

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HOLY MYSTERY OF BAPTISM

I. MEANING, NAME AND DIVINE ESTABLISHMENT

Baptism is the **Holy** Mystery in which **man** through three immersions and elevations within and out of water and the invocation of the name of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity is regenerated by the Holy Spirit and becomes the **New Creation** in Christ¹. St Paul refers to it as “...*the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*”² Divine Grace descends upon the water giving to Baptism the cleanliness from sins and the power of regeneration. Baptism offers the **Newness** of **Life** in Christ, implants them in the Orthodox Church, which is the only Canonical Body of Christ, and offers to them the **right** to participate in all the Holy Mysteries. This Holy Mystery has been described **by** many names and each **one clarifies** it. Thus Baptism was called “*Illumination,*” “*Bath,*” “*Charisma,*” “*Gift,*” “*Vestment of Immortality,*” “*Seal,*” “*Phylacterion,*” “*Vehicle to Heaven,*” etc.

The importance of this Holy Mystery is manifested by Holy Scripture through the prototypes and prefigures **of** the Old Testament. The baptism of St John the Forerunner and Baptist prepared the God-given Baptism of the Messiah **through repentance**. The importance of this Mystery is **evident** from the fact that it was instituted **shortly before His glorious Ascension** by the Son of God Who is our Lord, Master and Saviour. He commanded His **Holy** Apostles and Disciples to evangelise the **entire** world “*baptising*” those who believe in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.³ Simultaneously He threatened all those who disbelieve and **would** not be baptised **with condemnation**.⁴

1. The New Testament Determination of Baptism

The New Testament characterises the Holy Mystery of Baptism as “...*the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit...*”⁵ **as well as** “...*the washing of water by the word...*”⁶ **which** means the complete immersion and washing of the body within water **that** cleanses the soul from sin. One can understand Baptism to be the “...*cleansing of sins and forgiveness of transgressions and the cause of renewal and regeneration...*” when **it is comprehended** that the benefit “...*is not granted by the water...*” but “...*by the descent of the Spirit which comes secretly...*” and **bestows** “...*Grace and Power...*” **resulting in the** “...*cleansing of sin and complete deliverance from the pollution of evil.*” This Grace and Power is given by the Master Himself through the invocation “...*in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the*

¹ Cf. Damalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 82-83. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 193-196. For the biblical interpretation of the Holy Mystery see: Labadarios, *Explanation*, Johannesburg, 1990. Ibid, *Sermons*, v.1, pp.99-110. Meyendorff, *Theology*, pp. 192-195. Georgopoulos, *Anthology*, pp. 9-17.

² Tit. 3:5. Cf. Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, pp. 368-370. Kefalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 180-181.

³ Matth. 28:19.

⁴ Mark 16:16.

⁵ Tit. 3:5.

⁶ Ephes. 5:26.

*Holy Spirit...*⁷ being taught “...in the confession of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”⁸

2. The Entrance in the Church and the Participation in the Holy Mysteries

Baptism offers the newness of Life in Christ and makes one a member of the Orthodox Church. It gives him the right of Communion and participation in all the Holy Mysteries. This is witnessed by the ancient practice and tradition of the Orthodox Church according to which only those who were baptised were considered worthy to be accepted in the Divine Eucharist “*But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptised into the Name of the Lord, for the Lord has also spoken concerning this: ‘Do not give what is Holy to dogs.’*”^{9,10} The newly Illuminated were led from the Baptismal Font to the gathering of the faithful in order for them to participate in the celebration of Divine Eucharist and to partake of it. This is witnessed by St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr¹¹ as well as by the Egyptian Order and the Canons ascribed to St Hippolytus.¹²

On the contrary, the Catechumens “...who have known the deity of Christ and have confessed already the faith...” had to depart from the “Sacred Table” because “...in those who have not yet been baptised the Holy Spirit does not dwell; afterwards they are proved to be partakers of the Holy Spirit...” through Baptism “...then nothing prevents them touching our Saviour Christ.”¹³ Without the reception of Baptism no one can partake in the rest of the Holy Mysteries.¹⁴

3. The Multiplicity of Names of Baptism

The importance and Power of Baptism is such that it is natural to be given many and various names describing the effects on the soul.¹⁵ It was called

1. “Illumination”¹⁶ because before it is given, the Catechumen was taught, prepared and “...enlightened in his mind to learn¹⁷ these things...”
2. “Enlightenment”¹⁸ because through Baptism “...that sacred and saving Light is seen...”
3. “Washing”¹⁹ because through it “...we wash away our sins...” and we partake in “...the clear waters which clean greater than hyssop, or the

⁷ Matth. 28:19.

