

THE SACRAMENT OF CHRISM

Now newly baptised, the child will be chrismated with Holy Myrrh on the same parts of the body where he was earlier anointed with oil. Holy Chrism is the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which brands all baptised persons with a seal which sets them apart as inalienable possessions of Christ. That is, the Holy Spirit embraces them and envelopes them like a shield and an armour of faith to enable them to live the faith into which they have just been baptised. This is why Chrismation is also known as the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit.

The Tonsure

Following the Baptism and Chrism, the priest will tonsure the child by cutting some of his hair crosswise to signify: that Christ will be the head of the child from now on, that he will reject other allegiances, the first sacrifice from his body to God.

The Vesting

The priest now blesses the child and places a white garment of righteousness on him. The child will leave to be dressed and the priest will read additional prayers at this time. The child will return fully dressed and undergoes the ablution or symbolic washing away of the Myrrh and then receives the blessing of Christ. The Godparent will then take the child's baptismal candle and will then be lead three times around the font. This is an act of rejoicing with the angles in heaven at the return of a lost sheep, and with the other Christians present at the addition of one more member to the flock of Christ.

The Readings

The readings follow from the Epistle of Paul to the Romans (6:3-11) where Paul makes the comparison between the immersion and emersion with the burial and resurrection of Christ and from the Gospel according to St. Matthew (28:16-20) where the Divine Institution of Baptism was established by our Lord.

Holy Communion

The whole ceremony ends with the partaking of Holy Communion by the child, his first taste of the Body and Blood of the Lord, so that just as nature nourishes the newborn infant physically with milk, likewise the Grace offers to it Holy Communion as spiritual food as so as he is born through baptism. Finally the priest places a blessed gold cross around the neck of the child. The child will then be presented to the parents and the celebration can begin.

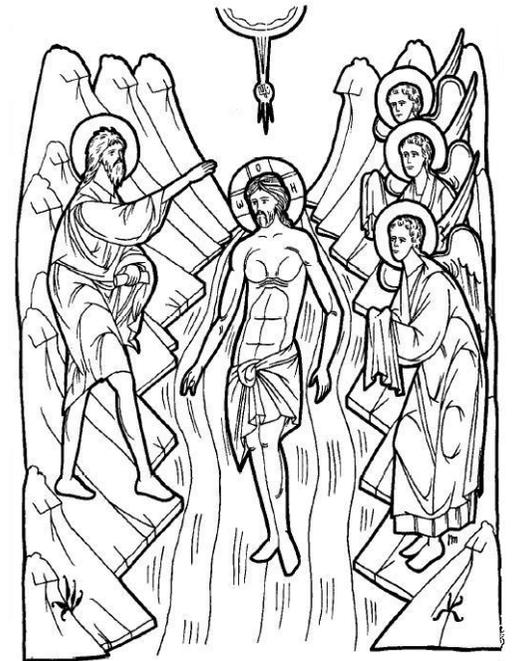
As many as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia.

- Service of Baptism

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HOLY BAPTISM



THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

The institution of the sacrament came after our Lord's Resurrection as a farewell commandment and admonition, so to speak, just before His Ascension to heaven, with these words: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all things I have commanded you." (Matt 28:19-20)

Baptism is the gateway into the Christian Church; the saving action of God who through water and the Spirit recreates His creation; the initial sacrament through which he who is immersed in water three times in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is cleansed from all sin and regenerated spiritually. As our Lord himself stated: "...no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit." (John 3:5)

The Renunciation and the Acceptance

The child will be held by Godparent or Godparents as he stands in the narthex of the church facing east (towards the altar). The priest, standing in front of them, blows three times into the child's face in the form of the Cross to drive away any evil spirits and adverse power and blesses him each time saying "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen". He then places his hands on the child's head, which symbolised the taking of possession of the candidate in the name of the Holy Trinity and recites a prayer addressed to the Triune God:

"In Your name, O God of truth, I lay my hand on Your servant who has been found worthy to seek salvation in Your Holy Name and protection under the shelter of Your wings. Banish from him the old error, fill him with faith and hope in You, so that he might know that You are the only true God. Grant him the ability to live in accordance with Your commandments."

The Exorcisms

The prayer is followed by three exorcisms and yet another prayer, the prayer of acceptance, at the end of which the priest, in summary of all that was said before, asks God to drive out and banish from the child any and every evil and impure spirit which may be hiding and lurking in his heart and make him a reason-endowed sheep in the holy flock of Christ, an honourable member of the Church, child and heir of the kingdom.

The child and Godparent will then be asked to face west and renounce Satan and all his works, and all his worship and all his angels, and all his pride in a question and answer form three times, and then asked to spit on Satan. Facing west signifies the west, a place of natural darkness, where the Devil, who is darkness himself, makes his abode.

The Confession of Faith

Then the child and Godparent will face east again and affirmatively answer the priest who will ask them (three times) if they have pledged their allegiance to Christ.

THE SERVICE OF BAPTISM

The Blessing of the Water

Now that the child is ready, they will enter the Church and the priest will ask the Holy Spirit to come down and bless and consecrate the water in the font and make it an instrument of salvation.

The Blessing of the Oil and Anointing

Once the blessing of the water is complete, the Godparent will offer a small bottle of olive oil over which a prayer for the banishment of evil is read to make it "an anointing of incorruption, a weapon of justice, a renewal of soul and body, a defence against every influence of the Devil and a release from evil to all those who are anointed with it, or partake of it." Some of this oil is then poured crosswise three times on the water in the font in order to render the consecration of the water complete. The child (now naked) will be anointed with the blessed oil on the forehead, nose, ears, mouth, chest, legs, feet, hands and back. The Godparent will then anoint the child, to prepare him, just as an athlete prepares, to battle the demon whom he has just renounced and to slip away from the grip of sin.

The Baptism

Now the child will be immersed in the font three times with prayers, and then handed to the Godparent who is waiting for him with a white sheet.