop is to give a homily. The editio typica tertia is more precise about this than the previous rubric. It indicates: "...taking as a starting point the texts of the readings which were proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word, he speaks to the people and to the priest about the priestly anointing, urging the priests to be faithful in fulfilling their office and inviting them to renew publicly their priestly promises" (CM, no.8). The *Renewal of Commitment to Priestly Service* remains as it is in the present Sacramentary.

There follows a change in rubrics. Whereas, before, both the profession of faith and the general intercessions were omitted, now only the profession of faith is omitted and the general intercessions follow (CM, no.10).

Music for the Preface of the Priesthood of Christ and the Ministry of Priests is provided in place in the *Missale Romanum*.

Finally, a new rubric is provided that indicates "a reception of the Holy Oils may take place in every parish either before the celebration of the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper or at another time that seems appropriate" (CM, no. 15). The Reception of the Holy Oils Blessed at the Chrism Mass is no longer in print. Since this can be a means of catechizing the faithful about the use and effects of the Holy Oils and Chrism in Christian life, we are making it available on the diocesan website, www.diometuchen.org, under Depts./Ministries, Worship and Liturgical Formation, Reception of the Holy Oils Blessed at the Chrism Mass.