⁸ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *1 Apology*, 65, in *B*, v. 3, p. 197. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *To holy Baptism*, Homily 40, § 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 368. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1117.

⁹ Matth. 7:6.

¹⁰ *Didache*, 9, § 5, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 154.

¹¹ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *1 Apology*, 65, in *B*, v. 3, p. 197.

¹² St. Hippolytus, *Egyptian Order*, ch. 46, XXI, 19, § 141-143. Trempelas, *Small Euchologion*, v. 1, pp. 390-391 and 393.

¹³ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To John*, book XIII, to John, 20, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 74, 696.

¹⁴ Bartmann, *Theologie Dogmatique*, v. II, p. 275.

¹⁵ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 305-306.

¹⁶ Heb. 10:32.

¹⁷ 2 Corinth. 4:4-6.

¹⁸ Heb. 6:4.

blood of Law more clearer and sacred than the ashes of a deer which is sprinkled upon those who partake and receive the temporary cleanness, but not the complete refutation of sin” (Old Testament) whereas the New Testament Baptism accomplishes this.

4. “*Gift of righteousness*”²⁰ as through it “...*the punishment of sin is removed...*”
5. “*Gift*”²¹ because it is “...*the best majestic Gift from God...*” given to us.
6. “*Vestment of immortality*” “...*as covering the disgrace...*”²² of the nakedness caused by sin
7. “*Anointment, as Holy and Royal*” because the priests and kings “...*were anointed...*”²³ in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament through Baptism the newly Illuminated are incorporated into the One King and High Priest **by their own becoming** priests and kings²⁴ “...*to God and Father.*” Baptism is **referred to as** “*Seal*”²⁵ because, although it is granted by Christ, “...*the despotic sign...*” “...*signing upon them the Light of the face of the Master...*” and “...*by sealing...*”²⁶ each of them, He proves them to be His sheep **that** “...*the thieves do not dare to steal so easily because they consider them to be insignificant.*” By “...*bearing the signs...*” **that are** “...*requested*” **by the Angels** it is clear that they belong to God **and they are able to** recognise the Seal and protect these souls from adversity **stemming** from Satan and his demons.²⁷ It is called “*Phylactery*” and “*Perfect*” because “...*those who are baptised are Illuminated...*” **and being** “...*Illuminated they become sons by adoption...*” **and by** “...*becoming sons they are perfected and become immortal*”. **However,** “...*the Baptism is a cross. For the old man was crucified together with Christ and was buried with Him through Baptism to death.*”²⁸

According to the ancient **western** Holy Fathers and ecclesiastic writers of the One united Orthodox Church, the Mystery of Baptism is called: “*sacramentum aquae,*” “*fons sacer,*” “*unda gentitalis,*” “*aquavitalis,*” “*sacramentum fidei,*” “*sacramentum Trinitatis,*” “*lavacrum regenerationis,*” “*ablution peccatorum*” **and** “*sigillum.*”²⁹

St Basil the Great characterised the Holy Mystery of Baptism as “...*the bath of those in slavery, forgiveness of sins, death of sin, Regeneration of the soul, bright*”

¹⁹ Ephes. 5:26. Tit. 3:5.

²⁰ Rom. 5:17.

²¹ Rom. 6:23; 12:6-8. 1 Corinth. 12:13. 1 John 3:24.

²² 1 Corinth. 15:53.

²³ Lev. 16:32. Ex. 37:29. 1 Sam. 16:6. 2 Samuel (2 Kings) 19:21; 22:51. 1 Chron. 16:22. Psalm 20:6. Zech. 4:14.

²⁴ 1 Peter 2:9.

²⁵ 2 Tim. 2:19.

