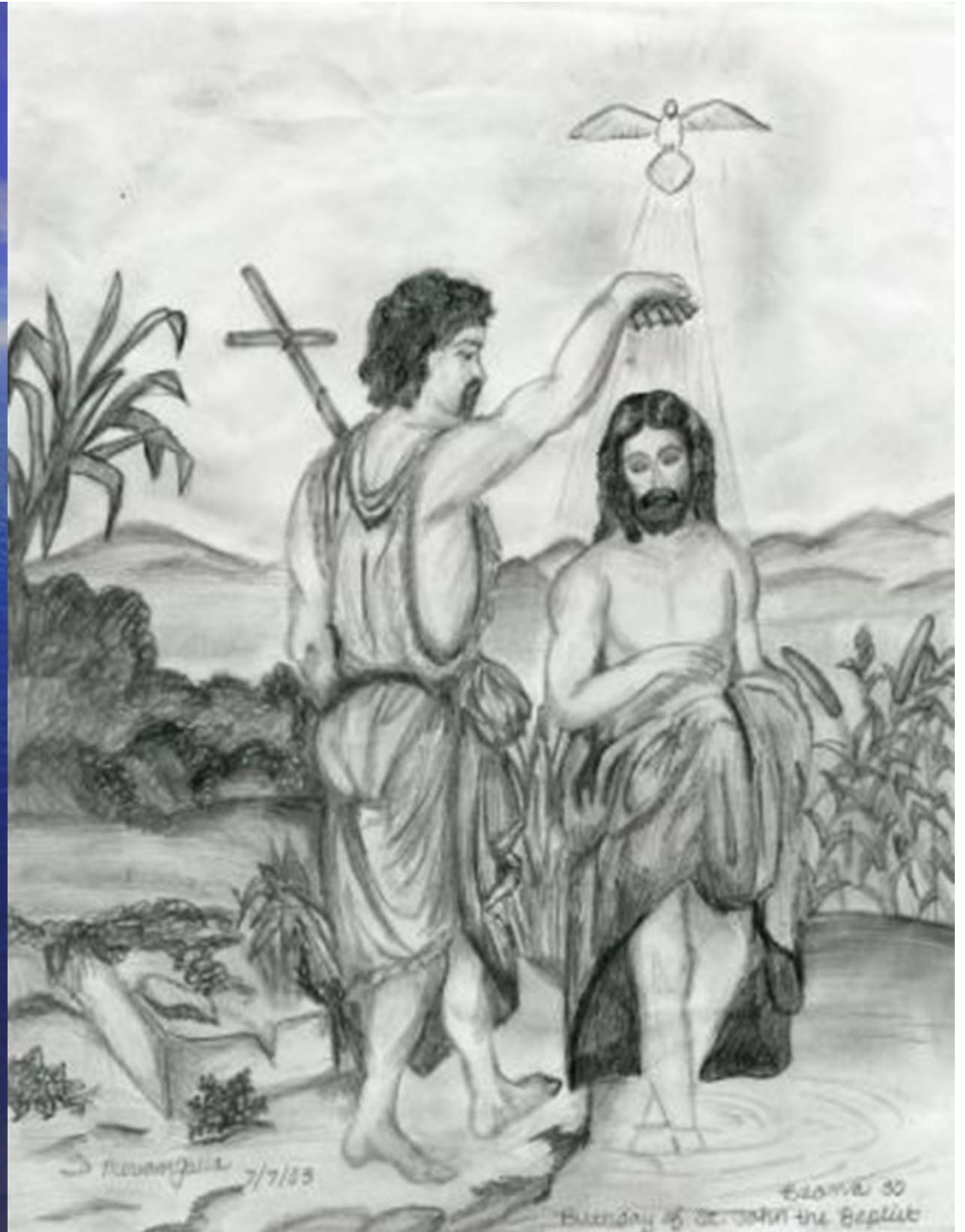


# The Sacrament of Baptism

Servants Prep Class  
December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

“Unless one is born  
from water and the  
Spirit, he cannot  
enter the Kingdom  
of God” (John 3:5)



# We will discuss

1. Importance and Meaning of Baptism
2. The Rituals of Baptism, and Practical Applications to Our Life



A wide-angle photograph of a calm ocean under a vast blue sky. A soft rainbow is visible on the horizon, blending into the sea. The water is a deep blue with gentle ripples. The sky is a lighter blue with wispy white clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and expansive.

# I. The Importance and Meaning of Baptism



# What is Baptism?

- Baptism is the Holy Sacrament through which we are born again by being submerged in water three times in the name of the Holy Trinity.
- It is the first sacrament that an individual receives, for it is the door through which one enters the Church and is given the right to partake of the rest of the sacraments.
- We become children of God, sons and daughters, through baptism

# For Salvation

- Salvation is made available to us through the redemptive death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.
- For us to have a share in this salvation, we must share the death and resurrection of the Lord.
- Therefore, St. Paul said, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death" (Romans 6:3-4).



