

MASS OF THE OILS 2017

On Monday, April 10, the beginning of Holy Week, St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat was filled with priests and people from around the Diocese for the Mass of the Oils. This Mass is very special to our Diocese as it is the annual celebration of the Diocesan Church of Ballarat. The gathering celebrates the unity of the Diocese where priests, religious and laity renew their commitment to call to serve in Christ's name as baptised members of his Church and sharers in his mission. The Holy Oils were blessed and consecrated and were distributed to all the communities of our Diocese for the celebration of the Sacraments.



The Oils – Oil of the Sick, Oil of Baptism and the Holy Chrism - will reach those in our Diocese who become sick and are anointed; every baby in our Diocese who is baptised; every young person and adult in our Diocese who are fully initiated into the community of the Church.

Concelebrants for the Mass were priests celebrating a Jubilee this year: Bishop Peter Connors (30 years a Bishop), Frs Kevin Murphy (60 years) and Gregory Tait (25 years). Fr John McKinnon is also celebrating 60 years a priest but was unable to attend the Mass.



Members of the diocese fulfilling ministries at the Mass this year were:

Oil of the Sick Procession:

Maureen Waddington – Director of Mission, St John of God Hospital
 Tony Fitzgerald – Chief Executive Officer, Centacare Ballarat
 Patty Martin – Funeral Ministry Team, St Joseph's Parish, Timboon
 Grey Loyer – St Augustine's Parish, Maryborough
Flagon: Sr Paula Asiasiau csn – Nazareth House

Oil of Catechumen Procession:

Bernadette Tolan – Secondary Education Officer: CEO Ballarat
 Evelyn Gurry – Sponsor: St Joseph's Parish, Warrnambool
 Michael Ryan – Parish Co-ordinator: St Patrick's Parish, Gordon
 Marie Shaddock - Diocesan Pastoral Council Member and St Joseph's Parish, Ouyen
Flagon: Bianca Flint - Catechumen: St Patrick's Parish, Gordon

Oil of Chrism Procession:

Joanne Rix - Diocesan Ecological Sustainability Group
 Bradley Harris – Candidate: St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, Ballarat
 Ali Pickles – St John of God Hospital, Ballarat
 Jo Brewer – Principal, Siena Catholic Primary School, Lucas
Flagon: Fr Kevin Murphy – Jubilarian: Ordination to the Priesthood
Perfume: Lona Green: Confirmation Candidate: St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, Ballarat



First Reading: Noreen McLeish – Sacramental Team, St Mary’s Parish, Hamilton
Second Reading: Barry Flynn – St Augustine’s Parish, Creswick
Gospel Procession: Sr Marie Davey rsm – Deputy Principal, Damascus College, Mt Clear
Presentation of the Gifts: Jean Fitzgibbon and Genevieve Verdonck - St Patrick’s Parish, Port Fairy
Preparation of the Oils: Holly Boyd, Julie Boyd, Sophie Boyd, Pat Conroy, Jean Dumaresq, Merle Leach, Dorothy Ludwell, Maureen McAloon, Luzaria Micich, June Staehr, Sheila Wilton.

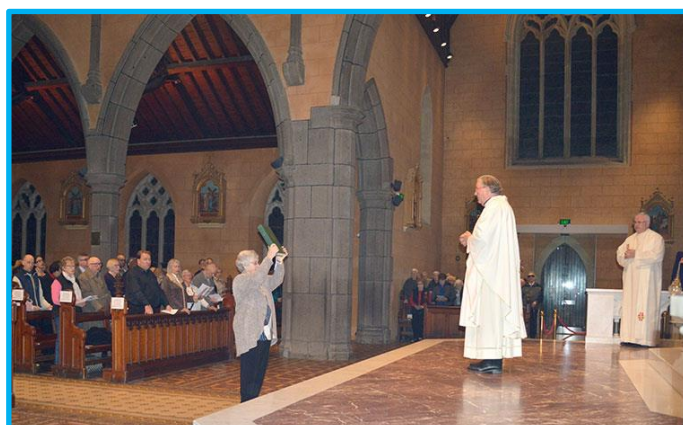
The music was beautifully led by Choir Conductor Dr Susan Crowe, Organist Mr Geoff Martin and choir members from the Cathedral and surrounding parishes. The Cantor for the evening was Chiara Angeli, a member of the YESS Youth Group at St Patrick’s Cathedral Ballarat, who performed a beautiful rendition of the psalm.