²⁶ Rev. 7:4. Ephes. 4:30. 2 Corinth. 1:22.

²⁷ Theophylactus of Bulgaria, *To 1 Peter 2:9*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 125, 1212. Aristeides, *Apology*, XX, 2 and 14, in *B*, v. 3, pp. 135 and 147. Rev. 1:6. St. John Chrysostom, *To 2 Corinthians*, Homily 18, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 61, 523. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 361-364. St. Basil the Great, *To holy Baptism*, Homily 13, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 31, 432.

²⁸ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, 94, 1121. Clement the Alexandrian, *Pedagogus*, I, 6, in *B*, v. 7, p. 92. St. John Chrysostom, *To Hebrews*, 9, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 63, 79.

²⁹ Bartmann, *Theologie Dogmatique*, v. II, p. 275.

vestment, Seal without hands, vessel to Heaven, cause of the Kingdom, Gift of sonship.”³⁰

St Gregory of Nazianzus determined Baptism as “...the brightness of the souls, transmission of Life, help to our weakness, putting down of the flesh, the following of the Spirit, communion of the Word, restoration of the creature, the cataclysm of sin, light transformation, abolition of darkness, vessel to God, passing with Christ, support of faith, perfection of the mind, the keys of the Heavenly Kingdom, reward of life, refuting of slavery, freedom of bonds.”³¹

4. The Prototypes and Pre-figurations of Baptism

The Gifts and Charismata that are granted to man through the Holy Mystery of Baptism are many and are mentioned in Holy Scripture. Even the Prophets foresaw these Gifts and spoke of the prototypes in the Old Testament. The Baptismal Rites through sprinkling with water or baths in the sea and rivers are evident even before the New Testament era, outside Christianity, not only amongst the Jews and Essenes, but even amongst the Gentiles such as the Babylonians, Indians, Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, etc. However, these purifications in the belief of all Greeks and barbarians concerned the necessity for moral catharsis, which physical cleanness and the washing of the body from its natural stains was always the visible sign.³²

Tertullian³³ and St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr³⁴ spoke of imitations and falsification of the Christian Mysteries by Satan. These external purifications were deprived of the power of the inner purification, which gave Life to the lifeless and were used as ways of magical and natural purification. Only in Judaism does one find that which is expressed in Psalm 50(51): “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”³⁵ The Prophets proclaimed repentance through washing on behalf of God’s Name: “Wash you, be clean; remove your iniquities from your souls before Mine eyes; cease from your iniquities; learn to do well; diligently seek judgment, deliver him that is suffering wrong, plead for the orphan, and obtain justice for the widow. And come let us reason together, said the Lord: and though your sins be as purple, I will make them white as snow; and though they be as scarlet, I will make them white as wool. And if you be willing, and hearken to Me, you shall eat the good of the land: but if you be not willing, nor hearken to Me, a sword shall devour you: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken this.”³⁶ St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr considered these admonitions to synchronise the washing of the body and inner cleanliness as prophetic

³⁰ St. Basil the Great, *Admonition to holy Baptism*, Homily XIII, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 31, 433.

³¹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *To holy Baptism*, Homily XL, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 361.

³² St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To the day of Lights*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 46, 581.

³³ Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 40 and *De Baptismo*, 5, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 66, 1312.

³⁴ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *1 Apology*, 62, in *B.*, v. 3, p. 195.

³⁵ Psalm 50(51):7-10.

³⁶ Is. 1:16-20.

announcements concerning Baptism, “...*the only possible way to clean those who repent... is the water of Life...*” “...*as it was proclaimed by Isaiah.*”³⁷

In the Old Testament Greek (Septuagint, LXX) the Hebrew verb “*tabal*” is used to signify catharsis and washing **as well as** the verb “*to baptise.*”³⁸ Through the mouth of Moses, speaking on behalf of God, these purifications, through water are determined as **a means of** purification according to Mosaic Law, which enable them to participate in public worship and communication with the people of God.³⁹ **However,** these purifications **only** “...*had temporary purification of the body, but not the removal of sin.*”⁴⁰ In later times the Baptism of proselytes was introduced as a way of bringing all those who were Gentiles **into Judaism.**