# Death & Resurrection

- It is our death and burial with the Lord through baptism which saves us and allows us to share the glories of His resurrection.
- We obtain salvation through death and our bodies must always remain dead to sin.
- St. Paul states, "If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13) and "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

# Only Once

- The sacrament of baptism is a redemptive sacrament and is only performed once.
- We say in the creed, "we confess one baptism for the remission of sins".
- Since baptism is a spiritual birth, so a person is born once, and since baptism is death with the Lord and the Lord died once, so a person dies with the Lord once.
- Thus St. Paul says, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5).

# Symbols of Baptism in the Old Testament:

- Saint Peter interprets the story of Noah's ark and the flood (Genesis 7) as a symbol of baptism.
- He says, "The divine longsuffering waited 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 (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:20-21).

# Symbols of Baptism in the Old Testament:

- Saint Paul interprets the commandment of circumcision (Genesis 17) as a symbol of Baptism.
- He said, "You were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of 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)...
- As God said that the child who is not circumcised would be cut off from his people, likewise He said that a child who is not baptized cannot enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5).

# Symbols of Baptism in the Old Testament:

- Saint Paul interpreted the story of crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 14) as a symbol of baptism.
- He said, "All of our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).
- The sea was a symbol of the baptismal water that draws its saving efficacy from the precious blood of our Lord (no wonder it's called the Red Sea).
- The cloud was a symbol of the Holy Spirit who works through the baptismal water, and Pharaoh was a symbol of the devil who is destroyed by the cross of our Lord Jesus through the water of baptism.

# Symbols of Baptism in the Old Testament:

- The sacrifice of Elijah the prophet was accepted after water was poured on it three times (1 Kings 18:34). Moreover, Elijah himself was not taken up to heaven until he crossed the waters of the Jordan River (2 Kings 2:8).
- The same happened with the Israelites, who went into the promised land after going through the waters of the Jordan (Joshua 3).
- In the Holy Book of Revelation we read about “a sea of glass” (Revelations 4:6) before the throne of God.
- The point is that we must go through the waters of Baptism to reach the Heavenly Promised Land and enjoy the presence of God.

# Symbols of Baptism in the Old Testament:

- The baptism of St. John the Baptist cannot be equated with Christian baptism. These baptisms were preparatory ones, for repentance.
- The specific relationship between Baptism and the Cross and Blood of Our Lord Jesus had not yet been established. On the day of Pentecost, no exceptions were allowed for those who had received baptism by St. John, and St. Peter ordered everyone to be baptized (Acts 2).
- St. John himself said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11). Saint Paul also taught believers who were baptized by St. John the Baptist to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19).

# Types of Baptism

- Jewish Baptism (Washing with Water):
  - "Let one wash his body in pure water -- it says in the Scriptures, -- and he will be unclean until evening, and then he will be clean" (Lev 15:5, 22:4).
  - Didn't forgive sins, but only ceremonial bodily impurity
- Baptism of John the Baptist
  - Bridge between 2 baptisms, repent, but didn't forgive or give Holy Spirit
  - "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Mt. 3:8)
- Christian Baptism
  - That One however will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Mt 3:11)
  - Cleanse of sin
  - Receive Holy Spirit in laying of hands

# The Institution of the Sacrament of Baptism:

- The sacrament of Baptism was instituted by our Lord Jesus and by His words to Nicodemus saying, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John 3).
- Moreover, He spoke to His disciples saying, "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" (Mathew 28).
- He also spoke saying, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16).
- Our Lord Jesus Himself was baptized by Saint John the Baptist in the Jordan River, not because He needed to be baptized, but to set a precedent for us. In the Holy Book of Acts, we see that the apostles baptized all the believers.

# Why Water?

God chose water for baptism...

- Water washes away dirt while baptism washes away sins.
- Water refreshes the body, and baptism awakens us from spiritual death.
- Baptism is a symbol of the death, burial (for three days), and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our first burial can only be done by being totally submerged into water.
- The substance used in baptism is water, and the Lord emphasized the relationship between the water and Spirit, thus baptismal water is not considered mere water, for "there are three that bear witness on earth: The Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these agree as one" (1 John 5:7).



# Submersion

- To baptize literally means to immerse or to put into. Therefore, the Orthodox Church baptizes by triple immersion (complete submersion) in water. Baptism by immersion is supported Biblically.
- Our Lord Jesus was baptized this way in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist... "Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water" (Matthew 3:16).
- The Apostles also baptized in this manner... "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?'" (Acts 8:36,38). Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. When they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away.

# Submersion

- Baptism is the symbol of the burial of our Lord Jesus and thus we do not practice it by sprinkling water, but rather through complete submersion. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ... Therefore 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 6:3,5).

# Submersion

- Baptism is called washing, by Saint Paul and Saint Ananias... "Be baptized and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16). Washing must be accomplished by immersion, not just by sprinkling.
- Because baptism is necessary for salvation, the Church allows baptism by sprinkling ONLY in the cases where immersion is prevented by a medical condition and there is a risk that the person would die without being baptized.

