

## Sanctification of Oil

**The Sanctification of Oil**<sup>1)</sup> is the sacrament in which, while anointing the body with oil, calls the grace of God upon those sick of spiritual and physical infirmities (Catechism).

Though holy unction is similar to the sacrament of repentance in this, as well as in repentance, sins also are absolved; but the essential action of holy unction consists in the reduction of physical and spiritual afflictions (His Eminence Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov, "Dogm. Bog." "[Dogmatic Theology]"). In as much as during a heavy illness when usually they turn to the mystery of unction, the person is not always capable, being exhausted in body and soul, to offer a true repentance of sins and generally to satisfy all the conditions of true repentance; in as much as some sins, by infirmity, he cannot quite confess, but another cannot at all confess by forgetfulness; in as much as some, especially with heavy sins, even after confession can strongly disturb the conscience of the penitent: then the merciful Lord, appropriate for such patients, granted a special healing again for the healing of their spiritual infirmities in the sacrament of unction; here for the enfeeblement of the sick the entire council of His servitors is necessary before the Lord, and by the prayers of faith on behalf of the whole Church begs Him, the most merciful, to grant the ailing remission of sins and to cleanse the conscience from all that is corruptible<sup>2)</sup> (His Beatitude Macarius, *Dogm. Bogosl. [Dogmatic Theology]*).

The mystery of unction should be done by a **council of seven priests**<sup>3)</sup> (this is why we even call it "the soborovaniem" [unction by a council], "maslosoborovaniem" [unction with oil by a council], but in extreme need the mystery may be done even by **one** priest<sup>4)</sup> (Trebnik [The Great Book of Needs]; Novaia Skrizhalj [New Stone Tablets]).

Under any condition **the priest cannot** do the mystery of the sanctification of oil<sup>5)</sup> **by himself** (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1886, 7).

**The sick**, receiving the mystery, **should be prepared** for his acceptance of confession<sup>6)</sup> and after that, already after the fulfilment of the sanctification of oil, he is usually given communion of the Holy Mysteries<sup>7)</sup>; in the case of very obvious

mortal danger, the sick should, before fulfillment over him of the anointing with oil, be given the Holy Mysteries, but, of course, precisely after confession<sup>8</sup> (Pravosl. Ispoved. [Orthodox Confession], question 118; Kn. o dolzhn. Presvit prikhod. [Book on the Needs of the Parish Presbyter], § 127; Metr. P. Mogila, Trebnik [Book of Needs (Euchologion)]).

The mystery of the Sanctification of Oil is designed for the sick<sup>9</sup>. Over the healthy the fulfillment of the mystery is forbidden<sup>10</sup>, why lose this mystery when condemned to death<sup>11</sup>, navigating in the sea or generally in any dangerous travel, in a word, all that cannot be carried to the number of the ill<sup>12</sup> (See P. Mogila, *Treb. [The Books of Needs]*). Besides, those belonging to the Orthodox Church should be taught that the mystery of the consecration of oil<sup>13</sup>, for the unrepentant sick sinners, who in insanity or madness even may carry any insult or dishonor of the holiness of the mystery; so long as the risk of such misfortune has not passed<sup>14</sup> for children who have not yet reached seven years of age (Orthodox Confession, answer to question 118; Nomocanon 163; Stavl. hier. gramme. [Certificate of Hierarchical Ordination]; P. Mogila, *Trebnik [Book of Needs]*; Most Rev. Philaret, Archbishop of Chernigov, *Dogmatic Theology*).

The mystery of the consecration of oil may be done over the same person throughout his life several times; but in the same illness proceeding continuously, this mystery should not be repeated over the ill however long the illness (see P. Mogila, *Book of Needs (Euchologion)*).

The Sanctification of Oil is necessarily done in the presence of the patient, and in agreement with the condition of the sick, it may be done **either in the temple or in the house**<sup>15</sup>, where the patient is (Office of Holy Oil).

The Sanctification of Oil may be done at any time in the church year and at any time day and night when the condition of the sick has demanded this.

**As the substance of mystery serves the** consecrated olive oil, into this, in imitation of the merciful Samaritan, is poured a little red wine<sup>16</sup>. The oil should be pure, without any impurity (Orthodox Confession, answer to question 118). During the fulfillment of the mystery of the consecration of oil are also used dried grains of wheat<sup>17</sup> and these swabs<sup>18</sup> which are set up in the vessel filled with the specified grains<sup>19</sup> ("Office of Holy Oil").

