

PART TWO

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION



HIS GRACE BISHOP METTAOUS,
Abbott of El'Syrian Monastery

The Sacrament of Myron, also known as the Holy Anointment, or the Sacrament of Confirmation, is a holy Sacrament, with which we receive the seal of the Holy Spirit. The word 'Myron' is a Greek word which means 'ointment' or 'fragrant perfume'.

The baptised person receives it immediately after Baptism, so as to become a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit aids him to grow in his spiritual life. Although it is received directly after Baptism, it is an independent Sacrament and the priests have to be very careful to grant it accurately to the baptised, anointing them with 36 crosses.

The Lord Jesus instituted it when He said: ***“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom these believing in Him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified”*** (John 7:37-39).

The Baptised is anointed with 36 signs on his joints and senses so that the Holy Spirit can dwell within them. His body and soul becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this anointment, God grants the grace of confirmation to the baptised as well as the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Anointing the external organs by the Myron oil denotes anointing the power of the internal soul and its spiritual senses by the power of God to fight the hosts of evil and its power. This is because the Myron is the most powerful weapon against the devil and the best protection against sin and its seduction.

Our fathers the apostles granted this Sacrament by the laying of their hands after Baptism, as we read in the Book of Acts when St. Peter and St. John laid hands on the people of Samaria who were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, and so received the Holy Spirit, (Acts 9:2-6).

As the laying of hands for the dwelling of the Holy Spirit is a specific rite of the fathers the Apostles and their successors the Bishops, and as the regions of mission increased, consequently the number of believers and those who entered faith increased. It was not possible for the Apostles to wander through all the countries and cities to lay hands on the baptised, so they established anointment by Myron as an alternative for the laying on of the hands for the Holy Spirit's indwelling.

The first who made the Myron were the fathers the Apostles as they kept certain fragrant oils which were on the body of the Lord Jesus during His burial, and they added the spices which were brought by the women who prepared them to anoint Jesus, but Christ had risen.

They melted all these spices in pure olive oil, prayed on it in the Upper Room in Zion and made it a holy ointment to grant the gift of the Holy Spirit to the baptised. It is also used in the Sanctification of Baptismal water, ordination of Churches, and church altars and vessels. They decided that their successors the Bishops, must renew the making of the Myron whenever it is close to finishing, by incorporating the original oil with the new. When St. Mark went to Alexandria, he took with him some of the Myron oil made by the fathers the Apostles. He used it in the Sacrament of Chrism, as well as the Patriarchs who succeeded him. This continued until the era of Pope Athanasius the

Apostolic - the 20th Patriarch, who then decided to remake the Myron in Alexandria.

Hence, he prepared all of the needed perfumes and spices from which God ordered Moses to make the Holy ointment as mentioned in the Book of Exodus (Chapter 30), with pure olive oil. Then the sanctification of the Myron was fulfilled in Alexandria, and Pope Athanasius was entrusted with the holy oil (leaven), which contained spices which touched the Lord's body whilst in the tomb, as well as the original oil which had been prepared by the Apostles and brought to Egypt by St. Mark. He distributed the oil to the churches abroad : to the See of Rome, Antioch and Constantinople, together with a document of its authenticity, and the patriarchs rejoiced in receiving it.

The Myron was made 29 times in the Coptic Orthodox Church.

What is joyous and comforting, is that whoever is baptised, is anointed by the Myron which contains the spices which were laid on the body of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Myron oil consists of about 30 kinds of spices and perfumes which have been added to pure olive oil and simmered four times. The filtered oil is then poured into a large container and after the Liturgy of the Sanctification of the Myron, the Patriarch places the old leaven in the Myron recently made, whilst saying certain prayers.

The Ghaliloun oil comprises the remaining fibres of the filtered oil after it having been simmered four times. It is then sanctified by a special Mass, which follows the Myron Mass.

The mixture of the Myron and the Ghaliloun oil, is composed of about 30 kinds of spices, some of which are: myrrh, aloes, frankincense, cinnamon, cassia, sweet-swelling cane, thistle, balsam and ambergris. The last substance added into the mixture is the fragrant musk.

According to the Apostolic Canons, the priest baptises the child in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and anoints them with the Holy Myron. This is to take place only after renouncing Satan and professing Christ has been done.