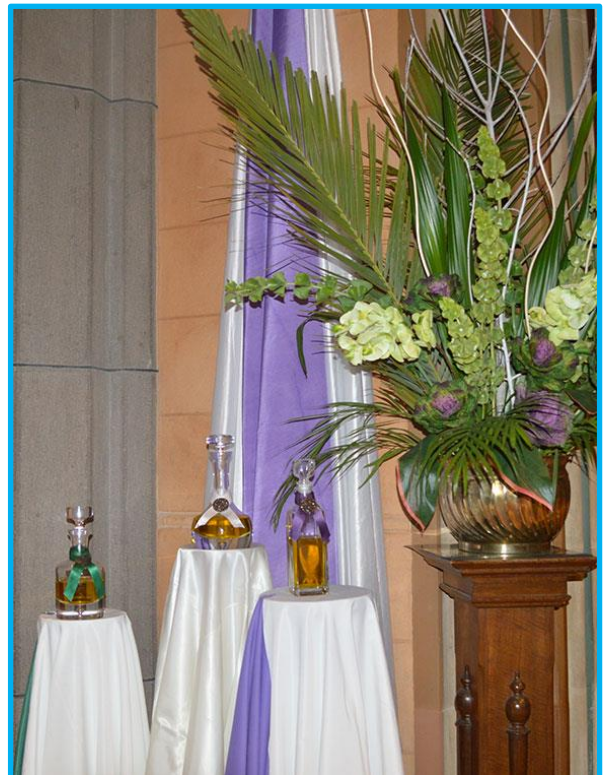
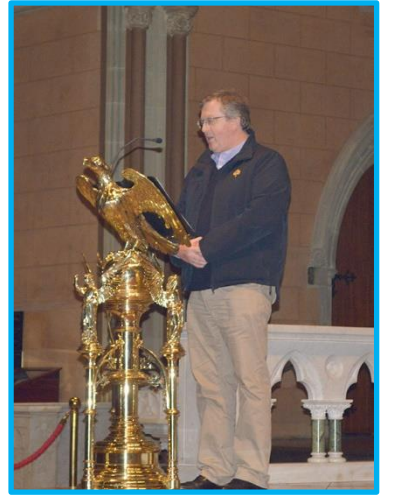
Before the final blessing, Anne Eskdale from the Diocesan Pastoral Council called representatives of the parishes of the Diocese forward to collect the Oils for their parish. These Oils will then be received in the parishes at Mass on Holy Thursday evening.

There are many people involved in the success of this Mass and thanks is extended to those who prepared the oils, participated in the various ministries, collected the Oils for their parishes, the Altar Servers, welcomers, ushers, those responsible for the décor in the Cathedral, Sally Morris for catering and members of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.

Following Mass, all gathered in St Patrick’s Hall for supper.

Bishop Paul Bird’s Homily can be read below.





Photos:

1. Gathering
2. Processing in
3. Fr Kevin Murphy presenting the Oil of Catechumen
4. Joanne Rix and Ali Pickles with baskets of oils
5. Bottling the oil in preparation
6. Maureen McAloon bottling oil
7. Bishop Paul and priests of the diocese
8. Sr Marie Davey rsm presenting the gospel to Fr Gregory Tait
9. Noreen McLeish
10. Chiari Angeli
11. Barry Flynn
12. Receiving Eucharist
13. Parish representatives collecting oils for their parishes
14. Lona Green: Confirmation Candidate: St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, Ballarat
15. The Oils

Bishop Paul Bird's Homily at the Chrism Mass - Ballarat Cathedral, April 10 2017

Yesterday afternoon I heard a program on radio dealing with the health of doctors. When we think of doctors, we probably think of them as looking after the health of others. This program referred to times when doctors themselves are not well. The examples given focussed on some particular challenges that doctors face, such as long hours and working under the stress of making life and death decisions.

It seems to be common for doctors to work long hours, particularly in their early years. Naturally, they will grow tired, sometimes to the point of exhaustion. Doctors also work under stress. They must make decisions that can have a profound impact on people's lives, and they often have to make these decisions under great pressure of time. So their work is often stressful, and sometimes stress becomes so great that a doctor will become worn down mentally, to the point of suffering depression. They will have to take a break from their work and receive treatment so that they might recover their health. For me, this program highlighted the fact that we all have our limits. At some point, we can all feel weary or stressed. Even doctors whose role is to heal others can themselves be in need of healing.

Our celebration this evening touches on those times when we feel weary or stressed, times when we feel weak and fragile, times when we are in need of a soothing anointing to bring us healing. We're celebrating the Mass of the Oils. We bless the Oil of Baptism, and the Oil of Chrism, and the Oil of the Sick. Each of these oils touches on our frailty. When we are anointed with the Oil of Baptism, we pray in our weakness that we might be made strong to meet the challenges of living as a Christian. When we are anointed with Chrism, we are given new strength to be priests and prophets and kings. We are given a share in the priesthood of Christ to offer praise to our heavenly Father. We are given a share in Christ's spirit of prophecy to be able to speak the truth in love. We are given a share in Christ's kingship, that we might be true Christian leaders, giving ourselves in serving others. When we are anointed with the Oil of the Sick, we pray that we might be healed in body and mind and spirit.

In one of his homilies for the Chrism Mass, the Mass of the Oils, Pope Francis reflected on the weariness that we feel in our lives. There were a large number of priests concelebrating with him at the Mass and he spoke in particular of the weariness that can come in the life of a priest as he seeks to meet the demands of pastoral care. He spoke of the Lord's concern for all who are weary, including priests who sometimes feel burdened. He spoke to the priests in these words:

"If the Lord is so concerned about helping us, it is because he knows that the task of anointing his faithful people is demanding; it can tire us. We experience this in so many ways: from the ordinary fatigue brought on by our daily apostolate to the weariness of sickness. The tiredness of priests! Do you know how often I think about this weariness which all of you experience? I think about it and I pray about it, often, especially when I am tired myself. I pray for you as you labour amid the people of God entrusted to your care."

In our Mass this evening, we will pray for the priests of our diocese. We will also pray for the laity and religious. We will pray for one another because we are all in need of prayerful support. We know our weakness, but we also know that we have great sources of strength. In our times of frailty, may we turn to Christ in prayer. We remember his encouraging words: "Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest." May we also be a support to one another. Like Christ, we have been anointed to bring good news to the poor and bind up hearts that are broken. In times of need, may we strengthen one another and bless one another with the oil of gladness.

Bishop Paul Bird CSSR