Doing the consecration of oil, even though there is only one priest, he should execute all of the office placed in the Book of Needs (Euchologion) for seven priests. The **mystery is considered done** if the priest, after the consecration of the oil, succeeds, even though once, to read over the ill the complete prayer and to anoint the oil on the specified members of the body specified in a Book of Needs (Euchologion)<sup>20</sup> (see, P. Mogila, *The Book of Needs (Trebnik, Euchologion)*).

As the **Holy Oil** in the mystery was the bearer of Divine grace, but the remaining objects, through its office meaning for it, are involved in the consecration (sanctification), especially **branches** are considered appropriate **beacons** to give to the church for burning during Divine service at the holy table and the prothesis (table of oblation); grains of wheat, also equal with the branches with paper, carrying traces of Holy Oil, are necessary to burn in the church in the burner, where incense is prepared for censuring; precisely as well the rest of the Holy Oil should be burned in the church burner<sup>21</sup> (Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 252-254, 256).

In most cases priests are invited for doing the mystery of the consecration of oil merely in extreme danger of the sick and look to the mystery as though on the last parting word over the dying<sup>22</sup> (see Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1888, 26); thus some consider it necessary, while doing the mystery, to give **vows** in a sort of renunciation of matrimonial intercourse (see p. 1192 below); finally, at burning of the cotton swabs, if it is done at the fulfillment of the same mystery on the table or in a cup in which they thrust in direction of the smoke see the indication of the anointing of oil on the outcome of an illness; the pastoral conscience of the builder of mysteries obliges him to find out the true meaning of the mystery of consecration of oil and to eradicate **superstitious insights** in him. That is why, by the way, it even follows that the swabs together with the grains are to burn in the church, not to mention the harm for the sick of the smoke from burning swabs (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1861, 22).

"**The Office (Akolouthia) of Holy Oil**" is found in the 22nd chapter of the Great Book of Needs (Euchologion) and in the 13th chapter of the Lesser Book of Needs (Euchologion).

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<sup>1</sup> The **Name of the mystery as unction** specifies that its essential sign, that the substance to serve consecrated oil in it, through the establishment of the Holy Church by prayers (according to this sign the sacrament is also sometimes called "unction with oil". It is also called the mystery of anointing with oil, which name was formed on the basis of the words of the Holy Scripture about anointment by oil (Mk 6:13; Jam. 5:11). Both names, consecration of oil and anointing with oil, mean two essential liturgical parts of the mystery: the consecration of oil and anointing with it and consequently they, generally, are indifferently used for designation of the whole; however, in theological language the mystery is mainly called holy oil. This name, as Theophanes Prokopovich says, rather well corresponds also to the Greek name - εὐχέλαιον (prayerful oil or oil of prayer), and for the ceremony of the consecration of oil (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 2-3).

<sup>2</sup> The **Sanctification of Oil is not identical with repentance**, does not repeat it, does not replace it, does not cancel it and does not make it insufficient for the forgiveness of sins. Worthily receiving Holy Oil releases:

1) hidden sins, i. e. entered into him because of universal infirmities, without his will and without his permission from their sinfulness;

2) those sins, which were the cause of illnesses, but the ill did not know about this nor did he realize them as sins;

3) such sins, which the infirm, but fulfilled long ago, by forgetfulness, or regarded unimportant and so forth, did not confess them to the presbyter, though would sincerely repent of them and confessed them, if he remembered them and recognized their sinfulness;

4) such cases and circumstances of sins, which the ill, because of the heavy infirmities, could not reveal to the presbyter, or cannot now smooth down good deeds, by fasting, prayers, acts of mercy, satisfaction of insults, asking for forgiveness, reconciliation and so forth;

5) such sins, which could be revealed in the ill after confession: in thoughts, feelings, movements, words and to weigh on his soul;

6) and finally, the confessed sins, especially those that are heavy, can disturb the conscience of the sick, can shake his faith in their remission, weaken hope for mercy of God and lead to despondency (His Eminence Eusebius, *About the Seven Mysteries*, p. 512).

