



# **St. Mina Coptic Orthodox Church Pre-Service Training Seminars**

## **The Rites of the Coptic Orthodox Church**



### **Lecture 2 The Sacrament of Baptism**

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33)

## **THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

**SACRAMENT:** Literally, a "mystery." A sacrament is a way in which God imparts grace to His people. Orthodox Christians frequently speak of seven sacraments, but God's gift of grace is not limited only to these seven—the entire life of the Church is mystical and sacramental. The sacraments were instituted by Christ Himself (John 1:16, 17). The seven mysteries are : baptism (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27), Chrismation (Acts 8:15-17; 1 John 2:27), The Holy Eucharist (Matt. 26:26-28; John 6:30-58; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-31), Repentance & Confession (John 20:22, 23; 1 John 1:8, 9), Priesthood (Ordination) (Mark 3:14; Acts 1:15-26; 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 4:14), Marriage (Gen. 2:18-25; Eph. 5:22-33), and Healing or Unction (Luke 9:1-6; James 5:14, 15).

### **The Purpose of Holy Baptism:**

To remove the consequences of the 'original sin'. To wash away all other sins committed before the time of Baptism if the person is beyond the age of infancy. To unite the person to "The Body of Christ" (that is, the Church), and to open the door of salvation and eternal life to him or her.

### **The Institution of the Sacrament of Baptism**

It was the Lord Jesus who instituted Baptism. "**He who believes and is baptised will be saved**" (Mark 16:16). "**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...**" (Matthew 28:19). "**Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God**" (John 3:5). The great model of our baptism, then, is the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan.

### **Explanation of the Ceremony:**

#### **The Water Liturgy:**

It is the first thing to be done by the priest and it should be attended by the person who is to be baptized (and his parents if a child).

The use of water is based upon the commandment of the Lord "to be born again of water and Spirit" and also as St. Peter explained in his first Epistle: "...in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight

souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism..." 1 Pet.3:20-21

The priest sanctifies the water through the prayers and Bible readings and finally by pouring the Holy Oil of Mayroon to give the water the power of the Holy Spirit so that it can "cleanse from sins" not only the filth of the flesh and be able to give the new birth from "water and Spirit " as the Lord said.

### **The absolution for the mother:**

It is the special prayer for the mother when she brings her baby to be baptized, and the church here prays for the mother so that she will be purified from all her sins and be worthy to partake of the Holy Eucharist. ( always the birth of a baby is a reminder to the woman of the original sin and how God punished her with the pains of labor and also as God ordered all the women to stay away for a time after the birth and not to touch the Holies of the Lord until she is clean from any product of the labour processe.).

After this prayer , the priest anoints the mother and allows her to partake of the Holy Mysteries.

### **The Prayers of the Holy Baptism:**

From now on the prayers started to be directed toward the person to be baptized (or the Baby) and here the priest asking the Lord to uproot all the evil from his heart and prepare him to be a Holy Sanctuary for the Holy Spirit.

During these prayers , the priest anoint the person with the plain oil in his head , hands , heart and back and recite many prayers and supplications so that the Lord grant him the open heart and mind to keep and understand the Holy words.

### **The Exorcism or renouncing Satan:**

The purpose of Baptism is to bring the person into the Church. To enter into the temple of God is to be with Christ, to become a member of His body. The Priest then calls upon the sponsor to renounce the devil and all his works on behalf of the child: "**I renounce you Satan, and all your works, and all your services... I renounce you , I renounce you , I renounce you.**" The exorcisms announce the forthcoming Baptism as an act of victory. The renouncing of Satan is done facing west because the west is where the sun disappears, and was regarded by the ancient Greeks as the place of the gates of Hades. Then the priest faces east whence the light of the sun rises and asks the

godparent to accept for the child Him who is the Light of the World: **"I accept you Christ..."** The renunciation of Satan and the union with Christ express our faith that the newly-baptized child has been transferred from one master to another, from Satan to Christ, from death to life.

### **The Creed**

The godparent is then asked to confess faith in Christ on behalf of the infant and reads the confession of faith contained in the Nicene Creed. The Creed was a symbol or sign of recognition among the early Christians; it was like a password that distinguished the true members of God's family. By reading the Creed the godparent confesses the true faith that will be passed on to the infant in time.

### **The Anointing with the Oil of joy (Ghalilawen):**

Right after renouncing Satan and confessing the Christian faith, the priest anoints the infant with Ghalilawen oil which is a semi-product of Mayroon synthesis symbolizing the implantation in the Holy church of God reminding us with what St. Paul has mentioned in his Epistle to the Romans: "and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree..." (Romans 11:17). Also like the chosen ones of God (kings and priests and prophets), were to be anointed in their ordination.

### **The Naked Infant**

The infant is baptized in its naked state to denote that just as we came out of our mother's womb naked so we emerge naked out of the womb of God - the baptismal Font. The removal of all clothes also signifies the putting off the 'old man' which will be cast off entirely through Baptism.

### **Immersion into the Baptismal Font**

In obedience to Christ's words, the Priest Baptizes the child with the words, **"I baptize you (name) in the name of the Father. Amen. And of the Son, Amen. And of the Holy Spirit, Amen"**. At each invocation the Priest immerses and then raises the infant up again while breathing gently in his face. After the Baptism is completed, the Priest places the child in a new linen sheet (towel) held by the Godparent.

### **The Sponsor or Godparent**

The use of sponsors in Baptism dates back to the days when Christians were persecuted by the Roman Emperor Nero. Parents were often massacred during these persecutions. Thus sponsors were provided to instruct the children in the Christian faith in the event the parents were martyred. The godparent promises

to see to it that the child is raised and educated in the Orthodox Christian faith. For this reason, it is important that godparents be chosen not for social reasons, but because they are persons who love God and His Church. Sponsors must be Orthodox Christians in good standing with the Church, otherwise they will not be able to bring up the child in a faith that is not theirs.

### **New Clothes**

Following the Sacrament of Chrismation the Priest then invests the newly Baptized child in a new robe or garment, saying: "**The garment of Eternal and immortal life Amen.**"

The new clothes signify the entirely new life that we receive after we are "buried with Jesus in His death" (Romans 6:4). Traditionally, the new white garment expresses the purity of the soul that has been washed from sin. It recalls also the shining robe in which Christ appeared at the Transfiguration. There is now a likeness between the one baptized and the transfigured Lord. St. Paul calls it a putting on of Christ: "**For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ**" ([Galatians 3:26-27](#)). "**Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come**" ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

### **The red ribbon and crown:**

Right after putting on the white garment, the priest encircles the baptized infant with a red ribbon (usually it takes the shape of a cross from the back)...it reminds us with the Precious blood of Lord Jesus by whom we were saved. And as the blood of the Passover lamb was marking the houses of the Israelites to save them, so also the Blood of Jesus is the mean and sign of our deliverance.