# Why Do We Baptize Infants?

- Since baptism is essential for salvation and without it, no one can enter the Kingdom of God, baptizing babies is very important.
- They are purified through baptism, and the necessity of circumcision (in babies) as a sign of a pledge in the Old Testament is a symbol of baptism in the New Testament.
- Just as God commanded that infants be circumcised, the Orthodox Church baptizes infants.
- "Let the little children come to Me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

# Now, here's a question

## Why was Christ baptized?

- Obviously, Our Lord instituted the sacrament of Baptism
- Well, let's look at the difference in what St. John said:

### To others:

- "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Mt. 3:8)

### To Christ:

- "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" (Mt 3:14)



# Why was Christ Baptized? (I)

## First Reason shown by John's testimony:

- John declared: **That Christ should become known to the people**, as Paul also mentions: "John therefore baptized with the baptism of repentance, so that through him they should believe on Him that cometh" (Acts 19:4); this was the consequence of the baptism.
- And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, **but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'**" And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." (John 1: 32,33) - THAT'S WHY THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDED

# Why was Christ Baptized? (II)

## Second Reason shown by Christ's testimony:

- But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, **for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" (Mt 3:15)
  - By righteousness is meant the fulfillment of all the commandments, as is said: "both were righteous, walking faultlessly in the commandments of the Lord" (Lk 1:6).
  - Since fulfilling this righteousness was necessary for all people -- but no one of them kept it or fulfilled it -- Christ came then and fulfilled this righteousness.

# John 3

1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

## II. The Rituals of Baptism



& Practical  
Applications  
to Real Life

# Ritual of the Sacrament of Baptism

1. Women's Absolution
2. Renouncing Satan
3. Liturgy of Baptism

As we go through this, please pray in your heart and renew the vows made at your baptism. Most of us were infants so its good for us to relive what happened.

# 1. Mother's Absolution



- A special prayer is said for the mother of the child being baptized.
- She should receive the Sacrament of Repentance & Confession before this
- She also should receive Holy Communion at the end of the Holy Liturgy with her newly baptized child.

## 2. Renouncing Satan

I renounce you, Satan, with all your impure works, all your evil soldiers, all your wickedness, all your powers, all your despicable worship, all your deceiving and misleading trickery, all your armies, all your principalities, and all the rest of your hypocrisy.

**I renounce you! I renounce you! I renounce you!**



### 3. The Liturgy of Baptism

- The person being baptized is immersed fully in water 3 times, symbolized being buried and rising with Christ.
- We should practically apply our renewed repentance, keeping away from our old works
- This is the beginning of a new life in holiness and in love

# 3. I baptize you...

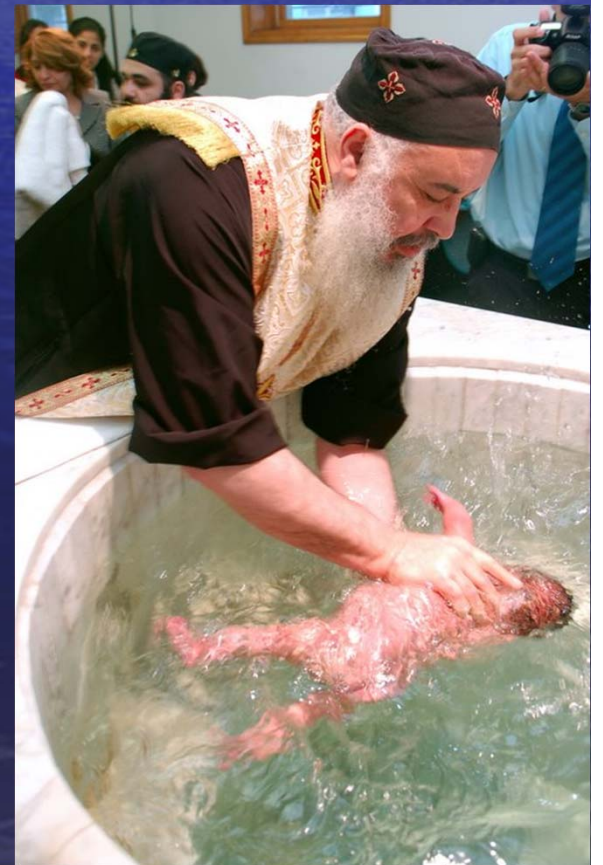
**In the Name  
of the Father**



**And the Son**



**And the  
Holy Spirit**



The Holy Chrism (Confirmation) is done right after the Baptism. (*This is when the person receives the Holy Spirit*)



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# Conclusion

- The Divine life of the Lord is communicated through His Church in exactly the same way that His divine life was communicated when He walked on earth.
- As He then used His human nature as an instrument of divinity and used material things as means to confer His grace (for example, clay and water in the case of the man born blind), so now He uses other humans (priests) and material things (water, bread, wine, oil, etc.) as instruments for the communication of the same Divine grace.
- Baptism is the holy sacrament through which we are born again by being immersed in water three times in the name of the Holy Trinity. It is the door through which the individual enters the Church and is given the right to partake of the rest of the Sacraments.
- Through Baptism, we are buried with Christ and resurrected with Him - reborn, forgiven, and granted the grace of sonship to God.