All fuller meaning and other similar unconfessed sins by the infirmities of the sick, during his penitential state of mind through the grace of God, are remitted to him through holy anointing with prayers and cleansed in the heritage of the kingdom of heaven, and he, according to the teaching of the Blessed Simeon of Salonika, receives the definitive absolution of sins, or in the expression of the second prayer of the consecration of oil "complete forgiveness of sins" (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 236-239). Absolution of sins through the mystery of Holy Oil, properly named for very sick patients, is not different from the fulfillment of absolution of sins in the mystery of repentance, - the fulfillment is not by the same insufficiency of repentance for the forgiveness of all sins, but by the infirmity of the sick to use this saving healing in all its fullness and salutariness (His Beatitude Macarius, *Dogmatic Theology*).

<sup>3</sup> The Holy Apostle James, having commanded to call presbyters for the fulfillment of the anointing with oil, did not define the very **number of presbyters**. In ancient times the consecration of oil was done by several presbyters and their number has not been strictly established, and on need to the fulfillment of the sacrament even one presbyter was permitted. At the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 9th century the Eastern Church had established the fulfillment of the consecration of oil by seven presbyters. By our Book of Needs (Euchologion), the consecration of oil should also be done "by seven priests". It does not at all break the unity of the mystery. All the readings of the word of God, prayers and anointing, although done successively and by different persons, but, in effect, consist of one action of the mystery, one consecration of oil, and each of the presbyters executes only that part of the whole which is assigned to each of them in the mystery. In the common rules about fulfillment of the

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consecration of oil presbyters are to include seven with an exception: in the fulfillment of the mystery either more than seven can participate or ("in the testimony of the greatest belief and diligence"), or less than this number. From an amount less than seven priests, antiquity, mainly, demanded that the consecration of oil be completed (for the sake of the power of the Holy Trinity and in remembrance of the testimony and prophecy of the Holy Trinity, which occurred when Elijah revived the son of the woman of Sarephah, having prayed three times and stretched over him three times) by three presbyters. (For more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *On the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 35-37.). At the present time in the Russian Church the fulfillment of the sanctification of oil by one priest has almost become constant practice (Prakticheskoe Rukovodstvo dlia Sviashchenno Sluzhitelei [Practical Manual for Church Servers], p. 257). Relative to the fulfillment of the mystery by one presbyter, Simeon of Salonika teaches: "one priest should not do the consecration of oil if there is a possibility to gather several presbyters, for it is said: "let him call for the presbyters of the church" (Jas. 5:14), instead of one presbyter". The fulfillment of the consecration of oil by seven priests is the general rule, but fulfillment by one priest is the exception, done for the sake of need, and, of course, these exceptions should not be specified in the law; therefore priests and laymen follow mutual efforts to care and promote each other, so that, in all possible cases, the consecration of oil was done by seven priests or, at least, three (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 38-48; refer to A. Shagun, "Krat. izl. Kanon. Prava [A short Discourse on Canonical Rights]", p. 146; Tserkovniia Vedomosti [Church News] 1897, 12).

<sup>4</sup> **The Priest, only one doing the mystery**, should do it on behalf of seven priests, but that is why he should read 7 Epistles, 7 Gospel, 7 special prayers with the seven anointings of the sick (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1891, 49).

The effectiveness of mystery in this case is explained by the legality of its fulfillment; for the Holy Church allows one person to do the mystery in case of extreme emergency, and then one accomplishes it all, and so it is necessary for seven priests; therefore the effectiveness of anointing and the entire mystery is not reduced by one's own power and remains complete and full (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, p. 155; see below, note 2 on p. 1186).

The priest can be alone, without the psalm reader and the deacon, in an extreme emergency, to administer the rite of the consecration of oil over the sick (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1897, 21).

<sup>5</sup> **Fulfillment by the priest alone over the consecration of oil** cannot be allowed because that salutary power of this mystery is attributed by Apostle James (5:14-15) not by oil alone, but mainly by the prayer of clergy: "let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (see Archbishop Macarius, *Dogmatic Theology*); but how can the priest both call and pray himself instead of others, and anoint with oil by himself when all this is assigned to others? Besides, the Church demands, in order that both the fulfillment of the mystery and reception of them are accomplished; and received not differently, as according to the God-given order ("Prav. Ispoved., otv. na vopr." ["Orthodox Confession", answers to question] 100); the Apostle directly calls on the presbyters doing this mystery: "let him call for the presbyters of the church". Clearly if the priest dared to do the consecration of oil by himself, then he would recede from the God established order and thus would not do the same mystery in as much as "then only the mystery also will be mystery, and will with grace operate on the person, when it will completely agree with its establishment, by the will of the Lord" (Archbishop Macarius, *Dogmatic Theology*).