Then a crown is to be put over the head of the child symbolizing his belonging to the heavens and his victory over death. ( it is not a common practice nowadays.)

### **The commandment for the parents:**

It is the most important part for the parents of the child...the church here urges them to remember the excellence of the mystery that their child had received and also keep reminding them of their duties concerning this new member of Christ's Body and how to raise him in a Godly manner.

### **Discharging the Baptismal water:**

The last thing is the prayer upon the water to be returned back to its original nature ( simple water) so that we can get rid of it...usually the Baptismal font drains its water to the outside ground or running water( not the regular swege).

The priest prays, "We ask and entreat Your goodness, O Philanthropic One, O Lord, to return this water to its first nature to be restored to the earth..."

Then he opens the plug below the Baptismal font so all the water trickles into the reservoir in the ground. Thus the Baptismal rite ends.

### **Questions about Baptism:**

#### **1- Why we baptize by emersion and for three times?**

The three immersions in Baptism is in the name of the Holy Trinity : The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the Lord Jesus taught His saintly disciples, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19,20).

As Baptism is death with Christ and resurrection with Him, through it the believer is granted the blessings of salvation that is accomplished by the death of Christ on the Cross, and as Christ died and was buried for three days, so also immersion of the baptized occurs three times in the Baptismal water, then the child immerses from the Baptismal font as Christ the Lord came out of the tomb. *"Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead"* (Colossians 2:12).

#### **2-Why we baptize infants and children?**

(1) We are concerned about the eternal life of children because the Lord says: *"...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God"* (John.3: 5).

(2) Through baptism, little children are given the opportunity to practice the life of the Church and enjoy the divine Sacraments therein together with all their efficacious. They can also enjoy all the means of Grace in the Church and their effects on their lives.

(3) Those who deny infant baptism are in fact denying the necessity of baptism for salvation (Mark. 16:16); because if they believe in the necessity of baptism for salvation, it would be a serious matter to deprive little children of salvation.

(4) We baptize little children because the Holy Bible indicates this. The Holy Bible mentions baptisms of whole families or of a person with his entire household, and there is no doubt that there must have been children in those families.

The following are a few of numerous examples:

(a) The baptism of the jailer at Philippi: St. Paul and St. Silas said to him: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household"* (Acts 16: 31).

(b) In the event of baptising Lydia, the dealer of purple cloth, it is written: *"And when she and her household were baptized"* (Acts 16: 15).

(c) St. Paul the Apostle said: *"Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas"* (1Cor.1: 16).

(5) Circumcision in the Old Testament symbolized baptism as we have previously explained. The circumcised was considered a member of God's people according to the covenant between

God and Abraham (Gen.17: 11). It is known that circumcision was to be done on the eighth day after birth, according to God's command (Gen.17: 12).

(6) The crossing of the Red Sea was a symbol of baptism or a baptism itself as St. Paul the Apostle explained in (1Cor.10: 2). It represented salvation from the slavery of death, Satan and sin. What was the position of the little children who were carried by their mothers and fathers across the Sea? Of course they received salvation from slavery; they were baptized, not on their own faith but on the faith of their parents.

### **3- How was the penitent thief saved without baptism?**

We say that this thief received the best baptism after whose example we all wish to be baptized. What is baptism but dying with Christ, as our teacher St. Paul says (Rom.6)? The Penitent Thief actually died with Christ and his death became a baptism. Similarly is the baptism by blood attributed to the martyrs who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and were killed at the time of persecution before they had received the grace of baptism by water. Their death became a baptism because they died with Christ like the Penitent Thief.

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*All the lecture is quoted (with some modifications) from:*

✠ *SACRAMENTAL RITES IN THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH “  
His Grace Bishop Mettaous”*

✠ *ORTHODOX CATECHISM Basic Teachings of the Orthodox Faith  
By Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios  
A publication of The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada)*

# SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

## The First Sacrament

Baptism is a Holy Sacrament by which we are born again by being immersed in water three times in the name of the Holy Trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Sacrament of Baptism has the first rank among the Seven Holy Sacraments, as it is the door by which the believer enters the church and has the right to partake in the rest of the Sacraments.

The Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of Baptism by being baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, when the Holy Spirit came upon Him as a dove, anointed Him, then assured it after the resurrection when He said to His disciples: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* (Matthew: 28:19), *“He who is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:16). Baptism is a redemptive Sacrament, necessary for redemption and entry to eternal life according to what the Lord said: *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God”* (John 3). It is one of the four redemptive Sacraments: Baptism, Myron, Confession and Communion of the Holy Body and precious Blood of the Lord. Through Baptism, the believer is reborn a spiritual birth from the Water and the Spirit; his first birth being from his parents.

The best time for Baptism is Sunday before Mass, as the priest is fasting because Baptism is death and resurrection, and Sunday is the weekly memory of the Lord's Resurrection. The wisdom of granting the Sacrament of Baptism right before the Mass, is so that the baptized person and his parents may attend the Mass, and receive the Holy Sacraments.

If the priest wants to administer the Sacrament of Baptism at night, such as during Vesper of Baptism Sunday, he must be fasting for nine or seven hours at least, as Baptism is a Holy Sacrament which must not be performed by an unfasting priest. He must also advise the parents to bring the newly baptized person to attend the Mass the following morning to receive the Holy Communion.

Considering that the Sacrament of Baptism is granted only once to the believer in life, by the priest, it is necessary for us to speak as accurately as possible in regards to how the ritual is performed.

We shall first speak about the Absolution of the Woman, the one who gave birth to the child and is presenting her child before the Lord for Baptism.

Secondly, we shall speak about the prayers of Renouncing Satan and confessing Christ and reciting the Apostolic Creed.

Then we shall speak about the Liturgy of Baptism.

And finally, we shall explain the Rite of Baptism, then the discharge of the Baptismal water.



## THE RITUAL OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

This is divided into four major parts :

- Women's Absolution
- Renouncing Satan
- Liturgy of Baptism
- Baptism & Water Discharge

### FIRST

#### WOMEN'S ABSOLUTION IF SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A MALE CHILD

40 days after her delivery, the woman would have recovered from her puerperium and tiredness. Hence, she comes to the church with her baby to ask the priest to baptize him.

The priest wears the service garment or at least the 'epitrachelion', and the deacons wear their white service garments. Then the priest, deacons, the woman with her child, and family enter into the Baptistery in order for the necessary rites to take place.

The Baptistery must be wide, furnished and clean, adequate for the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, exactly like the altar.

