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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 <u>Absolution of the Woman</u>, 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 <u>Renouncing Satan</u> and confessing Christ and reciting the Apostolic Creed.

Then we shall speak about the <u>Liturgy of Baptism</u>.

And finally, we shall explain the <u>Rite of Baptism</u>, 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

NOTES:

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

Simple oil   2. Ghaliloun Oil   3. Myron

<u>Simple Oil</u>: 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.

<u>Ghaliloun Oil</u>: 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.

<u>Myron Oil</u>: 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.

Reference

SACRAMENTAL RITES IN THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

2nd Edition

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