

The Order of the Divine Liturgy with Baptism

Before the Divine Liturgy

Preparation to be done ahead of the service: the font is filled with water; the Gospel book and baptismal items (oil, holy chrism/myrrh, scissors, sponge, dish with warm water) are on the service table (tetrapod) at the front.

After completing the service of the preparation of the gifts (*proskomedía*), the presbyter proceeds, along with the baptismal party (the child, godparents and parents), choir and people, to the back of the church for the prayers for the **Reception of a Catechumen** (exorcisms, renunciations of the devil, affirmations of faith and the recitation of the Symbol of Faith, the Nicene Creed).

Following these prayers all process into the nave of the church. The presbyter leads the baptismal party to the front of the nave where they stand a short distance from the service table. The choir and people take their usual places.

The presbyter does the great censuring (starting around the service table and font and ending in front of them). The baptismal party light their candle(s).

Beginning of the Divine Liturgy and Baptism

The Divine Liturgy begins at the service table with the opening blessing and great litany (with its additional baptismal petitions).

Following the great litany, the first antiphon ('Bless the Lord, O my soul') is sung.

In place of the little litany, the presbyter prays the prayers for the **Blessing of the Baptismal Water** and the **Blessing of the Oil of the Catechumens**. As the oil is poured into the font three times, the choir sings 'Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia' in response to the presbyter. Then 'Blessed is God...' followed by 'Amen'.

The second antiphon ('Praise the Lord, O my soul') and 'Only-begotten Son' are sung. During this time, the clothes of the child to be baptised are removed.

In place of the little litany, the **Anointing** and **Baptism** take place.

The presbyter first anoints the child on the forehead, the breast and shoulders, the ears, the hands and the feet.

Then the presbyter baptises the child — immersing the child three times in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The child is then wrapped in a white towel by the godparents and parents and dried while the choir sings Psalm 32 ('Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven').

Following the blessing by the presbyter, the child is clothed in the **Robe of Light**, a white garment (leaving feet and hands exposed). The choir sings the troparion 'Grant unto me the robe of light'.

The third antiphon ('In Thy kingdom, remember us, O Lord') is sung.

The Little Entrance and Chrismation

As the third antiphon concludes, the entrance with the Gospel (from the service table) is made, including the prayer of the entrance, then 'Wisdom, Aright'. The presbyter enters the sanctuary while the choir sings 'Come, let us worship' and then the hymns of the day.

The presbyter returns to the service table as the hymns finish, for the **Chrismation**. The child is anointed with holy chrism/myrrh on the forehead, eyelids, nostrils, lips, ears, breast, hands and feet. Each time the presbyter prays 'The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit' and the people reply 'Sealed'.

After the chrismation, before the service table, the presbyter exclaims 'For holy art Thou, O our God' as usual. Following the 'Amen', the choir sings 'As many as have been baptised into Christ'.

During the singing of this hymn, the presbyter leads the child and godparent(s) three times around the service table.

At 'Glory' the reader receives a blessing from the presbyter. The presbyter goes into the sanctuary, to the high place as usual.

The baptismal party can take their usual places or remain near the front as they wish (or as parental demands require). The baptismal candle(s) remain lit until after communion.

The Completion of the Divine Liturgy and Communion, Ablution and Tonsuring

The Divine Liturgy proceeds as normal, beginning with the prokeimenon, Epistle and Gospel.

At **Communion**, the newly baptised child communes first among the faithful, *before the prayer of repentance before holy communion*. The child is accompanied by the godparent(s) holding their lit candle(s).

At 'Let us depart in peace', in place of the prayer before the ambo, the rites of **Ablution** and **Tonsuring** are performed.

At the ablution, after the prayers, the child is sprinkled with water from the sponge, then the presbyter wipes away the oil and chrism with the sponge.

At the tonsuring, after the prayers, the child's hair is cut (a very small amount!) in the form of a cross.

Following the tonsuring, the choir sings 'Blessed is the Lord' and the Liturgy concludes as usual.

We then sing 'Many years' to the child, godparents and parents.