The removal of shoes is advisable. Ancient rites mention that the adult who accepts the faith on behalf of the child, is to stand on sheep fur before the bishop or priest, and recite all that is required in a clear voice. The fur is a reminder of the leather garments which the Lord made for Adam and Eve after their fall into sin.

On the eastern wall of the Baptistery must be placed a large icon of the Baptism of the Lord Christ by John the Baptist, and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove.

Near the Baptismal Font a small wardrobe must be placed, containing three bottles of oil which are used in the Baptism. These are the Apocalypse oil, the Ghaliloun, and the Chrism.

**Every bottle is marked in clear handwriting. Also the ritual books and the cross specified for Baptism are placed, and a clean box containing the red ribbons that are placed around the baptized. If possible, a special crown is also placed therein.**

In the Baptistery, a table must be placed, covered by a clean cover for the child to be placed upon during the anointing of the Holy Myron. The baptized person is signed with 36 crosses of Myron after Baptism.

The first procedure performed by the priest is the prayer of absolution of the woman, and it signifies permission of entry to the church and receiving the Holy Communion after the period of giving birth and puerperium, however, it does not replace the Sacrament of Repentance and Confession. The woman has to sit down with her confession father, to confess her sins done

during that period, then he gives her the adequate instructions and finally prays for her the absolution (for forgiveness of her sins). At the end of the Liturgy she receives the Holy Sacrament with her recently baptized son, as it is not correct for her not to receive Communion with her baptized son.

## **NOTES:**

The woman enters the church and carries out the Sacrament of Confession and receives the Holy Communion if she does not have a monthly period. We advise that the woman choose the days when she does not have her period to request Baptism of her child, so as to be able to receive the Holy Sacraments with her child and accomplish her joy.

If she is menstruating, she is not allowed to receive Communion or any other ecclesiastical Sacrament, but she keeps reading the Holy Bible, fasting and praying with the Agbia in her house.

The order of the Absolution Prayers of the woman is as follows:

The priest says: Aleyson Emas (Have Mercy Upon Us O God the Father Almighty).

The Lord's Prayer.

The Thanksgiving Prayer with its responses, and upon doing the signs of the cross, he anoints the woman saying, "...and for Your servant ..."

The priest performs the Pauline round of incense after he places five spoonfuls of incense in the censer, and with the known signs, says the Pauline mystery :

*"O great and eternal God, with no beginning or end....etc."* He raises incense on Baptismal font and blesses the attendants. One of the deacons read the Pauline (Hebrews 1:8-12). Speaks about the only Son Jesus Christ, *"Whose throne is forever and ever, with a scepter of righteousness and justice, who have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness"*, and who said in challenge, *"Which of you convicts me of sin"* (John 8:46).

The priest wishes that the baptized child resembles the image of Lord Christ in righteousness and truth, loving virtue and holiness and hating vice and evil.

The hymn of the Trisagion is recited then the priest prays the Prayer of the Gospel, and a deacon reads the Psalm 31:1,2, *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered..."*

By Baptism we get remission of original and actual sins and God forgets them, so we become as pure as Adam before the fall.

Then the Gospel : Luke 2:21-35. Where the circumcision of Jesus is narrated, it is exchanged by Baptism in the New Testament, as Baptism is a spiritual circumcision, as our teacher St. Paul says: *"In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by putting*

*off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in Baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead” (Colossians 2:11,12).* In Baptism the old nature is completely removed, not only a small part of the body as in the Old Testament circumcision. As man is born with the old nature contaminated by Adam’s sin. Also the purification rite is mentioned, which was done for the woman after forty days of her delivery, and which was accomplished by the Lord Jesus and His Mother the Virgin, despite that He does not need such purification as He is the Holiest of Holies, and was born of the Virgin St. Mary by the Holy Spirit, unlike all humankind. He instituted the law and accurately accomplished the law.

The Three Major Litanies are prayed: Litany of Peace, Litany of the Fathers and Litany of the Congregations, then the Orthodox Creed.

The priest asks God to look upon the woman, fill her with the Holy Spirit, and purify her from all sins.

The attendants pray the Lord’s Prayer...and the priest prays the Three Absolutions and the blessing while placing the cross on the woman’s head.

The priest anoints the woman by the simple oil (Note: It is mostly composed of olive oil, unlike the Myron oil which is composed of some thirty kinds of fragrances. The simple oil is the Apocalypse Oil).

The woman is anointed to be healed from any disease, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10). Then the woman becomes ready to enter the church and receive the Holy Communion after the Sacrament of Confession.

## NOTES:

The same rite of absolution of the woman is done for a woman who aborted a child involuntarily due to an accident or other, but voluntary abortion is considered murder and necessitates a law of repentance first.

## ABSOLUTION OF THE WOMAN IF SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A FEMALE CHILD

The woman comes to the church with her baby daughter after eighty days of delivery, to baptize her. The eighty days for the female child, and forty days for the male child is identified in the Book of Leviticus, Chapter Twelve. Although there may not be an explanation for this difference in the New Testament, we must obey this commandment without argument or complaint, as the Christian Church obeyed this divine order through all eras, and let us remember also the obedience of the Virgin Mary to this divine order. Despite her conceiving Christ by the Holy Spirit in all purity, and delivering Him in a miraculous Virginal birth, she did not come to the temple before completing the days of her purification according to the law of Moses, which is forty days for the male child (Luke 2: 22-24).

## NOTES:

The parents must be committed to the period of forty days for the male child, and eighty days for the female child, and must not surpass them for any reason, so they do not sin against their children. This means disregarding the idea of making a vow for Baptism in certain remote places, or at certain feasts which are months away. The child must be baptized at the specific time, and if a vow is made, they fulfill it at the right time, without delaying Baptism.

The forty days period for the male child and eighty days for the female child, exists in normal circumstances but if the new-born is sick and his parents are afraid the baby will die, they must request the priest to baptize and anoint the baby with the Myron, even if the child is one day old, and under any circumstance (as the priest may not be fasting or unable to baptize him by immersion); the baptism must be carried out quickly, so that the child does not die without Baptism and is deprived from entry or sight of the Kingdom, according to the words of our beloved Savior (John 3). The method to be followed is that someone, except the mother, should take the child to the church to be baptized. If the baby lives, the Baptism is correct and should not be repeated.

If his parents neglect the Baptism, and the child dies without Baptism, it is the right of the church to impose a punishment on the parents for a period of one year, of prayers and fasting with prostration. They may also be forbidden to receive the Holy Eucharist during this whole year.

But the rite of the woman's absolution is as follows :

After eighty days the woman brings her female child to church for Baptism.

