

# Oil

Besides being used in cooking, olive oil is an old-fashioned ointment for burns and bruises. In fact, some drug stores sell it as a medicine.

The Good Samaritan poured oil and wine on the wounds of the man who was attacked by robbers. The Letter of James tells the church to anoint the sick with oil. These Scriptures are the foundation for the Church's Sacrament of the Sick. Through this holy anointing, people who are sick unite their suffering with Christ.

Before competition, athletes may limber their muscles with an oily rubdown to make their bodies shine. That ancient practice is the origin of the Church's Oil of Catechumens (who are people preparing for Baptism). Catechumens take part in a kind of competition. They grapple with faith. They struggle against evil.

In preparation for Pentecost, treat yourself to a bottle of fine olive oil. Savor its fragrance and unique flavor.

The Church's use of olive oil brings to mind Noah's darling dove, which bore in its beak an olive branch as a sign of peace, of earth touching heaven. We Christians are anointed with oil so that our bodies, with all our sufferings and struggles, become bearers of the olive branch, become shining signs of peace.