<sup>6</sup> In this case concerning the fulfillment of the **mystery of repentance** some reason so: "confession really should precede the reception of the mystery of the consecration of oil; but this necessity is unconditional, but simply the moral necessity, in the sense of preparation for the acceptance of the sacramental act, because the latter also has in one's own goal the cleansing of sins" (for more details, see A. Almazov, *Taiynaia Ispoved, [The Mystery of Confession]*, vol. 2, pp. 423-425; refer to Archbishop Macarius, *Dogmatic Theology*, p. 473).

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<sup>7</sup> **During the simultaneous fulfillment of the consecration of oil and Holy Communion**, first is done "the Office (Akolouthia) of Confession", then, "the Office (Akolouthia) of Holy Oil" with the rite of asking for forgiveness of the sick, and, finally is the "Office of Giving Communion to the Sick", with the omission of the confession, as well as it is noticed in this last office: "If he, she be ill before he, she is confessed (but he, she is confessed before the sanctification of oil), then the (priest) (right after the prayers) communes him, her of the Holy Mysteries (Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *O Taine sv. Eleia [About the Mystery of Holy Oil]*, p. 230).

In some editions of The Great Book of Needs (Euchologion) after singing the Molieben there is this indication: "if therefore it is evening, there will be a dismissal; if it is early in the morning, a little table is prepared for a lampada and the service proceeds". With these it is indicated in the ancient order of the office of the mystery of the sanctification of oil, according to which the singing of the Molieben was done in the evening, and the consecration of oil and the anointing of the patient by it are done in the morning the next day. Such order may be followed even at the present time.

**The sanctification of oil can be connected to the usual Divine service** and thus: the ill may take prayerful part in the fulfillment of Vespers and Matins, after Matins he is to be confessed and receive the anointing with Holy Oil, but he is to receive Holy Communion in the liturgy (ibid., pp. 179-180, 227-230; refer to Prib. k tvor. sv. otts. [Supplement to the Works of the Holy Fathers], 1888, part 42, pp. 119-122, but also see more below, note 2 on p. 1187).

As it is known in our modern practice the fulfillment of the consecration of oil and all the office of this mystery cannot be divided in two parts; usually, it is done simultaneously.

<sup>8</sup> **In case of the mortal danger for the sick**, confession and communion following it are done according to the "Office of how to commune the sick"; after this is done the sanctification of oil, depending on the condition of the patient (Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 230-231).

Other patients refuse receiving the mystery of the sanctification of oil depending on various reasons: from weakness or absence of internal persuasion in dogmas of faith and the mystery, from various prejudgments (refer below, p. 1187), but sometimes also from an unaccountable whim of will of the sick.

The family of the patient, and mainly - the priest is obliged in such cases to prove to the patient the vanity of his prejudgment, to order his soul, to explain compulsion, meaning and true value of the mystery, to show its saving fruits and in every possible way to convince him of the acceptance of the mystery, turning with prayer before God about an explanation of the infirm (ibid., p. 104).

Except the healing and easing of illnesses, **the mystery of the sanctification of oil acquires the grace of God** to heal illnesses of the soul, to lift, ennoble and strengthen the spiritual reality and the might of the person, who became bodily exhausted. After the acceptance of the mystery, the infirm, if he, she does not receive recovery or easing, then he gains the spiritual world, calmness of conscience, firmness and courage of spirit, carries the illness easier, victoriously struggles against temptations, looks happier at the future, entirely gives himself over to the will of God. It is known that sins, especially heavy sins, sometimes leave in the soul too sharp traces, strongly weaken the moral energy of spirit, are involuntarily remembered by the patient in all his disgrace with all his bad consequences, confuse the conscience, inspire fear, and that increases even without that painful weight of the situation of the person when death terminates the union of his soul with the body, - increase still the heaviness of the indicated situation of the sick by the repose about the new, until then unknown world to him, about the dread judgment of the impartial Judge. The situation, during strongly built health, during an attack of infirmity, is awful, here again one moment to despair and eternal death. For these in those heavy minutes of the boundless love of God prepared for his person the grace of tranquility in the mystery of the sanctification of oil. That enlightenment and strengthening of spirit, which, during the mystery of the sanctification of oil, during the separation of the soul from the body, is the greatest, incomparable with that gift, and completely the supernatural gift of the grace of God; for