The priest prays Aleyson Emas, the Thanksgiving Prayer, and places five spoonfuls of incense into the censer with the known signs, then prays the Pauline mystery, "*O Great and eternal God...*", he then raises the Pauline incense on the Baptismal font and blesses the attendants.

The deacon reads the Pauline Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 7:12-14), which speaks about how the believing woman is a blessing for her husband.

The hymn of the Trisagon is chanted, then the Prayer of the Gospel, and Psalm 44 : "*The queen shall be brought to the king*", these specific words from the Psalm are chosen, because the child that is to be baptized is female.

The Gospel of Luke (10:38-43), speaks about Mary and Martha who were exemplary in their love of God, hearing and practicing His commandments, and offering the service of sacrifice. The priest asks God that the newly baptized female child may emulate them by choosing the right path..

The Three Major Litanies: Peace, Fathers and the Congregations, are said, followed by the Orthodox Creed.

The same previous prayer is said where the priest requests God to fill the woman with His Holy Spirit, and purify her from sins.

This is followed by the Lord's Prayer, and the priest prays the three absolutions and the blessing while placing the cross on the woman's head.

The priest anoints the woman by the simple oil or Apocalypse oil, which is present in the Baptism room. Hence, the woman is ready to enter the church and receive the Holy Communion of our God Emmanuel.

## **SECOND**

### **PRAYERS OF RENOUNCING SATAN**

Absolution prayer for the child's mother (whether male or female) : The priest places the cross on

the woman's head and prays asking God to absolve and bless the child's mother and make her worthy to share in the Holy Sacraments without falling into condemnation. The woman who gives birth to a child should not receive Holy Communion before her child's Baptism. Hence, this will motivate her not to delay the child's Baptism according to the law (40 days for the male child and 80 days for the female child). In this way, she will receive the blessing of absolution of the woman related to the child's Baptism before their Communion, and this absolution is the legal permission for entry to church and receiving the Holy Sacraments after delivery. He also supplicates unto God to bless the child, and keep him/her to grow in grace, stature, faith, hope and love.

The priest prays the known litany of the Catechumens.

The priest prays for the children proceeding for Baptism while placing the cross on their heads, asking God to forgive their sins and make them worthy of the pure Sacrament of Baptism, and to enlighten their hearts to see in purity the way of eternal life, and glorify God all the days of their lives.

The priest prays on the Apocalypse oil bottle, asking God to let this oil undo the works of devils and their magic, and so become an anointing oil for faith in Christ.

Another prayer on the oil is done, asking that this oil becomes a sermon oil to cast away all evil deeds.

First, the priest asks the mothers that they have removed any jewelry from their children. He then takes the bottle of oil to anoint the children (males then females) as follows :

He anoints the forehead saying, "I anoint you ( Name of the Child) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. A sermon oil for (Name of the Child ) in the church of God, one Holy, Universal and Apostolic, Amen.

Then he anoints the heart (chest), hands and back saying : "*This oil abolishes the power of the adversary Amen.*" The deacons respond, "*We ask this from God.*"

The priest says a prayer where he glorifies God for His great love to humankind, as He has taken us from darkness to His splendid light, and asks Him to write the names of those children who came forward for Baptism, in the Book of Life, counting them amongst His believers, preparing them temples of the Holy Spirit and granting them growth in faith and grace and free them from the bondage of corruption, to the freedom of the glory of God's children.

The priest asks about the names of the baptized then prays saying: "We also ask the Almighty God...for your servants whose names are presented (it is preferable to mention the names (II) individually) make them worthy to win grace which they require, purify them from sins of the world and free them from bondage of corruption..."



The deacon says: "*Pray for those whose names are said so that the Lord may make them worthy of the Holy Baptism for the forgiveness of their sins*". The congregation

answers, *“Lord have mercy.”* The priest prays to ask God to make the children worthy of grace. The mother kneels down facing the East whilst carrying her child (if the person being baptized is old enough, they must kneel). Then the priest prays :

***“We also ask perseveringly...God to open their hearts and enlighten them by the light of knowledge.”***

***“For by calling Your Holy Name, all the powers of the evil adversary perish.”***

NOTES:

We kneel during these prayers to signify our contrite souls asking of the Lord to free us from the bondage of Satan, like the Phoenician woman who knelt at the feet of Jesus and asked Him to cast out the demon from her daughter (Mark 7:26).

The priest places his hand on the child’s head saying :

“In the name of the only begotten Son Jesus Christ, I prepare this body for purification...”, the deacons respond : “Amen.”

“In the name of the only begotten Son Jesus Christ, may he/she be free from all the devils...”, the deacons respond : “Amen.”

“In the name of the only begotten Son Jesus Christ, may he/she be purified from all devils...”, the deacons respond : “Amen.”

## RENOUNCING SATAN AND RECITING THE ORTHODOX CREED

### *I. RENOUNCING SATAN ...*

The mother undresses her child and holds him/her with her left arm, looking towards the West and lifts her right hand, reciting after the priest the following statements of Renouncing Satan (if the baptized is not a child, he recites the Statements personally) :

“I renounce you Satan and all your profane deeds, and all your evil followers, and all your bad debts, all your power, and all your detested worshipping, all your evil traps and your army and your dominion and the rest of your deceit. I renounce you, I renounce you, I renounce you”.

NOTES:

Undressing the child reminds us of the nakedness of Adam and Eve when they obeyed Satan and disobeyed the commandment of God, so they were put to shame before Him and hid from Him (Genesis 3:7-10) when they realized their nakedness. Such is what sin and Satan do to human beings, they strip them from all virtues and the protection of grace, and hence put them to shame before others.

Facing the West symbolizes exile and separation from God, and submission to the dominion of Satan, who was the first to be exiled and separated from God; falling from his angelic rank due to pride.

The direction of the West signifies the end, death and darkness, just as how the sun sets in the west. Also, we say about the deceased that the sun of his life has set. The ancient Egyptians built their cemeteries facing West. We notice this in the historical city of Aswan; all the temples are along the eastern banks of the River Nile, while all the tombs in the Valley of the Kings, are situated on the western bank of the River Nile. Likewise, the Pyramids at Giza, which were the once tombs of kings, is situated along the western bank of the River Nile.

The West symbolizes darkness, for once the sun sets in the west, the sky is replaced with the darkness of night.

The West symbolizes night and darkness which signify sin and evil. In the Greek language the word for evil : K a K I a, and the word for darkness : X a K I, are quite similar.

Sunset signifies darkness of sin which leads to grief, as the Psalmist said, "*Weeping may endure for a night, (weeping of repentance and remorse) but joy comes in the morning*" (Psalm 30:5). Joy, because of the acceptance of our repentance, and partaking in the Mass and Communion of the Holy Sacrament, and life in the light of Christ.