Pre-types of Christian Baptism were circumcision, the crossing of the Red Sea, the Salvation from the Cataclysm in Noah’s Ark **while** the Baptism of St John the Forerunner and Baptist **was the preparation for Baptism in Christ**

St Paul observed that “...*in Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the 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.*”⁴¹ “*All were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*”⁴²

Upon the assurance **of** Moses **to** the people, the Red Sea **was crossed** and **they** were saved from the surrounding dangers. Likewise we, being baptised in the water of the Baptismal Font and being buried in the depths of the waters, **are** freed from **the imaginary of** the slavery of Pharaoh. Moses “*baptised,*” **although** in simple and common water. Typically this was, as Paul believed, “*the sea*” of the water of the Baptismal Font **and** “*the Cloud*” of the Holy Spirit Who Regenerates us. These were the symbols and the pre-figurations of **Holy Baptism.**⁴³

The Holy Fathers **refer to** the Baptism of St John the Forerunner and Baptist **as** a Judaic ceremony **that** was in use even before St John’s **era** but **which** was performed by him according to God’s **Commandment.**⁴⁴ This is **clearly evident** from the words of the Lord **Who,** in order to **soothe the reluctance** of St John, said: “*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.*”⁴⁵ Whereas on the other hand, it is manifested from the question which He addressed to the Pharisees before His sufferings: “*The Baptism of John – was it from heaven or from men?*”⁴⁶

Hence St Gregory **the Theologian** of Nazianzus observed that “...*John baptised not Judaically; for not only in water, but in repentance.*”⁴⁷

³⁷ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 14, § 1 and 44, § 4, in **B**, v. 3, pp. 220 and 247.

³⁸ 2 Kings (3 Kings) 5:14. Judith 12:7. Sirach 34:30.

³⁹ Lev. ch. 11-15. Num. ch. 19.

⁴⁰ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *To holy Baptism*, Homily 40, § 11, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 372.

⁴¹ Col. 2:11-12.

⁴² 1 Corinth. 10:2.

⁴³ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *To the holy Lights*, Homily 17, § 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 353.

⁴⁴ John 1:33.

⁴⁵ Matth. 3:15.

⁴⁶ Mark 11:30. Matth. 21:25. Luke 20:4.

⁴⁷ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *To the holy Lights*, Homily 17, § 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 353.

St John Chrysostom observed that “...John was preaching Baptism of repentance...” but “...he does not say for the forgiveness of sins...” because the Sacrifice on the Cross “...was not yet offered neither had the Spirit descended, nor was sin forgiven, nor enmity wiped away, nor the curse abolished, so how could there be forgiveness?” But what was the purpose of the Baptism of John? “By preaching Baptism of repentance...” John “...was convincing...” those who approached him and received it “...to confess and repent of their sins, and by doing so would be easier to receive the forgiveness afterwards.” If in repentance they did not **sincerely** condemn themselves “...they could not have the Grace; by not requesting, they would not have the forgiveness...” when the Redeemer would offer it. So, St John by baptising “...introduced a pedagogic Baptism by the washing in water of those who were polluted because of sin and through repentance teaching the higher and perfect things.”⁴⁸ Consequently, the Baptism of St John “...prepared Christ’s Baptism...” which was to be offered by the Lord to the faithful and which “...alone will have the Grace of the Spirit...”, whereas the Baptism of St John “lacked the Gift.” “Jesus also baptised, but in the Spirit. This is the perfection.”⁴⁹

St Basil the Great characterised the two Baptisms as follows: that of John, which was an “*introductory Baptism*” and that of Jesus Christ which was “*conclusive*,” in other words “... the departure of sin.” “John preached Baptism of repentance, the Lord preached Baptism of adoption as sons.”⁵⁰

St John continued to baptise after his witness **that** he gave at Christ’s Baptism saying: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”⁵¹ After the arrest and beheading of St John by Herod, his disciples continued to baptise.⁵² But this Baptism had fulfilled its purpose and ceased. St John Chrysostom noted that “...what happened to the Passover, happened also to the Baptism.” Because, as the Lord eating the Passover with His **Disciples, terminated** it and “...gave a new beginning...” **to** the new Passover. Likewise “...here again fulfilling the Judaic baptism together with that of the Church, He opened the doors.” When He instituted the Divine Mystery of the Eucharist “...He confirmed and fulfilled the Truth.”⁵³

