

Using the Oil of Baptism (also called “Chrism”)

Background

In our faith, we believe that sometimes God speaks to us, not in words, but in a sense of mystery. Somehow, we know God is involved, and we may feel closer to God or to things that are holy or sacred, that we may not be able to explain. As long as there have been human beings, there have been these experiences of sacred mystery. People have tried to capture what these holy experiences are like by drawing or writing poems, singing songs, or sitting in silence. The church calls these moments “sacraments” because they are sacred.

The first sacrament of the Church is Holy Baptism. We are washed in the waters of Baptism, as Jesus was washed in the Jordan River. Then, we are marked with scented oil in the sign of the cross, with the reminder that we are “marked as Christ’s own forever.”

From the moment of Jesus’ baptism, his ministry began—healing, preaching, forming community, and growing disciples, all the while pointing toward the saving love of God that is available for all of us.

Something sacred happens to us in baptism, too. We, like Jesus, are named “the Beloved” of God, and the community surrounding us prays that we will exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit that God gives us.

On Easter, we remember that we are joined with Jesus Christ through our own experience of Holy Baptism. Together, we renew our Baptismal Covenant (found in the Easter Vigil leaflet) and make the sign of the cross to help us remember the oil that marked us as Christ’s own.

Marking Yourself with Chrism

For an individual: Open the container that has a cotton ball saturated with Chrism. Touch a fingertip to the oil and make the sign of the cross on your forehead. Then say one or more of the prayers below.

For a household: Open the container with the cotton ball saturated with Chrism. You might choose to have people mark the sign of the cross on each other, after dipping a fingertip or thumb to the oil.

Prayer after using the Chrism

Loving God, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sin and have raised us to the new life of grace. Sustain us, O God, in your Holy Spirit. Give us an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen.

A prayer for remembering your baptism each day

Lord, as I enter the water today, I remember my baptism. Wash me by your grace, fill me with your spirit, and renew my soul. I pray that I might live as your child today and honor you in all that I do. Amen.

- from Adam Hamilton, *The Call: The Life, Ministry, and Message of the Apostle Paul* video series