Renouncing Satan means that we are breaking the covenant with him, which is the covenant of obeying him, which he had with our first fathers. When Adam and Eve submitted to his will and obeyed his evil counsel, they disobeyed God and fell from grace, just like Satan. Hence he grabbed them to do his will. Adam and his descendants became slaves of Satan, after breaking the commandment of God, and thus fell from grace and divine comfort.

Renouncing Satan means that the person is refusing to remain under the bondage of Satan, and so refuses all his profane deeds and all his plans and deluding tricks, all his deceit, and deadly lies.

Renouncing Satan means casting him out of our lives, and cleaning the body and heart, so that the Holy Spirit can dwell in the pure body and pure heart (which had previously been contaminated by the devil), and so the body becomes a temple for the Holy Spirit.



Renouncing Satan means that we are ending all relations with him, hence we shall not accept from him any guidance or seduction or tricks, and we do not accept Satanic deeds, or deal with such people, such as clairvoyance, magicians, and so on.

The priest breathes three times on the child, and orders the profane spirit to come out from this child's life, by the order and power of the Holy Spirit. The mother or guardian father should take special notice of this, in order that they may not allow Satan to enter the child's life or have any share with the child in any way.

## 2. *CONFESSING CHRIST AND RECITING THE ORTHODOX CREED...*

The mother looks towards the East with her child on her left arm, and raises her right hand to repeat after the priest:

***“I confess to you O Christ my God and to all Your redeeming laws and enlivening service and Your life giving works.***

***I believe in one God the Father the Almighty, and His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ and the Life-Giving Holy Spirit, and the resurrection of the body, and the One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church, Amen”.***

The priest then asks her three times : “*Do you believe on behalf of this child?*” And three times she responds, “*I believe.*”

## NOTES:

Facing the East signifies new birth, as the day starts by the rising of the sun in the East, and with sunrise a new day begins.

**Facing the East signifies light**, “For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

As life and light are strongly related, the East became a symbol of life and we encounter this relation in the words of the Psalmist : “*For with You is the fountain of life; In your light we see light*” (Psalm 36:9), and, “*Christ is life and the dayspring from on high*” (Luke 7:78), and to enlighten those sitting in darkness, He visited us and redeemed us from sin. “*The people who sat in darkness saw a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, light has dawned*” (Matthew 4:16).

The one who leaves the direction of the West and faces the East proves that he hates and renounces sin and its darkness, yearns for holiness and light which are granted in Baptism, a new

pure life renewed day by day according to the image of his Creator.

He who faces the East proves that he seeks the first heavenly life, as the first paradise was planted by God, a garden eastward in Eden (Genesis 2:8).

**Christ is the light that shone on us.** “But to you who fear My Name the Son of righteousness shall arise” (**Malachi 4:2**).

The Wiseman saw the star of Christ in the East at His birth: “*We have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him*” (Matthew 2:2).

**Isaiah said:** “Glorify the Lord in the dawning light” (**Isaiah 24:15**), “And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East” (**Ezekiel 43:2**).

When the mother or the guardian father says, “*I believe for this child*”, they mean they believe in the grace that is granted to the child in the Sacrament of Baptism, which is the grace of sonship to God and the spiritual preparation for the Kingdom of God. This also means that they undertake to teach the child the principles of faith, church tradition and dogmas, as if engraving on stone.

### The raising of the hand and the Covenant with the Lord Christ

When the baptized or the child’s parent faces the East and raises their right hand, repeating the words of the covenant with Christ, they are praying for God’s help to fulfill this holy covenant.

#### NOTES:

Some people say, when the mother turns from the West to the East, she must change her child from her left arm to her right arm, hence this means that she will raise her left hand during the confession for Christ and the reciting of the Orthodox Creed. I believe this is not correct that she raise her right hand while renouncing Satan, and her left hand while confessing Christ. The Baptismal Rites does not imply this, and therefore, I believe the correct position is for the child to remain on the mother’s left arm in both cases, and thus her right hand is raised in both cases.

Raising the hand has various implications. We shall mention a few :

When the person requiring Baptism raises the right hand while looking towards the West and renouncing Satan, they must open the palm of their hand as if avoiding Satan as an enemy and destroyer.

When the person requiring Baptism raises their right hand while looking towards the East and

reciting the Orthodox Creed, they undertakes before God to keep what is said, and hence the raising of the hand signifies the undertaking of an oath, just as in court and oath is taken to indicate the seriousness of what the speaker says and the necessity of commitment to this undertaking.

After the Rite of renouncing Satan and the confession of Christ is completed, the deacon says :

“From God we ask for the blessing of Baptism for the child.”

“From God we ask for the baptized to complete his life in rejecting Satan and his evil thoughts and destructive counseling.”

“From God we ask God’s providence for the baptized for his struggle as a servant of Christ, keeping His commandments and practicing His will, as he lives truly according to the Gospel of Christ.”

“From God we ask providence for the mother or guardian father to accomplish their duty in bringing up the child in the fear of God, and warning them to follow in God’s path throughout their life.”

### 3. *OTHER PRAYERS*

The priest prays asking God to : “Establish the obedience of your servants ... give them the power to abandon their past sins, reinforce their faith so nothing will separate them from You. Prepare them on the foundation of Your Apostolic faith, call them to Your pure light. Make them worthy of Your great grace...”.

They kneel down and the priest prays for them, placing the Cross on their heads saying : “Enlighten their understanding by the light of knowledge, cast away every magic, seduction and evil deed, and may they deserve the intimacy of the new Baptism and the incorruptible garment and the forgiveness of sins, as You prepare them to be a temple for Your Holy Spirit”.

NOTES:

Kneeling for the second time may mean a thanksgiving bow for the grace of freedom from the dominion of Satan and sin, and the acceptance of the soul in the Church Community, just as the leper did when he was healed from his leprosy which denoted his sin, “*He returned and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks*” (Luke 17:15,16).

The priest takes the holy oil (Ghaliloun) and anoints the baptized on their heart, back and arms with the sign of the Cross saying : “*I anoint you (the baptized Name) by the ointment of joy, opposing all the deeds of the adversary to implant you in the pleasant olive tree, in the One Holy Universal, and Apostolic Church of God*”.

NOTES:

We notice there are three kinds of oil used in Baptism :

Simple oil 2. Ghaliloun Oil 3. Myron

Simple Oil: pure olive oil, most probably the oil upon which the Apocalypse Vigil of Easter Saturday was prayed. It helps the Baptized to accept the Word of God and understand the Gospel, and simply accept faith.

