



In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
St. Mary and St. Joseph
COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Deacons Meeting – Saturday, October 02nd, 2010

The Sacrament of Baptism & Holy Confirmation (Mayron)

Sacrament of Baptism:

- It's important for us to understand this great sacrament as it's the foundation, the basis and the beginning of the life of Christianity. No one is to be called Christian unless he/she has gone through baptism, so the baptism is the door to allow people to enter into the Christianity. Without baptism, no one can participate in any other sacrament. Note: the church sacraments are Seven (7): Baptism, Confirmation (Chrismation or Mayron), Communion, Repentance & Confession, Matrimony, Priesthood and Unction of Sick.
- Because of the importance of this sacrament, the church has dedicated a special room where it has the baptismal font.
- This sacrament was founded by the lord Jesus Christ, and it was practiced even before Christianity when St. John started to baptize people by water when he said He who comes after me will baptize with water and the Holy Spirit. *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11).*
- The sacrament of Baptism & Holy Chrismation is performed once and it's irreversible (cannot be reversed), the same with the priesthood and matrimony sacraments.

Baptism by Immersion:

- The baptismal font is made big enough for child or grown-up to be baptized in it, so when it's filled with water the person can be immersed in the water. It's a must in the Coptic Orthodox church.
- Baptism is a renewal of the spirit, so we believe that through baptism we die with the Lord Jesus Christ, get buried with Him to be able to rise by His resurrection, as St. Paul said:

“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 6:4)

- That’s why the baptized person has to go down inside the baptismal font same as Jesus Christ went inside the tomb. When a child is baptized, he has to go inside completely under the surface of the water, as he is dying with Christ to be able to rise with Christ. Even for a grown-up, we bring him a chair to step on it and go inside the font where there is another step inside, then he sits on the inside step and when abouna comes to batize him, he put his head and the whole body under the water.
- When the grown-up is baptized, he comes with his regular clothes, change it behind the curtain and wear a tonia like the deacon’s tonia, then step inside the baptismal font and abouna comes to baptize him three times (*in the name of the father, the son and the holy spirit*) then abouna goes outside and the baptized person comes out of the baptismal font and go behind the curtain to dry up himself and put his regular clothes on. The tonia can be kept in the church or he can take it with him to wash it and put the water on the grass.

Note: In the old days, during the Apostoles era, there were no baptismal fonts so the Apostoles used to use the rivers to baptize people

The Components of the Baptism Room

1- Baptismal Font:

- There is a side door under the font where you can find all the plumping; hot water and cold water come in and a mixer to mix the hot water and cold water to prepare warm water for the baptized person, in order to make sure he feels comfortable and not allow anything to disturb this moment.
- The tap on the top of the font, we open it after opening the mixer to fill the font with the warm water.



The drain which drain the water out of the font; of course this water is blessed after adding the blessed oil onto it so we can’t drain it in the sewage out of respect to this water; that’s why we have the drain to drain the water into the grass. You can find the pipes that drain the water out of the font outside the baptism room towards the north side wall of the church. The drain valve is kept off all the time and we open it after finishing the baptism to drain the water.

2- Curtain:

- To isolate the area where the grown-up person can change his/her clothes before and after baptizing.

3- Closet:



It's only allowed to be opened by abouna; Abouna keeps in it what he needs for baptism so it may contain the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1- A box of the holy oil | 6- Incense |
| 2- Baptism Certificate | 7- Charcoal |
| 3- Service Books | 8- Soap |
| 4- Cross | 9- Sponge |
| 5- Red Ribbon | |

Preparation for Baptism:

- 1- Open the mixer and the tap to fill the font with the warm water to a reasonable level where abouna can reach when baptizing the baby and allow the baby to be immersed.
- 2- Prepare the shoria; one charcoal or max two should be enough for the baptism prayers. The prayers has similar parts to the Divine Liturgy (Like: Thanksgiving / reading of Pauline, Catholic Epistles, Acts and Gospel), Creed, Litanies and a Liturgy that abouna prays before start baptizing.
- 3- Make sure the room is clean and tidy; also there is a table and a towel to lay the baby on it.



Note:

- After the baptism is done, abouna prays a short prayer on the holy water to transform it into its original nature, before the deacon starts draining the water. So the deacon should asks abouna first to make sure he has prayed this prayer or not before the deacon opens the drain valve for the water to go out; you will notice a green line on the wall of the fiber glass font because of the oil added to the water and the oil is lighter than the water so it stays on the surface and float on the water. If we leave it the residues of the oil start to make a mark and become difficult to wash as it may catch dust as well.

So we need to wash it immediately by the sponge and clean this thin layer and the water will be drained with the oil in it. If we wash it immediately after about a finish the baptism that will help maintaining the baptismal font clean all the time.

