



The Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Nectarios

The Baptism Service

The Ceremony

The Baptism service begins at the entrance of the church, signifying that the person being received is not yet a full member of the Orthodox Church. The purpose of Baptism is to bring the person into full communion with the Church.

The priest calls upon the Godparent to renounce the devil and all his works on behalf of the child. This is done facing the west, the traditional direction symbolising darkness and the rejection of evil. In the case of an adult baptism, the candidate responds to the priest together with the Godparent.

The priest asks:

«Ἀποτάσῃ τῷ Σατανᾷ, καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ,
καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ,
καὶ πάσῃ τῇ λατρείᾳ αὐτοῦ,
καὶ πάσῃ τῇ ὑπερηφανίᾳ αὐτοῦ;»

“Do you renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his angels, and all his service, and all his pride?”

Each time, the Godparent (or the adult being baptised) responds:

«Ἀποτάσσομαι.»
“I do renounce him.”

The priest then asks three times:

«Ἀπετάξω τῷ Σατανᾷ;»
“Have you renounced Satan?”

Each time, the response is given:

«Ἀπεταξάμην.»
“I have renounced him.”

After the third time, the priest then says:

«Καὶ ἐμφύσησον καὶ ἔμπτυσον αὐτῷ.»
“And breathe upon him, and spit upon him.”

This symbolic action signifies the complete rejection of evil and the authority of Christ over it.



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Acceptance of Christ

The priest then turns to face the east, the direction of light and resurrection, and calls upon the Godparent to unite the child to Christ, who is the Light of the world. In the case of an adult baptism, the candidate responds together with the Godparent.

The priest asks three times:

«Συντάσση τῷ Χριστῷ;»

“Do you join Christ?”

Each time the response is:

«Συντάσσομαι.»

“I do join Him.”

The priest then asks three times:

«Συνετάξω τῷ Χριστῷ;»

“Have you joined Christ?”

Each time the response is:

«Συνεταξάμην.»

“I have joined Him.”

The priest then asks:

«Καὶ πιστεύεις αὐτῷ;»

“And do you believe in Him?”

The response is:

«Πιστεύω αὐτῷ ὡς Βασιλεῖ καὶ Θεῷ.»

“I believe in Him as King and God.”

The Godparent (or the adult being baptised) then recites the Creed, confessing the Orthodox faith. From this moment onward, the Godparent undertakes the responsibility of guiding the child in the life of faith that has been confessed on their behalf.



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THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages.

Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through Him all things were made.

For our sake and for our salvation
He came down from heaven,
and was incarnate from the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary, and became man.

He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate,
and suffered and was buried;
He rose again on the third day,
in accordance with the Scriptures;
and ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He is coming again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the Giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who together with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and together glorified,
who spoke through the Prophets.

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In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
I await the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the age to come.
Amen.

ΣΥΜΒΟΛΟ ΤΗΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ

Πιστεύω εἰς ἓνα Θεόν, Πατέρα παντοκράτορα,
ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς,
ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων.

Καὶ εἰς ἓνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν,
τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ,
τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα
πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων·

φῶς ἐκ φωτός, Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν
ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ,
γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα,
ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί,
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο·

τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους
καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν
κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν
καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου
καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Παρθένου
καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα·

σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν
ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου,

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καὶ παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα·
καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ
κατὰ τὰς γραφάς·

καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς
καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Πατρὸς·
καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης
κρίναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς,
οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος.

Καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον,
τὸ Κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν,
τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον,
τὸ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ
συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον,
τὸ λαλήσαν διὰ τῶν Προφητῶν.

Εἰς μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν
καὶ ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν.
Ὁμολογῶ ἓν βάπτισμα
εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.
Προσδοκῶ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν
καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. Ἀμήν

After the Completion of the Creed

After the Creed has been recited, the priest asks three times:

«Συνετάξω τῷ Χριστῷ;»

“Have you joined Christ?”

Each time, the Godparent (or the adult being baptised) responds:

«Συνεταξάμην.»

“I have joined Him.”

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Then the priest says:

«Καὶ προσκύνησον αὐτῷ.»

“And bow down before Him and worship Him.”