5. The Divine Institution and the Time of its Establishment

Although the Baptism of St John was from Heaven, it was the shadow and preparation of the Baptism in the Spirit. Even St John proclaimed: “I indeed baptise 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 baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”⁵⁴

⁴⁸ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 10, §§ 1 and 2, in Minge, *P.G.*, 57, 185 and 186.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, *To Mathew*, Homily 10, § 2 and 12, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 57, 186 and 206.

⁵⁰ St. Basil the Great, *To the holy Baptism*, Homily 13, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 31, 425.

⁵¹ John 1:29.

⁵² Acts 19:3.

⁵³ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 12, § 3, in Minge, *P.G.*, 57, 206.

⁵⁴ Matth. 3:11. Luke 3:16.

There can be no doubt that the Baptism of the Orthodox Church was instituted by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God.⁵⁵ Taking **into** consideration the Commandment given to the Holy Apostles after the Lord's Ascension: "*Go therefore and make Disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...*"⁵⁶ as well as the assurance that "...*he who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned...*"⁵⁷ the Orthodox Baptism is the realisation of this Commandment.

Although no one doubted the fact that the Lord instituted the Holy Mystery of Baptism, questions arose concerning the time of its institution. Some of the Holy Fathers expressed the opinion that it was at the time of Christ's Baptism in the river Jordan when, through His Baptism, He Sanctified the waters.⁵⁸ Others expressed the opinion that it was established at the discussion of Christ with Nicodemus when Christ proclaimed "... *most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.*"⁵⁹

The time of the establishment of the Holy Mystery of Baptism must be placed after the Resurrection when the Lord assured His Disciples that "...*all authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth...*"⁶⁰ and He commanded them to "...*go therefore and make Disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*"⁶¹ The Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church **also** supported the opinion that when the Lord **had** died on the Cross and was pierced by the soldier⁶² **there** "...*sprang out from His Holy and precious Side the Fountain of Forgiveness, the Water of Regeneration ... washing away ... sin and mortality...*" **and** "... *the Blood became the cause of the Drink of Life.*" **At that moment** "...*the beginning of the Mysteries took place...*" "...*and those who partake through water are Regenerated, through Blood and Flesh they are nourished.*"⁶³

The fact that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, instituted the Holy Mystery of Baptism **confirms** its importance and the reason why the Holy Apostles and Disciples obeyed the instruction given by the Master. Truthfully, on the Day of Pentecost, when the people asked the Apostles: "*Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit.'*"⁶⁴ "*Then those who gladly received his words were baptised; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.*"⁶⁵ St Philip the deacon baptised

⁵⁵ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 306-307.

⁵⁶ Matth. 28:19.

⁵⁷ Mark 16:16.

⁵⁸ St. John Chrysostom, *To Matthew*, Homily 12, § 2, in Minge, *P.G.*, 57, 205. Ibid, *Homily to the holy and saving Baptism of our Saviour Jesus Christ*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 49, 366. St. Ambrosius, *In Luce*, c. II, 83, in Migne, *P.L.*, 15, 1665. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, III, 11, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 441. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1117. Theophylactus of Bulgaria, *2 Autolycus*, § 16, in *B*, v. 5, p. 33.

⁵⁹ John 3:5. St. John Chrysostom, *To John*, Homily 29, § 1, in Minge, *P.G.*, 59, 168.

⁶⁰ Matth. 28:19.

⁶¹ Matth. 28:19.

⁶² John 19:34.

⁶³ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1117.

⁶⁴ Acts 2:37-38.