Regarding the Sacrament of Myron, some of our Church fathers said :

- ✠ “Whoever is baptised should be anointed by Myron, to become the anointed for God, and so is granted the grace of the Holy Spirit” (St. Cyprianus)
- ✠ “We also, after getting out of the Baptismal Font are granted the anointment officially as was Christ, I mean the Holy Spirit” (St. Kyrillos of Jerusalem)
- ✠ “After going out of the Baptismal water, we are anointed by Holy Oil according to old tradition. The anointment is accomplished externally on our bodies so that we may bear spiritual fruits” (St. Tertullian)
- ✠ “In the Sacrament of Baptism the body is cleansed, so that the soul may be purified, and in the Sacrament of Anointment the body is anointed so that the soul may be sanctified” (St. Tertullian)

THE RITE OF ANOINTMENT BY HOLY MYRON

1. After baptising the child, the mother receives him on the right side of the priest in a large clean towel, and wipes his body from water.
2. After Baptism, the priest anoints the baptised according to age, males first then females.
3. If available, another priest may carry out the Sacrament of Anointment on the baptised, as soon as they come out of the Baptismal Font and their bodies are wiped and dried. After the mother dries her child, she places him on the prepared table near the Baptismal Font, so that the priest can anoint the child by the Myron with 36 crosses, on all the joints and senses.

The Myron Rite takes place as follows:

The priest holds the bottle of Holy Myron and prays saying:

“O Almighty Maker of all miracles, who is Omnipotent, whose will and power can do anything. Grant the grace of the Holy Spirit when the Holy Myron is sprinkled, to become a living seal and steadfastness to Your servants through Your Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Glory, honour, dominion and worship are due to you, together with Him, and the consubstantial Holy Spirit, now and forever Amen.”

NOTES:

This prayer is not for the blessing of the Myron oil, but for asking the Holy Spirit which dwells in the Myron, to also dwell in the baptised person, through the anointment.

THE ANOINTMENTS

The priest places his right thumb on top of the opening of the Myron bottle, and turns it downwards to wet his finger with the Myron. He then anoints the baptised as follows :

The first four anointments (eight crosses) are on the senses

✠ Firstly, the top of the head, the nostrils, the mouth, and the right ear

✠ Then, the right eye, the left eye, and finally the left ear

Whilst anointing, the priest says, *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The anointment of grace of the Holy Spirit, Amen.”*

NOTES:

1. He anoints The Head to sanctify it. The head contains the brain, where thinking takes place. It is the brain which distinguishes humankind from other creatures. A good mind is of great use and benefit to oneself and to others also. King

Solomon praises the mind saying, ***“When wisdom enters your heart and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you, understanding will keep you, to deliver from the way evil”*** (Proverbs 2: 10-12).

Also, the Lord Jesus praised the young man who answered wisely and said to him: ***“You are not far from the Kingdom of God”*** (Mark 12:34). And St. Paul our teacher prays for us saying, ***“And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”*** (Philippians 4:7).

2. The Nostrils contain the sense of smell, and it is an important sense, for if a person is not careful and alert, it is possible for impure thoughts to enter ones heart through this sense. Hence, the priest anoints it to protect it against all sin and lust.
3. The Mouth with the tongue is the most dangerous organ in a person...

† ***“If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless”*** (James 1:26).

† ***“If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body”*** (James 3:2).

† ***“The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire by hell”*** (James 3:8,6), if it is not controlled.

✠ The Psalmist prays, ***“Set a guard O Lord, over my mouth. Keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing”*** (Psalm 141:3,4)

✠ And the wise King Solomon said: ***“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles”*** (Proverbs 21:23), and, ***“Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you”*** (Proverbs 4:24. We ought to keep our tongue from sins such as swearing, insulting, lying, judging, and gossiping. Our words should always be graceful.

4. The Ears provide us with the important sense of hearing, which should also be controlled, and the anointing of the Myron is a strong weapon in control what we hear. We protect our ears from hearing such things as gossip, and other conversations which may poison our hearts with revenge and hatred. We also protect our ears from hearing certain songs which may poison our hearts with lustful thoughts.

5. The Eyes are the most important sense, through which enters more than 80% of information which may affect our hearts. If the information is holy, it sanctifies the heart, and vice versa. For this reason, we should control what we see so that we may keep ourselves pure. The tenth commandment says, ***“Do not covet”***. The Psalmist prays, ***“Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things”*** (Psalm 119:37), and, ***“Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law”*** (Psalm 119:17).

The second group of four anointments are as follows :

The priest wets his right thumb with the Myron another time and anoints,

- ✠ The heart (chest)
- ✠ The navel
- ✠ The back
- ✠ The lower back

Whilst anointing the priest prays : “*An anointment as a token for the kingdom of heaven,*” as this holy anointment makes the Holy Spirit work in us and prepares us for the inheritance of the Kingdom of heaven.

