

DIOCESE CELEBRATES CHRISM MASS -- Clergy and representatives from parishes in all eight counties of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown joined Bishop Joseph on Monday April 6, 2009, for the annual Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Altoona.

The Chrism Mass is a celebration of the Church's unity. With the Bishop as Chief Shepherd, the community of believers assemble in the Cathedral to celebrate our unity in Jesus Christ.

During the celebration, Bishop Joseph blessed the oils that will be used in parishes over the next year – The Holy Chrism, the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens. At the end of the Mass, representatives from each parish in the Diocese received the Oils. They will carry the Oils in procession at their parish during the Holy Thursday Mass.

The Holy Chrism is used for baptisms, confirmations, clergy ordinations and the consecration of a church. The Oil of the Sick is used for consecrating the sick or dying. The Oil of Catechumens is used for those preparing for baptism.

The Chrism Mass is also an opportunity for all priests in the Diocese to renew their commitment to their vocation. After the Homily, all priests present in the Cathedral rose to reaffirm their pledge to priestly service.