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neither the infirm by itself nor in powers will be to create in itself such enlightenment and might of soul, neither effort nor human means can inform him with such enthusiasm. In all these appearances of the mystery as spiritual healing, does not eliminate the action of the powers and laws of nature, but supports and renders them the graceful help in that measure, in what this, after looking to God, is useful for the salvation of the sick. Generally in the condition of our bodily paralysis, the grace of the mystery of the sanctification of oil submits all that is necessary for our spirit (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 104, 246-247., Most Reverend Justin, *Dogmatic Theology*, part 2, pp. 427-428).

<sup>9</sup> In ancient times the sick, able to slightly rise from a bed and to go, with the help of others were brought or lead to church, in order that in a sacred place to gain comfort for the suffering soul and to return health to the body by means of a certain wonderful action, communicated by this mystery. It is why they sometimes remained for several days in the church narthex and spent days and nights there, awaiting graceful help from anointing with this sacred oil. Simeon of Salonika (in ch. 285) writes: "the Latins say that one should not impart this sacrament to the ill, but only the dying, - for this, in order that whoever has received the remission of sins, after his recovery, cannot sin again. What madness! ... They are thinking contrary to both the Savior and His Apostles... They say that one should teach him not in order that the sick be healed, but that they remained incurable and died" (Novaia Skrizhalj' [New Stone Tablets]). The mystery of **the consecration of oil should be deigned** sufferers with illnesses, which are considered incurable and curable; merely there are no bases for those with light corporal diseases to resort to this mystery, which everyone in life should test many times in various organs and forms and concerning which it is known that they pass by itself or from the use of simple natural means of medicine (refer to 1 Tim. 5:23) and continue for a short time (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 71-73. 78-80).

As to such illnesses, which, although does not concern the heavy, but is long and persistent, then concerning using the mystery of the consecration of oil in similar sorts illnesses Metropolitan Philaret in one of his letters (to Archimandrite Joannicius, deputy of the Chudovo monastery) wrote the following: "usually" the mystery of the consecration of oil "is now used in heavy illnesses and in the perceptible closeness to death; but this restriction is not present in Christ's and the Apostolic teaching; but it seems to me, for light illness especially those healing decently, received its power from the spirit and prayers; and this I say not without known experiences". Generally the Muscovite Archpastor recognized the mystery of the consecration of oil as such healing from illnesses, "which use is always well and hardly probable when it may be erroneous" ("Pis. k Vysoch. Osob. i raz. dr. lits. [Letters Especially to His Majesty and to Various Other Persons]", 165-166 p.).

<sup>10</sup> Sometimes the **fulfillment of the consecration of oil is allowed even over the healthy** (See pp. 541-542 above; see also the Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors], 1881, 35); by priests not already able to imitate this, so that in specified cases the consecration of oil is done by the bishop instead of the priest (Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1891, 28).

<sup>11</sup> Of course, it is impossible to pray for deliverance from death and continuation of that life which inevitably should undergo deprivation of life; but that is why **those sentenced to the death** are able to receive the consecration of oil, although they were and are seriously ill (Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, p. 85).

During the epidemic in our fatherland in the XIV-XV century **of the plague**, believers, still being healthy by the way received the consecration of oil in preparation for the forthcoming danger to their life.

But, by the explanation of some, it is not necessary to do the consecration of oil over persons for whom the danger of illness only grows, since the consecration of oil is established and, apparently from the content of the "Office (Akolouthia)" merely threatens, exists and is completed not in cases that might be and not in danger, illnesses and death, not for their prevention, but for the healing of real illnesses which visit believers (for more details, see *ibid.*, pp. 85-87).