Ghaliloun Oil: called an ointment of joy, which helps the soul to rejoice in the Word of God, the acceptance of faith and entry to the Church Community.

Myron Oil: is the Seal of the Holy Spirit, and it is with this oil that the child is anointed after Baptism, on the body; the senses, joints and heart. All the body's organs are sanctified, and hence the body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. The anointing of the Myron are like a royal seal, signifying that this body is a possession of the True King and Lord Jesus Christ. The devil cannot approach it to dwell in it or possess it, as he has no dominion over it. It is possessed by the Lord Jesus and sealed by His Seal, that is, the sign of the Cross.

The priest prays the prayer of the laying of hands on the catechumens (coming for Baptism) after anointing them with the Ghaliloun saying : *“Search the hearts of Your servants who came to the intimacy of Your grace, and if the evil of Satan is hidden in them, declare it, cast it out from the souls and bodies of Your servants, renew their lives so they may wear the garments of salvation and the weapons of undefeated faith, to become Your flock and sons of Your heavenly shelter and heirs of Your incorruptible eternal Kingdom of Christ.”*

Then the priest prays : *“Save Your creation from the bondage of the enemy. Accept them in Your Kingdom. Open their hearts to shine by the light of the Gospel of Your Kingdom, and may their lives be accompanied by the angels of light to save them from every conspiracy and every arrow that flies by day and the pestilence in darkness and the terror by night, and cast away from them all intrigues of the profane souls. The wicked soul that worries their hearts, cast it away, make them sleep in Your Holy flock of Your Christ, pure members in the Apostolic Church, pure vessels, blameless souls and children of the light and heirs of the Kingdom. Through Jesus Christ...”*

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## **THIRD**

# **SANCTIFICATION OF THE BAPTISMAL WATER**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is called The Liturgy of Baptism, and is similar to the Liturgy of Eucharist. It includes the Thanksgiving Prayer, readings from the Pauline and Catholic Epistles, the Book of Acts, from the Psalms and Gospels. Then the Litanies are said, followed by an inaudible prayer said by the priest while kneeling before the Baptismal Font. The prayer is very moving and spiritual : *“Send Your power from on High and help me to perform the service of this great heavenly Sacrament, and may Christ be imaged in those granted the anointment of the new Baptism from me. Build them on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets that they may never perish. Implant within them truth in Your One Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church to progress in worshipping You ...”*

The prayers continue similar to the rites of the Liturgy of Eucharist, with the priest, deacon and congregation, until such a time when the priest pours the Holy Myron in the Baptismal Font accompanied by three signs of the cross. This is the moment of the dwelling of the Holy Spirit and the sanctification of the Baptismal water. Psalm 150 is then chanted while the priest baptizes the child. Baptism here replaces the Communion in the Rite of the Eucharist.

Sanctification of the Baptismal water, through prayers, is done to prepare for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and pouring the Myron oil into the water causes the water to become living water, capable by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to grant new birth to the soul and body, and become effective in the salvation of the baptized, enabling them to walk along the path of salvation, and hence enter and see the Kingdom of God. It also gives the baptized the right to become a child of God and the Church, having the right to partake of all the other Sacraments, such as Repentance, Communion, Matrimony and Priesthood.

St. Cyril the Great resembled the Baptismal water at the moment of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to a bowl with water which is placed on the fire so it gains heat. Likewise, the Baptismal water gains the power and reflection of the Holy Spirit, to be born of God and the Church as spiritual children.

St. John the Baptist says, *“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”* (Matthew 3:11). Sanctification of the water is accomplished through the prayer of the gathered church (priest, deacons, congregation), the reading of the Word of God, the signs of the Cross, and finally by the pouring of the Myron into the Baptismal water so that the Holy Spirit dwells on the water grants the baptized person a new nature. *“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters, so God created all the creatures, the light, the ferment the earth, the seas, sun, moon, grass herbs, trees, animals, birds and concluded by creating man on His image and likeness. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good”* (Genesis 1).

In Baptism, man is void of any virtue, and his soul is empty because of the original sin, so the Spirit of God hovers over the Baptismal font in the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness of truth; just as the first creation was from water and spirit, so also the new creation is from water and spirit, the Baptismal water upon which dwells, the Holy Spirit.

## THE RITE OF THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE BAPTISMAL WATER

The baptismal font is filled the clean water. Then the following steps and prayers take place :

1. The priest takes the simple oil or Apocalypse oil, and pours it into the Baptismal water three times with the sign of the Cross, and with every sign of the cross, the deacons say, “*Amen*”.
  2. He prays inaudibly or quietly : “Call Your servants to the pure light, make them worthy of this great grace of the holy Baptism, fill them with the power of Your Holy Spirit...”.
  3. Then after bestowing peace, he prays the Thanksgiving Prayer.
  4. He places five spoonfuls of incense in the censer together with three signs of the cross, then prays the mystery of the Pauline incense, “*O God the Great and Eternal*”.
  5. One of the deacons read the Pauline epistle to Titus (2:11-38) which talks about the difference in attitude of a person before Baptism, in ungodliness and worldly lusts, and after Baptism, living righteously in love and peace with all people. He calls Baptism, “*The regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*” (3:5).
  6. The priest prays the second Pauline mystery, “*O God of knowledge, giver of wisdom...*”, asking God to grant us a mind free of wandering, and a clear understanding that we may learn and understand the teachings of St. Paul, so that we may emulate him in deed, struggle and in faith and receive the glorious imperishable crown.
- Then he prays the Catholicon mystery, asking God to help him and his people to walk in the steps of the apostles, and to imitate and share in their struggle for God’s sake, in order to spread the faith and proclaim the good news of the unsearchable riches of God’s mercy, and to bless this vine which His right hand has planted through His holy apostles teachings, preaching and epistles.
7. Meanwhile one of the deacons reads the Catholicon from the First Epistle of St. John (5:5-14), which speaks about overcoming the world by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and about the three witnesses : the spirit, water and blood, and all these are present in Baptism. Baptism is founded on the Blood of Christ and the atonement of the Cross, the font is filled with water, and by prayer the Holy Spirit dwells upon it. Hence, the presence of all three - the Spirit, the water and the blood - causes Baptism to be correct and effective.
  8. The priest prays the Praxis (Acts) mystery, asking God to accept from him this sacrifice of incense, and send down upon him and His congregation in return His abundant mercy, making them pure from all sin, and making them worthy to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. One of the deacons read the Praxis from the Book of Acts (8:26-40), which mentions the incident of the Ethiopian eunuch, who was baptized after he proclaimed the true faith in Jesus Christ saying: “*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*” (Acts 8:38), and so St. Philip baptized him by immersion in the nearby river, and then they came up out of the water, just as the Lord Jesus on His baptism, “*Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water*” (Matthew 3:16).
  9. The Trisagon is sung and the priest says the Prayer for the Gospel with its relevant responses.