- Later on when we consecrate the church, the baptismal font will be consecrated with the mayron oil so it will become sacred and holy place since there will be a sacrament, and therefore this room has to be respected so much. The font is considered to be the womb of the great mother, the church, which gives birth to the Christian. As a matter of fact, some churches don't allow people to come into this room with the shoes.

The Holy Oil

There are different oils used in Baptism:

- 1) **Simple Oil** (Pure Olive Oil) – It comes from the oil of Apocalypse night (the night after the Good Friday and before the Resurrection Feast – Friday night to Saturday Morning). This oil is different than the oil used in the unction of the sick during the last Friday of the Lent.
- 2) **Oil of Joy (Ghaliloun)** – More sacred and more important than the simple oil.



- 3) **Oil of Confirmation (Oil of Mayroon)** – It's the most sacred and important oil. Initially started from the 1st century of Christianity and it's used as a means for the ascension of the Holy Spirit. When we use it to consecrate the altar/icon/person, this thing will be consecrated, and it's only used once, meaning that the sacrament of chrismation can't be repeated as the Communion, Uction of Sick, Repentance and Confession. From the old days, the Apostoles were able to pray for the Holy Spirit to descend on the person, and later the people used to wait for the bishop to come and descend the Holy Spirit on them, so they decided to make a very holy oil by using the spices used in the burial of the Lord Jesus Christ body mixed with pure olive oil and through special prayers they made the first batch of Mayroon, then they distributed it on the churches for the priest to use them.

Later on, when they found they are running out of oil, they gathered and mix the new olive oil and new spices and pray on it then mixed it with the first batch oil and distributed it to the churches.

Mixing the Mayroon is a big event in the history of the church and patriarch.

Notes:

- This oils box has to be handled with utmost care and it should be left for abouna himself to carry it, unless abouna asks you then you can use a lefafa to carry it.
- Deacons should always be respectful in the baptism room at all times, as there is a sacrament done in it.
- In baptism, the deacon should wear his tonia since it's a sacrament same as in communion. Even Abouna also wear his tonia during baptism; you don't see abouna in black garment while he is baptizing.

Baptismal Process

In the day of baptism we do several things, the first thing is to pray the Absolution on the Mother, since the mother can't take communion (for 40 days) if she gave birth to a baby boy (or 80 days) if she gave birth to a baby girl, so this absolution allows her to take communion. This is before the baptismal process.

The stages of baptismal process go as following:

- 1) Bless the water.
- 2) Bless the Baby/Grown-up to be baptized.
- 3) Baptize the Baby/Grown-up – that concludes the baptism sacrament (1st Sacrament)
- 4) Sacrament of the Holy Chrismation – The Mayroon (2nd Sacrament)
- 5) Sacrament of Holy Communion after attending the Holy Liturgy (3rd Sacrament)

So during that day, the baby/grown-up to be baptized will receive 3 sacraments.

The stages of baptismal process

1) Bless the Water

- It's a complete liturgy starts with the thanksgiving prayer, litanies, etc. Also, there is a special prayer that abouna prays to ask God to send the Holy Spirit to bless the water.
- During these prayers, the 3 different holy oils are used:
 - Before the thanksgiving, abouna will do the sign of cross on the water with the 1st oil - the simple oil.
 - During the prayer at certain stage, abouna will do again the sign of cross on the water with the 2nd oil - the oil of Ghaliloun.
 - At the end, before baptizing the baby/grown-up, abouna will do the sign of cross on the water with the 3rd oil – the mayroon.

Through this stage, the water is blessed.

- There are readings from the Gospel like Pauline, Catholic Epistles, Acts and the Gospel from the book of St John. The church is teaching the people who attend the baptism the foundation of this sacrament.

2) Bless the Baby/grown up to be baptized

- For blessing the baby, only two oils are used, Oil #1 (The Simple Oil) and Oil#2 (Ghaliloun Oil)
- The mother carrying the baby renounces the devil and accept the Lord Jesus Christ, and this done in two steps:
 - a) The mother carrying the baby looks towards the west and renounce (reject) the devil.
 - b) The mother carrying the baby is to look towards the east and accept the Lord Jesus Christ.

The father can stay and do it as well as he is responsible for the child as well.

3) Baptize the Baby/grown up

- Abouna asks the mother to take the baby's cloth off, and then he lift him and immerse him completely under the water 3 times (I baptize you "give him/her a Christian name" in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit). If the person to be baptized is a grown up, he/she can choose the new name, otherwise abouna or parents can recommend a Christian name.
- The baby then gets the 2nd sacrament; abouna will put the baby on the table, dry up from the water, and then anoint him 36 times all over his body using the oil of Mayroon. All your body is belong to God through the sacrament of Confirmation (Mayroon). Any sin you do with your body is like you take God's body and do the sin. That's the only time the person touch the oil of Mayroon when get baptized, unless he become a priest / bishop.
- After being anointed with the Mayroon, the church which is the body of Christ has a new member/new addition, so the church celebrates this joyfully by doing a great procession at the end of the Divine Liturgy.