NOTES:

1. Anointing the heart is very important as it is the organ which pumps blood to all the body. A healthy heart is important for a healthy body, and its spiritual welfare is required, as the wise King Solomon advises us saying, “***Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life***” (Proverbs 4:23).
2. The Navel is the place to which was joined the umbilical cord when a person was a foetus in his mother’s womb. Through it the foetus is nourished and nurtured, and so by anointing it, the holy Myron is protecting it against Satan.
3. The Back supports the body and is the place of the spine. If the spine is infected or damaged, severe pain may occur and

even lead to paralysis. So it is important to protect it through the anointing of the Myron.

4. The Lower Back is the area of sexual lusts, and so the anointing of the Myron sanctifies it and protects it by the power of the living Cross. This area also includes the kidneys.

This group of anointments include the anointing of the heart, which must be cared for and renewed, as the Psalmist prayed, ***“Create in me a pure heart O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me”*** (Psalm 51:10), and, ***“Examine me O Lord and prove me. Try my mind and my heart”*** (Psalm 26:2).

The third group of anointments are on the six joints of the arm:

The priest wets his thumb with the holy Myron, and anoints,

- ✝ The right shoulder joint
- ✝ The right underarm
- ✝ The right elbow joint
- ✝ The inner elbow joint
- ✝ The right wrist joint
- ✝ The back of the right wrist

Whilst anointing, the priest prays, *“An anointment for the community of eternal life, Amen”*.

The fourth group of anointments are on the other six joints:

- ✠ The left shoulder joint
- ✠ The left underarm
- ✠ The left elbow joint
- ✠ The left elbow joint
- ✠ The left wrist joint
- ✠ The back of the left wrist

Whilst anointing, the priest prays, “*A holy anointment of our Lord Jesus Christ, an unperishable seal, Amen.*”

Anointing the hands is important, as they are instruments of work and contain the sense of touch. We should keep our hands pure from all things that may defile; from touching things that are impure, from partaking in ungodly deeds, from taking part in murder, stealing, and so on.

The fifth group of anointments are on the six joints of the leg:

The priest wets his thumb with the Myron and anoints,

- ✠ The right hip joint
- ✠ The right ureter (inside of the hip joint)
- ✠ The right knee joint
- ✠ The inner knee joint
- ✠ The right ankle joint
- ✠ Above the right ankle joint

The priest anoints them saying, “*Perfection of the grace of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*”

These are sensitive parts of the body, for near the inner hips lies the reproductive organs, and the church anoints this area so that the child may lead a life of purity. The sexual organs are called the holy of Holies of the body, and so keeping them pure is required. Through the anointing of the Myron, these organs are being protected from sexual immorality, which greatly angers God.

God destroyed the old world because of their profanity, through wiping them out by the flood. Likewise, He burnt the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and judged them to become an example of the fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries, ***“Those who died in the plague were twenty four thousand”*** (Numbers 25:9). For this reason, St. Paul our teacher advises every youth saying, ***“Keep yourself pure”*** (1 Timothy 5:22), for without holiness no one can see the Lord.

The sixth group of anointments are on the other six joints:

The priest wets his thumb with the Myron and anoints,

- ✙ The left hip joint
- ✙ The left ureter (inside of the hip joint)
- ✙ The left knee joint
- ✙ The inner knee joint
- ✙ The left ankle joint
- ✙ Above the left ankle joint

The priest anoints them saying, *“I anoint you (...name) by a holy anointment. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit Amen.”*

Anointing the feet is to protect them from walking in the way of sin, and from going to corrupt places. Avoiding the way of sin will enable us to live a virtuous life, and finally gain eternal life.

After finishing the anointments, the priest places his hand on the child's head, saying, *"May you be blessed by the blessings of the heavenly, and the blessings of the angels. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you in His name."*

NOTES:

We notice that the priest anoints the child's right arm, then the left, and the right leg before the left. He gives priority to the right side because it is the center of power in the human body, for example, most work is done by the right hand. Also, when he enters the altar, he must enter with his right foot first.

✠ Blessing of the Heavenly: signifies the blessings of all the heavenly hosts, whether they be saints or angels.