10. A deacon then reads Psalm 31 (1,2), blessing those whose sins are forgiven and transgression is covered by Baptism. Then the gospel is read from St. John (3:1-21) which narrates the meeting of Nicodemus with the Lord Jesus, and the speech of Christ about the importance of Baptism and His definite assurance of its necessity for salvation and entering the Kingdom of God, saying: *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again (from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God”* (John 3:3), and, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven”* (John 3:5), *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6), and, *“We know that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God”* (1 Corinthians 15:5), but the spiritual person born of the Holy Spirit.

11. During the Gospel reading, the priest prays the mystery of the Gospel : *“O You, who are long suffering, abundant in mercy and true, receive our prayers...”*.

12. The priest then prays the Seven Minor Litanies, as in the Laqqan Prayer, and the Sacrament of Anointing the Sick, and others. These are :

The Litany of the Sick

The Litany of Travelers

The Litany of the air of heaven, or fruits, according to the season. In the period between 12 Baounah to 9 Baba, the Litany of water is said as it is the flood season. In the period from 10 Baba to 10 Tubah, the Litany of plants is said as it is the season of plantation. In the period from 11 Tubah (Epiphany) to 11 Baounah, the Litany of air and fruits is said, as during this time plants bear fruits and need adequate environment so it flourishes. Then comes the harvest.

The King’s Litany

The Litany of the Deceased

The Litany of Oblations

The Catechumens Litany where the priest asks God to have mercy on them and let His Word abide in their hearts, and make them worthy of the New Birth (Baptism) for the forgiveness of sins, and preparedness for them to become holy temples for His Holy Spirit. These litanies are prayed by the priest raising incense.

13. The priest prays a short prayer saying : *“Send Your holy power to precede the Baptism and prepare Your servants to receive this pure Baptism for the remission of their sins.”*

14. The priest prays for the laying on of hands, that is, he places his hands on the head of the baptized saying, *“Dwell upon them Lord, walk with them and help them in every good deed”*.

15. The priest kneels humbly before the font, resembling the River Jordan. Then the priest

prays saying : “Cleanse my soul and body’s profanity, purify me completely. Send Your power from on high and strengthen me to perform the service of this great heavenly sacrament. May Christ be formed in them, who are being granted the seal of new birth, from me a sinner”, as if saying with St. Paul : “My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you” (Galatians 4:19), “build them on the foundation of the apostles and prophets”, as if saying with St. Paul, “Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20).

16. The priest then prays the three Major Litanies.

17. The attendants pray the Orthodox Creed.

18. The priest takes the Holy Ghaliloun oil, pours some of it into the Baptismal font three times with the sign of the Cross to sanctify the water.

19. The priest prays, “We ask You our King for Your servants, sanctify them and strengthen them so through this water and oil You abolish all the power of the adversary and wicked spirits, prevent them from perishing...”.

20. He breathes three times in the water while praying, “Sanctify this water and this oil to cause new birth, amen. Eternal life, amen. An incorruptible garment, amen.”

21. He makes the sign of the cross on the water three times saying, “O God the Pantocrator, touch this water so by it and by Your Holy Spirit You may renew the birth of Your servants.”

22. The congregation chants the Aspasmos, “Hail to John the forerunner ... Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, Saint Mary”, then the Liturgy of Baptism Starts.

## THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM

1. The priest, while signing the water, says : “*The Lord be with you all*” And the congregation responds, “*And with your spirit*”.

The priest says : “*Lift up your hearts*”. And the congregation responds, “*They are with the Lord*”.

The priest says : “Let us give thanks to the Lord” And the congregation responds, “It is right and worthy”.

The priest continues : “We lifted our eyes to You Lord ... You split the springs and valleys ... You ordered the rock to overflow water for your people...”

These three sections are prayed by the priest, following the example of the three prayers which follow the bestowal of peace with the sign of the cross : “*The Lord be with you all*”, in the Liturgy of Eucharist.

2. the priest says “Agios” three times with three signs of the Cross in the water, followed



by “Holy, Holy, Holy, truly O Lord You are Holy ... grant the water the grace of the Jordan, the power and heavenly comfort. Upon the dwelling of Your Holy Spirit, grant it the blessing of the Jordan, amen ... give it power to become life-giving water, amen..”.

3. He makes the sign of the cross three times on the water saying, “Your servants who offered their children to You, receive them ... Keep them in the Orthodox Faith all the days of their lives, grant them imperishable love...” The congregation responds, “Our Father who art in Heaven...”, followed by the priest saying the three absolutions.

4. The priest takes the holy Myron oil and pours a little into the Baptismal water three times, each time with the sign of the Cross to sanctify the water. He does this while saying the three known signs similar to those of the Offering. The deacons respond each time with “*Amen*”. Here the Holy Spirit dwells upon the Baptismal water, and is capable of granting new birth to the baptized person and to purify them from their sins.

5. The priest says the following verses from the Psalms (28: 2,3; 31: 5; 65:11; 50:7,9,10; 132:13), while moving the water with the Cross. The deacons respond after every sentence with, “*Alleluia*”, followed by, “*Glory be to God...*”.

#### NOTES:

The priest stirs the water with the Cross while reciting the Psalms, resembling the angel who was stirring the water of the pool of Bethesda to gain power of healing, “*For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water, then whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had*” (John 5:4).

**6. The congregation sings the Communion hymn, Psalm 150, during the Baptism.**

## FOURTH

### BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

- 1. The deacon or guardian takes the naked child from the West and brings them to the baptismal Font to the left of the priest and gives the child to him.**
- 2. The priest holds the child from under the arms while facing the baby is towards the West.**
3. He gradually dips the child into the water, until the child is completely immersed, while saying: “*I baptize you ... (if the baby’s does not have a Christian name, the priest must give them a name from the Holy Bible, or a saint’s name) ... in the name of the Father...*”, and this is the first immersion.

4. He lifts the child from the water and breathes into them, then immerses the child again saying: *“And the Son...”*, this is the second immersion.
5. Then he lifts the child from the water and breathes into them again, then immerses the child for the third time in the water while saying: *“And the Holy Spirit”*, and this is the third immersion. Then he lifts the child from the water and breathes into them for the third time.
6. **The priest lifts the child by his hands above the Baptismal font with his face downwards so that any water in the baby’s mouth or nose may come out. If the child delays in breathing, the priest may shake them gently, and breathe in their face to regain normal breathing.**

NOTES:

1. We see the priest receiving the child from the left, and then after baptism giving the child to the mother from the right side. This action signifies that Baptism transforms us from the side of rejection, which is darkness, to the side of acceptance, which is the light. The Syrian Fraction mentions, *“Instead of the sin permeating the world, the Son died on the Cross and restored us from the left to the right providence”*.