The Godparent or the adult being baptised bows down, saying:

«Προσκυνῶ Πατέρα καὶ Υἱὸν καὶ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα,

Τριάδα ὁμοούσιον καὶ ἀχώριστον.»

“I bow down before the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
the Trinity, one in essence and undivided.”

Blessing of the Water of New Life

In preparation for the spiritual cleansing and rebirth that will take place in Holy Baptism, the priest makes the sign of the Cross over the water in the baptismal font and offers the appointed prayers.

He prays that the water may become:

“a water of redemption, of sanctification and cleansing of flesh and spirit;
a loosening of bonds, forgiveness of transgressions, enlightenment of souls;
a laver of regeneration, a renewal of the mind;
a garment of incorruption and a source of life.”

During the pre-baptismal service, the priest also prays that God will appoint a guardian angel to accompany the newly baptised throughout life:

“Attach to his life a radiant angel, to deliver him from every plot of the adversary...”

Holy Baptism — Triple Immersion in Water

The child’s clothing is removed, symbolising the putting off of the fallen nature inherited from Adam and Eve. An adult candidate removes their own clothing and is vested in suitable garments for Baptism, as agreed beforehand with the priest.

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The priest and Godparent then anoint the child with blessed oil, so that, like an athlete, the newly baptised may be strengthened to struggle against evil and live the Christian life with Christ's help.

Finally, the person is immersed three times in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The immersion in the water symbolises death to sin and burial with Christ. The raising up from the water symbolises the Resurrection with Christ.

Through Holy Baptism, the person encounters Christ and is grafted into His risen life, becoming an adopted child of God.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit — Anointing with Oil

Before Baptism, the priest anoints the person with the Oil of Catechumens, praying for strength, healing, and preparation for the spiritual struggle of the Christian life. As athletes were once anointed before contest, so the newly baptised is strengthened to struggle against evil and to live in Christ.

After Baptism, the newly baptised receives the Sacrament of Chrismation, the gift of the Holy Spirit. The priest anoints the person with Holy Chrism (Holy Myron), consecrated on Holy Thursday by the Ecumenical Patriarch and the bishops of the Orthodox Church in Constantinople (Istanbul), and distributed to Orthodox churches throughout the world.

Through this anointing, the newly baptised is sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and dedicated wholly to the service of Christ.

The priest anoints various parts of the body, each with a prayer and meaning:

- ✙ Nostrils — for the fragrance of spiritual life
 - ✙ Ears — to hear the words of faith
 - ✙ Mouth — “My mouth shall speak wisdom”
 - ✙ Chest — for the healing of soul and body
 - ✙ Hands — “Your hands have made me and fashioned me, O Lord”
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- ✝ Knees — to walk in the ways of the Lord
 - ✝ Feet — to walk in the path of peace and overcome the power of evil
 - ✝ Back — “Whoever wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me”
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The Offering

The priest then cuts small portions of hair from the head of the newly baptised in the form of a cross. This act is an offering of thanksgiving. Having received the great gifts of Baptism and Chrismation, and having nothing material to offer in return, the person offers a part of themselves.

The cutting of the hair symbolises strength, dedication, and a lifelong commitment to serve God with all that one is and has.

Putting on the New Garment

The newly baptised is clothed in white garments, symbolising purity and the new life in Christ. As the Apostle teaches, the baptised has “put on Christ.” It now becomes the task of the Christian to preserve this life through faith, repentance, and love.

The newly baptised also receives a cross, bearing witness to Christ’s words: “Take up your cross and follow Me.”

The Cross marks the Christian as belonging to Christ and proclaims Christ’s victory over sin and death.

The Procession into the Kingdom

The newly baptised is then led in procession three times around the baptismal font, a joyful sign of entry into the Kingdom of God and of the eternal life now begun in Christ.

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The priest censes the newly baptised, and when the baptised is a child, the Godparent carries the child together with the baptismal candle — a reminder that the Christian is called to live and die in the light of Christ.

Holy Communion

The new life received in Baptism is fulfilled and renewed in the Holy Eucharist. As a full member of the Body of Christ, the Church, the newly baptised receives Holy Communion for the first time; adults receive this at their first Holy Liturgy.

After the Service

At the conclusion of the service, the mother of a newly baptised child traditionally kisses the hand of the Godparent as a sign of gratitude, respect, and shared responsibility for the child's spiritual care.

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