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<sup>12</sup> By the explanation of some, the mystery of the consecration of oil should not be given **to decrepit aged men** without illnesses because of one in old age since old age in itself is not illness. For in decrepit old age, as well as any other age, illnesses and health are peculiar. Decrepit, as it seems, aged men quite often are used to good health, peculiar, certainly, to their age, do not undergo whatever illnesses and even die without serious consequences of old age only. The office of the consecration of oil assumes the diseased condition of the one who prays; they anoint him for healing from bodily and spiritual illnesses, and meanwhile the aged man, according to his age, is absolutely healthy and does not suffer any kind of illness. Therefore the consecration of oil, by the Orthodox rite, should be done over believers, during old age and their decrepitude, by the general rule, in only those cases when they are confronted with certain serious illness or the diseased condition is taken seriously. Believers, not yet subjected to illness, although that and in old age, the Orthodox Church prepares for death by other means: prayers, fasting, confession and holy communion. For these means the Orthodox pastor also should direct pious mood resorting to his flock, wishing without special need to use the mystery of the consecration of oil (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 87-90; Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1898, 15).

According to the opinion of others, decrepit aged men may be worthy of the mystery of the consecration of oil since decrepit old age is usually accompanied by the lessening of bodily powers and consequently may also be called some kind of illness. (See Metr. P. Mogila, *Trebnik [Book of Needs]*; Prakticheskoe Rukovodstvo dlia Sviashchenno Sluzhitelei [Practical Manual for Church Servers], p. 256; refer to p. 1181 above).

<sup>13</sup> **Not allowed the mystery of the consecration of oil** are other faiths (Jews, Mohammedans and so forth), Christians not of the Orthodox faith, apostates from the Orthodox Church, those preparing for holy baptism in the Orthodox Church (i. e. catechumens). Those excommunicated from the mysteries and church prayers and even in an excommunication merely from holy communion also may not be given the mystery of the consecration of oil; but in as much as they, being found at the end of life, do not lose "the latter and the needed parting word" (see p. 1061 above), then thus it is not only permissible for the parting word, but also the mystery of the consecration of oil should be given and in this order: first they confess him and the absolution from sins is given, then the consecration of oil is done and in conclusion they are granted the parting words with the Holy Mysteries. In the case of the recovery of those, they are delivered in the former degree of repentance, with the obligation to finish to term the appointed penance and again with deprivation during this term of the right and to the mystery of the consecration of oil (Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 58-66).

<sup>14</sup> By the explanation of some, the mystery of the consecration of oil is not done **over the frenzied**; for them exist special prayers in the Book of Needs (Euchologion) (see chapter 74): "The Office (Akolouthia) of Molieben for the infirm, overwhelmed with impure spirits and despondent unease". (For more details, see *ibid.* pp. 108-109).

According to the opinion of some, it agrees with the direction concerning the mystery of consecration of oil in the Book of Needs of Metr. P. Mogila, merely "in unrepentance and in obvious sin of the mortal dying both in excommunication and in the curse of sin that in no way is this mystery taught" (Metr. P. Mogila, *Trebnik*); over the ill, already sustained in the use of judgment and **found without memory**, if before they have lost consciousness, had time to declare with words or even merely with whatever other signs concerning the desire to receive the consecration of oil and before this have cleansed themselves by the mystery of repentance, it is possible to do the anointing with oil; also similarly if the ill after the parting word of the mystery of repentance has fallen into unconsciousness, without having had time to express his, her desire to be consecrated with oil, - it is also possible, at the request of relatives of the ill, to do the consecration of oil over him; since the direct prohibition to do the consecration of oil over specified patients in church rules is not present (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1892, 51; see the Prib. k tvor. sv. otts. [Supplement to the Works of the Holy Fathers], 1888, part 42, pp. 126-130). But such external insight on the mystery cannot be recognized for the expression of the

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insight of the Universal Church and responds as the character of Roman Catholicism (Prakticheskoe Rukovodstvo dlia Sviashchenno Sluzhitelei [Practical Manual for Church Servers], pp. 256-257). Under the condition of possession of consciousness and reason the consecration of oil may be, of course, done over the sick even in their agonal sufferings; but it is not necessary to do this mystery over the sufferer in agony if the latter is accompanied with a full cup of both consciousness and sensitivity; the anointing with oil is also not done during the sleep of the sick, in an epilepsy attack, in lethargy and so forth. The previous fulfillment of the mysteries: the wish to receive them, the expression of repentance by word or sign, cannot replace the requirement of personal understanding and cognition during the fulfillment of the consecration of oil. In such cases, during the impossibility of factual sacrament fulfillment, wishing this does not remain in the Lord without his goodwill and help, for the lamentation of the sick will not be concealed from the Lord, and then only his faith justifies him (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 77-78, 105-107; see also the Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1892, 19; Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1893, 3).