✠ Blessing of the Angels: signifies their care, watchfulness, assistance and intercession for the baptised person, and how they accompany us and keep us from all evil. Here we are assured of the idea of a guardian angel. As the ruler of devils appoints a demon for every born child in order to delude and seduce them, so too does the Lord appoint every person after Baptism and anointment by the Myron, an angel to watch, accompany, care and keep them. The existence of guardian angels are clearly mentioned in the Lord's words (Matthew 18:10 and Acts 12:15).

✠ Blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ: signifies His gifts and providence for each believer to live with God.

✠ In His Name: implies that the believer is blessed by the name of the Lord Jesus through which, ***“There is no name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”*** (Acts 4:12).

The Baptised person is now a Christian, having been called by the glorified name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTES:

1. The 36 anointments are on all the joints and senses of the human body, and the anointment protects them against Satanic warfares, so that the devil does not abide in this person by any means. A Christian who is possessed by a demon, is said to be ‘Myron deficient, which means that he was not anointed by the Myron as required, and so the devil was able to penetrate into his body and dwell there.
2. The child is anointed by the Myron only once in life, so we always ask the priests to take care in administering the Myron after Baptism, lest neglect may bring harm to the child. The priest anoints the new white garments of the child with three signs of the cross, then dresses the baby with the undergarment first saying, *“The garment of eternal life to enable them to enter to the Kingdom of heaven.”*

NOTES:

Wearing the new white garments after baptism has much significance:

- † ***“Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new”*** (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- † ***“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him”*** (Colossians 3:9-11).
- † ***“We were buried with Him through Baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”*** (Romans 6:4).

Hence, the new garments signify the new life granted to the baptised person, so that they may walk in holiness.

Why should be garments be white?

The colour white reminds us of three incidences - in the past, present and future:

1. It reminds us of the purity of life in the Garden of Eden before Adam sinned. And so wearing white after baptism represents the purity and holiness which Adam had before he fell. Protected by the grace of God, the baptised person does not feel nakedness or shame.

2. The baptised must live a pure and blameless life, so as not to defile this new garment, new heart and new person, that was granted in Baptism. If he does sin, he must quickly repent and receive the Holy Communion, for the precious Blood of Jesus Christ purifies us from sin.
3. It also reminds us of the eternal life, which has been prepared for the pure. In heaven the righteous souls wear white garments and serve God day and night in His temple: ***‘They washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb’*** (Revelation 7).

The priest then takes the crown and prays on it saying, *“Bless these crowns which we prepared for Your servant who is united with You through the holy Baptism, may they be crowns of glory and exaltation.”* He then places the crown on the baptised person’s head, praying, *“O Lord, place on Your servant this crown from heaven, Amen. Crowns of glory, Amen.”*

NOTES:

1. Placing crowns on the heads of the baptised, is an old rite mentioned in some of the sayings of the church fathers. St. Ephram the Syrian (373 AD) addressed the baptised person saying: *“Your garments and crowns shine and the glory of Jesus Christ protected you.”* The Church continued this practice until the seventeenth century, but we do not know the reason why it was then neglected.

2. This rite should be practiced again, for using crowns on the baptised has many great spiritual meanings; such as denoting victory granted to the baptised in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the new freedom from the bondage of the devil, his evil deeds, and from the imprisonment of Hades and its bonds. Crowns are regal, hence denoting royalty and glory for the baptised who has become a child of God, a king enthroned, a priest, and a prophet. The baptised become like kings over themselves; controlling their tendencies and lusts, and not being enslaved by the devil, sin or lusts. They become like priests; presenting their bodies and souls as a living, holy sacrifice, worshipping, praying, fasting and serving. And they become like prophets; as the Holy Spirit whom they received in the Sacrament of Confirmation grants them the spirit of prophecy, wisdom, understanding, counselling and knowledge (Isaiah 11:2).
3. The baptismal crowns could be made of metal, similar to the wedding crowns used in the Rite of Matrimony. The crown may also be made of roses, or material adorned by crosses.

The Church has not stopped this rite officially, but out of neglect, it is not practiced. It is important, however, that we return to this original Rite, which is rich in its spiritual meanings.

The priest then ties a red ribbon (girdle) around the waist of the baptised. 'Girdle' is a Syrian word meaning 'belt'. Just as when a soldier ties a girdle about his waist before going into battle, so too, by tying this ribbon around the baptised, it signifies that he has now become a soldier of Christ, ready to attack any evil encounter.

The Christian must strive to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ by enduring hardships, in order to attain crowns of glory (2 Timothy 2:3-5).

