

CHRISM MASS 2020
Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King
March 24, 2020

The Chrism Mass is usually one of the Bishop's favourite Masses of the year. It is usually a Mass that draws together all of the Priests in the Diocese, and parishioners who make the trip to the Cathedral from the many parishes in the Diocese. At the Chrism Mass, the Priests usually renew the promises made when they were ordained, and the Holy Oils are blessed and the Sacred Chrism consecrated for use at the upcoming Easter Vigil celebrations throughout the Diocese and for the coming year.

Usually. But these are not usual times. Today, in the Cathedral, I gather with a very few Priests to pray for our Diocese, to pray for our Priests and Deacons, to pray for our Parishioners, to pray especially for those who are ill with the COVID-19 coronavirus, for those who have died because of it, for those who mourn them, and for the healthcare providers who are on the front lines of responding to the pandemic.

And today I will bless the oils and consecrate the Chrism that will be used for the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and the Sacrament of the Sick, during the coming year.

When we are anointed with these oils we are made "more like Christ" who is called THE anointed one – "chosen" by the Father to bring the Good News of God's love and mercy to the world.

We, too, are anointed, we are chosen, to BE LIKE CHRIST, to proclaim and to live GOOD NEWS. During this time of trial, that call is even greater and our response even more urgent. I am amazed at the creative ways people are reaching out to others. One of my sisters telephoned me yesterday. We haven't spoken for some time – and it was sooo good to hear from her and about her family. I know that some Pastors are calling parishioners to find out how they are doing. It has inspired me to pick up the phone and call the Priests who serve the Diocese. I am not adept at it, but I am following Twitter. Pope Francis tweets messages of hope. Last week on the Feast of St. Joseph, he called us to pray the Rosary at the same time as he did – a world-wide prayer at the same time. Recently, he asked Christians around the world to pray the Lord's Prayer at noon tomorrow. In our Diocese Father Wynen is ringing the Cathedral bells at various times throughout the day as a thanksgiving and encouragement for the amazing healthcare providers. And there are many wonderful uplifting stories that give hope.

My friends, when we are anointed with Oil at the Sacraments, we are made "LIKE CHRIST". So, like Christ, we find ways to care for one another – in prayer, by our concern for one another, by our bravery in following the orders of government leaders, by our acts of generosity, and by our courage. Like Christ, let us be guided by love, let us be GOOD NEWS.