2. The three immersions in Baptism is in the name of the Holy Trinity : The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the Lord Jesus taught His saintly disciples, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”* (Matthew 28:19,20).

As Baptism is death with Christ and resurrection with Him, through it the believer is granted the blessings of salvation that is accomplished by the death of Christ on the Cross, and as Christ died and was buried for three days, so also immersion of the baptized occurs three times in the Baptismal water, then the child immerses from the Baptismal font as Christ the Lord came out of the tomb. *“Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead”* (Colossians 2:12).

3. **The priest must be careful with the Baptismal water during Baptism, when taking the child from the Baptismal Font, and handing them to the mother, so that no water spills out from the font and is trodden by feet.**
4. **The mother must take care of the water that is used to wash the towel the baby is wrapped in after baptism, and the baptism clothes the child wears following baptism, as well as the water that is used to bath the baby after the baptism. The water should be disposed of in a spring or well, so that it not be trodden on, for the water contains the holy Myron oil.**
5. **When both male and female children are presented for baptism, the male child is baptized first, to symbolize man being the head of the woman.**

## THE RITE FOR DISCHARGING THE BAPTISMAL WATER

If the priest wants to discharge the Baptismal water after Baptism, he washes his hands with some water to clear what clings to them from the Myron oil, then washes around the Baptismal font what was sprinkled from the Baptismal water that contained some Myron, and pours it into the font.

Then the priest prays, “We ask and entreat Your goodness, O Philanthropic One, O Lord, to return this water to its first nature to be restored to the earth...”

Then he opens the plug below the Baptismal font so all the water trickles into the reservoir in the ground. Thus the Baptismal rite ends.

### NOTES:

- 1. It is not advisable to keep the Baptismal waters which contain the Apocalypse oil, Ghaliloun oil and Myron oil, without discharge for a long time, otherwise the water, due to the oils, may rot. It is advisable for the Liturgy of Baptism to be prayed at each Baptism and for the water to be immediately discharged after Baptism. In extreme conditions, the water must not be kept in the Baptismal font for more than three days.**
- 2. It is wrong to add new water to the Baptismal water after its sanctification, as we do not add wine to the chalice after the sanctification and transubstantiation.**
3. When building the Baptismal font, care must be given to make it deep and wide enough to contain adults of other denominations, who join our Church and are baptized, or certain persons whose baptism, for various reasons was neglected by their parents. Hence during baptism, the priest says, “*If you ... were not baptized, I now baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*”, and immerses the person three times as usual.  
If the Baptismal font is not spacious enough to contain an adult, it is possible to provide a large container big enough to make it possible to completely immerse the person according to the Baptismal Rite by immersion. Following the baptism, the container must be broken or only specified for this purpose as it is sanctified and ordained by prayers and Myron poured into it.
- 4. It is better to build a sink near the Baptismal font for the priest to wash his hands after Baptism, so he does not wash his hands in the font, and for the sink to flow into the same reservoir as the Baptismal font.**

## THE ADULT BAPTISM IS AS FOLLOWS ...

If the person to be baptized is a man, then after completion of the Rite of Renouncing Satan and recitation of the Orthodox Creed, and the Liturgy of Baptism, the attendants should leave the Baptismal room, so the baptized may undress, and go down into the Baptismal font immersed up to his neck, then the priest comes and dips his head in the Baptismal water three times saying: “*I baptize you ... in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*”.

Then the priest leaves the room, and the baptized person arises out of the Baptismal water and dries his body by the prepared towel, then wears his underwear. Then the priest comes and anoints him with the Myron oil 36 times. Then he dresses in garments appropriate for this happy occasion.

If the person to be baptized is a woman, after the priest prays the Liturgy of Baptism and performs the Rite of Renouncing Satan, the profession and Orthodox Creed, he leaves the room and asks the deaconess to assist the woman to undress, and go down into the Baptismal font immersed up to her neck. Then the priest enters and places his hand on the woman's head (preferably he should be standing behind a curtain) and immerses her in water three times while saying: "*I baptize you ... in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*". She may wear a white garment specified for this occasion with which she enters into the Baptismal font. Then the priest leaves the room, and the woman arises from the Baptismal font and dries her body with the prepared towel, and clothes herself appropriately for this occasion. The priest comes and anoints her with the holy Myron oil on her external members only, such as on her head, her senses; ears, eyes, nostrils, mouth and both wrists. Thus the Sacrament of Holy Chrism is performed.

## **THE BAPTISM OF BLOOD**

During the days of persecution, many pagans believed in Christ from simply being touched by witnessing the strong faith of the Christians who were martyred for Christ. As a result, these pagans welcomed martyrdom for Christ, even though they had previously not been baptized.

In this situation, the blood which they shed is recognized, and considered a "Baptism of Blood". Hence, they receive the crown of martyrdom and eternal life. In essence, Baptism is dying with Christ, and these martyrs shed their blood honorably for and with Christ.

Many saints spoke about the "Baptism of Blood". St Cyril of Jerusalem said, "Whoever does not accept Baptism has no salvation, except the martyrs, who without the Baptism of water are granted salvation by the Baptism of Blood". When our Savior was crucified on the Cross, He was wounded by a spear in His side, and water and blood came forth. Likewise, during times of peace, baptism is carried out through water, and during times of persecution, by blood. The Savior Himself called martyrdom by blood and Baptism by saying: "*Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*" (Matthew 20:22).

St. Cyril the Great said: "Some received salvation and eternal life without any need for signs from the water, as they were baptized by blood".

## **THE BAPTISM OF A DYING PERSON**

If a child got sick before their baptism and their parents were frightened the child may die, the child must be baptized even if they are a day old. In this case another person, other than the mother, must take the child to the Church for baptism, and then the priest must anoint the child with the Myron. The Rites mention (in the third chapter) : “If the newly born was in fear of death before the mother is purified from blood, someone else may take the child to be baptized, as the delivering woman must stay away from Church forty days if she delivered a male child and eighty days if she delivered a female child.”

In the occasion of baptizing a dying child, it is not possible to be restricted with all the conditions of Baptism, so the child may be baptized by wiping the whole body by water instead of immersion, and if time is limited, the rite of fasting for a priest before baptism may not occur.

**If the child dies, their soul will go to paradise as a pure angel, but if the child lives, the baptism must not be repeated, as it is binding. Baptism only takes place once.**