The girdle is red, symbolising the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His Blood for us, and upon which the Baptism, Myron and all other Sacraments were founded (Hebrews 12:4).

After donning the crown and tying the girdle, the priest chants the Verses of the Cymbals, and the congregation responds with, ***“Worthy are you!”*** three times.

Then the congregation sings the hymn, *“Non perishable crowns placed by the Lord, on the baptised who are of Christ.”*

The priest then prays for the laying on of hands: *“Make them worthy of the Communion of the Holy Body and Precious Blood.”* The prayer of blessing then follows: *“Accomplish them in Your wisdom, show them Your fear, bring them up in spiritual stature, grant them the knowledge of truth and keep them in the faith, Amen.”*

A Commandment Read for the Parents and Godparents of the Baptised Person

It is read for parents or Godparents of the baptised person, and is said either after wearing the crowns, or after they receive Holy Communion. It can also be said after the procession, or before untying the girdle, and this is when it seems to happen these days. Although it must be mentioned that the procession for the baptised is not referenced in the Rite. The

only thing mentioned is the chanting of the Verses of the Cymbals followed by the “Worthy” hymn.

However, the procession after Baptism has a nice spiritual meaning. Baptism denotes the death of the Lord Christ and His burial in the tomb for three days (signified by the three immersions during baptism), followed by Christ's Resurrection and preaching taking place in all the world. And this is the significance of the procession. We celebrate the resurrection of Christ during the fifty joyous days by the procession which takes places around the church, which symbolises the Apostles preaching Christ and His resurrection throughout the whole world.

Likewise, for the baptised, who has been buried with Christ and arisen with Him, we celebrate by a procession because he has now become a witness of Christ and shares in the joy of His resurrection. Our teacher St. Paul says: ***“Buried with Him in Baptism in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God”*** (Colossians 2:12).

Baptism is death, and burial, followed by resurrection and joy. The reading of the Commandment is long and spiritual in order to urge the baptised child's parents or guardians to care for them, and bring them up as Christians. We shall mention parts of the Commandment...

“...Strive to teach them the reading of the holy Bible, and to be committed to Church life, to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as during the Holy Lent and other church fasts. Teach them to abide by the Apostolic instructions and teachings. Implant in them the virtues of righteousness and

praise, purity and obedience, holiness, love, mercy, truthfulness and justice. Teach them the acceptable way of God; build them up on the foundation of goodness. Rebuke them from dealing with evil people. Feed them on spiritualities, and teach them the fear of God, and do not disregard their education”.

NOTES:

‘Godfather/mother’ is a Syrian word meaning ‘guardian’, ‘caretaker’ or custodian. They are spiritually responsible before the church for bringing up the baptised child in a spiritual way, full of virtues of holiness, Christian discipline, and strong in the Orthodox faith. The Church puts also certain conditions for Godparents :

- ✙ They must be Coptic Orthodox only
- ✙ They must accompany the child throughout their up-bringing and care for their spiritual, physical, and educational well being.
- ✙ The matter of a Godparent is not only a Rite, but is of great significance, for they are responsible for the spiritual up-bringing of the child, and this is the secret of the continuous success and happiness of a person.

The above mentioned Commandment contains many beautiful meanings :

✠ The greatness and sanctity of the sacrament. It is important for parents to know the greatness and significance granted to their child through this Sacrament.

✠ The responsibility of the Godparent in :

- Not allowing the devil to have any share in the child's life after having renounced him.
- Teaching the child about the Holy Bible from their childhood, by means of simple stories; strive to teach them the Holy Books, which are the breath of God. In this way, resemble the mother of St. Timothy: "When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded in you also" (2 Timothy 1:5), ***"And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"*** (2 Timothy 3:15), for his grandmother and mother gave him the faith and taught him the Holy Bible from his childhood.
- Teaching the child about the Church and its traditions:
 - The parent must go to Church every week with their child to receive the Holy Communion, and be regular in partaking of it.
 - The parent must teach the child how to respect God's house and the Holy Sacraments, for example, by taking off shoes before Communion, by lighting a candle in front of the saints' icons, by kneeling before the altar when entering the Church,

then kissing the curtain, the cross and the priest's hand, then sitting quietly and respectfully. The parent should also teach the child how to pray the 'Our Father', the Orthodox Creed, and how to make the sign of the cross. It is also important for the parent to teach their child the significance of alms giving by giving the child some money to place in the Church's money box.

