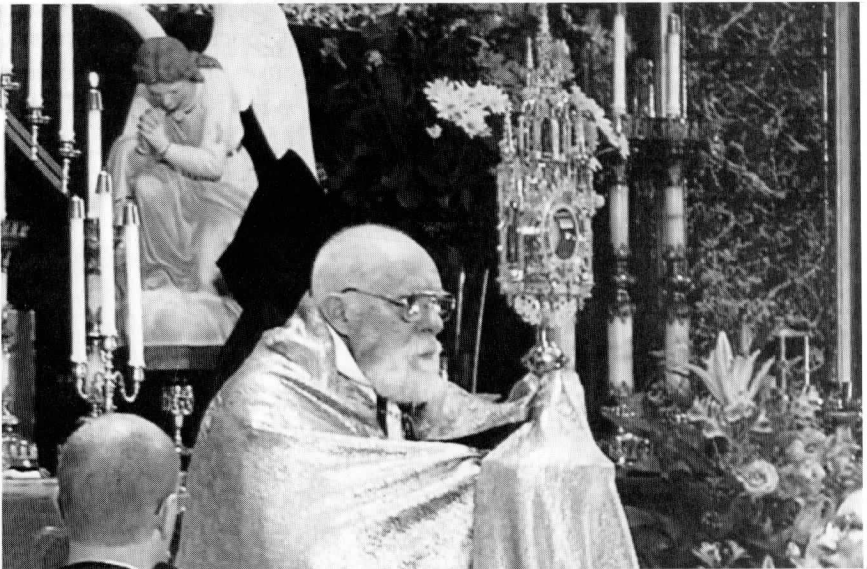


THE SACRED HANDS OF THE PRIEST

The hands of the priest are in a very special way “set aside” because of their sacred functions. At a certain point in the ceremony of ordination, the one to be ordained to the priesthood extends his hands, palms upward, with the sides of the palms and little fingers touching each other. The bishop dips his thumb into the holy oil (Oil of Catechumens) and draws a line from the thumb of the right hand to the index finger of the left hand and from the thumb of the left hand to the index finger of the right hand. He then anoints the whole of both palms. The palms of the priest-to-be are then placed together and a specially made strip of linen cloth is draped over them. In a very old custom followed in some areas of the world and also here at Christ the King Abbey, the young man goes down to the communion rail where his mother is waiting for him. His mother then ties together the hands of her now priest-son with the binding cloth. (This cloth is kept and later it is cut lengthwise into two strips, each of which is used to tie the hands of the priest’s mother and father at the time of their deaths.)

Later, the binding cloth is removed and the hands are cleansed with lemon juice. The hands of the new priest are then consecrated:

“Deign, O Lord, to sanctify and consecrate these hands by this anointing, that whatsoever they bless shall indeed be blessed, and whatsoever they shall consecrate shall indeed be consecrated, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” □



“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of Hosts!”