**"The sanctification of Oil by no means should be done over the dead"** (Nomocanon 164; for more details, see the "Prib. k tvor. sv. ott. [Supplement to the Works of the Holy Fathers]", 1888, part 42, pp. 126-130).

<sup>15</sup> The "Office (Akolouthia)" establishes the church as the **place of fulfilment of the mystery**, before houses, whence it follows that the temple is the main and primary place for the fulfillment of the consecration of oil as any Divine Service is directed to the temple, has and induces those present and the fulfillment for those "who assist" (Jas. 5:16) with prayers to the Lord and Holy God; that is why believers, having run into illness, should resort to the mystery in good time, while they still have the strength to visit the house of God and while this is harmless to the condition of their health. When it is impossible for the ill to receive the consecration of oil in the temple, it may be done in the house, and in extreme cases - even in open places, under the sky, for example on the battlefield during war, on the deck of the ship during navigation and so forth (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 25-30).

<sup>16</sup> **Wine** added to oil still serves as a sign of Christ's blood flowing on the cross for the salvation of the people (Archpriest A. Maltsev, *Tain. Prav. Kath. Vost. Tser. (Mysteries of the Orthodox Catholic Eastern Church)*, p. 452).

On the parable of the merciful Samaritan, the latter first poured oil and then the wine; and by the present office of the consecration of oil, first is poured the oil, but then adds wine to it. Before establishing the addition of wine, water is added to the oil (see the Office of Holy Oil) as a sign of the cleanliness of the one anointed by oil, received by him in the waters of Holy Baptism; by the present office, water poured into the oil is completely cancelled. To add wine to the oil, when there is that possibility, it follows as this establishment of the Church of Constantinople, having as its basis, as said above, in the parable of the Savior about the merciful Samaritan (which parable even is read in the Gospel, placed in the office of the consecration of oil) and in memory of the death of the Savior on the cross, which it gained even by itself the grace of mystery. But as the addition of wine to oil is merely a ceremonial action and has no dogmatic value, then in extreme need, in the case of the impossibility to give wine, the mystery of the consecration of oil may be done with the use of only the oil (refer to Tserkovnyi Viestnik [Church Messenger] 1892, 48). The **oil** is unconditionally necessary during the mystery of the consecration of oil, but that is why in order not to subject the ill to deprivation of the mystery, presbyters and laymen should have in readiness and safety, in case of need, a quantity of oil demanded for the mystery.

At the present time, during the fulfillment of the consecration of oil, the oil is poured into a suitable **vessel** (usually, a glass) used in the home. It is necessary to observe that this vessel was decorous, clean and after would not customarily be used for everyday things. It would be more expedient to necessarily have at each temple a corresponding vessel for the mystery of the consecration of oil and, according to the indication of the Book of Needs (Euchologion), - a "candle holder" (for more details, Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 119-122).

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<sup>17</sup> **Grains of wheat** do not make the substance of the mystery. Their use explains that they symbolically serve here as the image of the germ of new life - recovery, and life after the death of the body - the resurrection (see Jn. 12:44; 1 Cor. 15:36-38); the raising of the swabs in the wheat is, in the relation to it, a minor act (ibid., p. 169).

<sup>18</sup> **Struchets** (from the word "*struk*" - a little branch of a grassy plant) in Church Slavonic, in the relation to the mystery of the consecration of oil, considered a synonym of twig (swab) (from the word "bough" which is a little branch which came from the tree trunk). It is accepted for the anointing with Holy Oil, during the mystery of the consecration of oil, in conformity to the olive branch Noah brought into the ark (see Gen. 8:11) and serves for the anointing as a symbol of its graceful restoration from the flood of illnesses and sins. Now a thin small stick is used as the swab during the consecration of oil, well pared down from all ends; its one end is firmly wrapped up in a soft cotton plant paper or cotton wool, for anointing with holy oil by this end of the parts of the body of the sick. In this case this, as though actually, a branch, surrounded by paper, itself represents an olive branch, the doves, covered with leaves (For more details, see ibid., pp. 145-147).