- The parent must implant virtues and spiritual principles in the child, such as purity, obedience, love, holiness, mercy, almsgiving, justice, righteousness, reverence, patience, goodness, truthfulness and every good deed accepted by God. It is important also that those who teach virtues, should themselves be virtuous people.

Prayer of Untying the Girdle of the Baptised

The church is now accustomed to give the baptised person the Holy Communion at the end of the Divine Mass, followed by the procession. After the procession, the girdle is untied.

In the original Rite, the untying of the girdle occurred in the eighth day after Baptism, at home and not in Church. Hence, the baptised remained with the Baptismal garments bound to the girdle for eight days. On the eight day, the priest comes to the house and prays the prayer of 'Untying the Girdle' as follows...

A container or bowl of water is placed, and is surrounded by lit candles. The priest then commences with the Thanksgiving Prayer, and the raising of incense three times while reciting the

Pauline mystery, *“O God the great and eternal, without beginning and without end...”*, followed by the Lord’s Prayer and Psalm 50.

The Pauline Epistle is read from 1 Corinthians 10:1-5, which is about the people of Israel who were baptised during the crossing over of the Red Sea, being led by Moses the prophet. Then the Trisagon and the Litany of the Gospel is said, followed by the Baptismal psalm : *“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven”* (Psalm 32:1-2).

The Gospel is concerning Christ’s baptism by St John: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ... who has fulfilled My will” (Matthew 3:1-7). Everyone wishes for their child to become like Christ in fulfilling the Lord’s commandments and living according to His will. The priest says the Three Major litanies for Peace, the Fathers, and The Congregations.

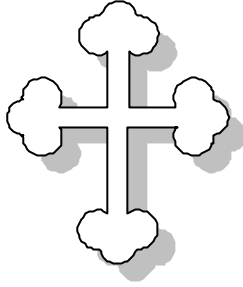
Prayer for the Laying on of Hands

The priest places his hand with the Cross on the head of the baptised, while praying, *“Enlighten them by the light of blessing. Purify them, bless them, renew them by Your Grace by the Baptism that was granted by the power of Your living Holy Spirit. Keep them steadfast in the Orthodox Faith till the end. Bring them up in spiritual stature, may they be watched by Your good angels. Fill them with all knowledge and understanding. Remove from their hearts the feeling of anxiety ... make them worthy of eternal life and the Kingdom of heaven.”*

After the “*Worthy...*” hymn, the congregation prays the Lord’s Prayer. The priest says the three absolutions, then makes the sign of the cross three times on the water saying, “*One is the Holy Father, One is the Holy Son, one is the Holy Spirit Amen.*”

The congregation chant Psalm 150, “*Praise the Lord*” . During the dismissal, the baby is bathed with the water that has been prayed on. Then it is important that the water be poured into a river, lake or any other thing which no one would walk onto or into.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.



APPENDIX

The Prayer of the Basin

This prayer is done for children newly born, and before baptism.

The purpose of this prayer is for the Church to grant its blessing and well wishes to the family, officially, for the new born child. The priest may choose a name for the child from the church saints, and he reminds the parents of their child's baptism day, and how they must prepare for it and be committed to the spiritual upbringing of their child.

The priest comes (according to choice) on the seventh day after the child's birth. He pours water into a basin, together with some oil and salt, and lights seven candles.

The priest prays the Thanksgiving Prayer and raises the Pauline incense.

The deacon reads the Pauline Epistle (Hebrews 1:5-12) which speaks about Christ being the only begotten Son.

This is followed by the Trisagon and the Litany of the Gospel: ***“Praise, O servants of the Lord, Praise the name of the Lord ... and the Word became flesh”*** (Psalm 112:1-2 and John 1:14-19). The Gospel explains the glory of the only begotten Son of God.”

The priest then says the Three Major Litanies, followed by the Orthodox Creed.

The priest says the following prayer: *“Bless Your child with all heavenly blessings. Bless their birth day and may they have long life, by Your Grace. May their parents rejoice, and at the right time, may they deserve the new Birth for the remission of sins. Prepare them to be a temple of Your Holy Spirit.”*

The priest then prays Psalms 148 and 149, which are from the fourth part of the Midnight Praises.

The congregation says the ‘Our Father’, and the priest prays the three absolutions, making the sign of the cross three times on the water saying, *“One is the Holy Father, one is the Holy Son, one is the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*

The congregation sings Psalm 150 ***“Praise the Lord”***, while the priest bathes the child (or otherwise, the priest may start to bathe, and another one continue).

The priest says the blessing and dismissal.

Glory be to God forever, Amen.