<sup>19</sup> The priest, remembering the commandment of the Lord: "blessed are the poor in spirit", should not be confused that, at anointing with oil **in houses of the poor**, the table quite often will be covered with a dirty cloth that this branch, wrapped up with hemp on the ends, and seven, hand-made candles are thrust in bread flower by which the simple clay cup is filled, and that the oil should be sometimes poured in a simple liqueur glass, here there is nothing prejudicial (Rukovodstvo dlia Sel'skikh Pastyrei [Manual for Village Pastors] 1885, 40; Refer note 1 above).

<sup>20</sup> In the "Office (Akolouthia) of Holy Oil" the **consecration (sanctification) of oil and the anointing of the sick** with holy oil are undividedly connected in one liturgical office. The consecration (sanctification) of oil is done once before the first anointing, the anointing with this consecrated oil is one of the same patient, on one of the same organs of his body, completed, after the office, this once (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 132, 154).

The seven times number is selected as a sign of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Is. 2:2), in conformity to number of prayers and bows of the prophet Elisha with which he revived the adolescent (4 Kg. 4:35), in imitation of the number of prayers of Prophet Elijah, with whom he closed the sky for three years half-way (3 Kg. 18:43), corresponding to the seven immersions of Naaman in the waters of the Jordan, after which he was cleansed (4 Kg. 5:14). **The seven times anointing** with Holy Oil the parts of the body of the sick specified in the Book of Needs (Euchologion) should remain invariable, whether the consecration of oil will be done by presbyters in number less or more than seven. If in doing the mystery eight and more priests participate, then only seven of them anoint the sick, and the rest participate only prayerfully in action of the mystery. If three, two or one presbyter do the consecration of oil, then the anointing all the same will be seven times, - "If the sick, after the first anointing with saying of the fulfillment of the prayer, dies, then it stops for he completely received the mystery of the consecration of oil" (Book of Needs (Euchologion), 1646). Thus in the specified case the consecration of oil is considered done and effective during the **unitary anointing**. But such an individual exception not only does not give ground to reject the meaning and power of the canon of the Church about seven anointings, but, on the contrary, itself confirms and strengthens it, without allowing, except for the designated case, to do only one anointing. The one time anointing then admits the action, when there is no possibility to do the other six anointings (Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 155-457).

<sup>21</sup> Relative to the oil in our old printed Trebniks [Book of Needs] it was recommended: "if the sick dies, then pour the remaining oil on the dead, whether it heals the sick, then the sacred oil is burned in a polycenser or the censer" (see Pravoslavnyi Sobesednik (Orthodox Companion), 1887, part 2, p. 84; Supplement to the Works of the Holy Fathers, 1888, part 42, p. 128). And at the present time we hardly have the custom anywhere where the oil and the wine is accepted, which remained from the anointing of the sick, if the latter soon dies after the fulfillment of the consecration of oil over him, to pour on his body after his funeral (Posobiye k Izucheniyu Ustava Bogoslužhenia Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi [Manual for the Study of the Ustav of the Divine Services of the Orthodox Church, p. 735,

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Prakticheskoe izlozhenie tserkovno-grazhdanzki postanovlenij [Practical declarations of church-civil rulings], p. 149; Prakticheskoe Rukovodstvo dlia Sviashchenno Sluzhitelei [Practical Manual for Church Servers], p. 258).

But under the indication of others, in case of the death of the one anointed with oil, it is not necessary to pour out the holy oil on the dead after the rite of the burial service before the closing of the coffin in as much as the oil is consecrated for anointing the living, and not the dead, and in the practice of the ancient Church the custom did not exist at all to pour in the rest of the sacred mystery oil on the dead (for more details, see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 252-254, 256).

<sup>22</sup> In the Orthodox consecration of oil the sick is asked healing from illnesses and absolution of sins and there is not present the least hint of **preparation of the sick for death** (see the Supplement to the Works of the Holy Fathers, 1883, part 42, pp. 122-123); as a parting word the Orthodox Church serves communion of the Holy Mysteries to the dying, with the preparatory confession and absolution of sins (see I, 13), following that, in the absence of mortal danger for the patient, the connection of the parting word with the consecration of oil has no binding force, is why these two religious rites can also be done separately at various times: the consecration of oil - in the period of the approach of illness, as a healing of grace, and the parting word, as a vow to eternal blessedness, in view of the danger of death (see Archpriest M. Archangelsky, *About the Mystery of Holy Oil*, pp. 4, 229).

*S. V. Bulgakov, "Handbook for Church Servers", 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 1181-1187.  
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