⁶⁵ Acts 2:41.

in Samaria⁶⁶ **as well as** the eunuch of Ethiopia,⁶⁷ while St Paul and Silas baptised Lydia with all her household⁶⁸ as well as the Philippian Jailer “...with his entire household.”⁶⁹ Furthermore “...Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue ...” **and** “...many Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptised.”⁷⁰ After his calling by the Lord on the road to Damascus St Paul was baptised⁷¹ and St Peter baptised Cornelius **together** with his family.⁷²

St Paul in his Epistles related the Christian Baptism to the death and burial of the Lord **proclaiming** that “...as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death...”⁷³ and that “...as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ.”⁷⁴ “For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free...”⁷⁵ and “...in Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in Baptism.”⁷⁶ St Peter declared that “...there is also an antitype which now saves us – Baptism...”⁷⁷ as “...once 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.”⁷⁸

The *Didache* noted: “Now concerning Baptism, baptise as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptise ‘in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’⁷⁹ in running water. But if you have no running water, then baptise in some other water; and if you are not able in cold water, then do so in warm. But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times ‘in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’ And before the Baptism, let the one baptising and the one who is to be baptised fast, as well as any others who are able. Also, you must instruct the one who is to be baptised to fast for one or two days beforehand.”⁸⁰

The Epistle of Barnabas noted that: “... there was river flowing on the right hand, and beautiful trees were rising from it, and whoever eats from them will live forever.”⁸¹ By this he means that while we descend into the water laden with sins and dirt, we rise up bearing fruit in our heart and with fear and hope in Jesus in our spirits. ‘And whoever eats from these will live forever’ means this: whoever, He says, hears these things spoken and believes them will live forever.”⁸²

⁶⁶ Acts 8:12.

⁶⁷ Acts 8:27-38.

⁶⁸ Acts 16:14-15.

⁶⁹ Acts 16:25-34.

⁷⁰ Acts 18:8.

⁷¹ Acts 9:18.

⁷² Acts 10:1-48.

⁷³ Rom. 6:3.

⁷⁴ Rom. 3:27.

⁷⁵ 1 Corinth. 12:13.

⁷⁶ Col. 2:11-12.

⁷⁷ 1 Peter 3:21.

⁷⁸ 1 Peter 3:20.

⁷⁹ Matth. 28:19.

⁸⁰ *Didache*, 7, 1-4, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 153.

⁸¹ Ezek. 47:1-12.

⁸² *Barnabas*, 11, 10-11, n Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 177-178.

The Shepherd of Hermas also observed the following: “*The seal, therefore, is the water; so they go down into the water dead and they come up alive. Thus this seal was proclaimed to them as well, and they made use of it in order that they might enter the Kingdom of God.*”⁸³ “*Therefore they went down with them into the water, and came up again. But these went down alive and came up alive, whereas those who had previously fallen asleep went down dead and came up alive. So they were made alive through them, and came to full knowledge of the name of the Son of God.*”⁸⁴

St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr declared that the Apostolic Tradition concerning Baptism continued.⁸⁵

Thus is it strongly proved that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Founder of Christian Baptism. Since the time of the Holy Apostles **until** this very day it continues to be officiated as the Mystery of Regeneration and the Renewal of souls. Through the Orthodox Christian Baptism the Holy Spirit is transmitted as the Gift of God regenerating all those who partake of it, assuring the adoption as sons and **granting** the Eternal Kingdom.

II. THE PERCEPTIBLE SIGNS OF BAPTISM

The perceptible **aspect** of the Holy Mystery of Baptism is the thrice immersion and elevation of the body into and out of the water, accompanied by the invocation of the Name of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Thus, the use of water is required according to the **Commandment** of the Lord to activate and perfect the Baptism. This water receives the Power of Regeneration through the descent of the Holy Spirit Who **bestows** His Divine Grace **upon** it, for the water itself does not have this Power by nature. Thus, the Promise of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is fulfilled **whereby** He will baptise us “...with water and the Holy Spirit.” The thrice immersion and elevation of the Catechumen is also required, who **is** buried together with Christ and becomes of the same nature with Christ through the imitation of His death. Finally, the invocation of the Name of each Person of the Holy Trinity is required **at each immersion**, according to the instructions of the Master. **The invocation** is a confession of faith and acceptance of the teachings of Christ. This makes Baptism, a Baptism into Christ And the water is Sanctified through the calling of the Grace of the Holy Spirit. The thrice immersion and elevation in and out of the water symbolises, on the one hand, the three day burial and Resurrection of the Son of God, **while** on the other hand **symbolising** the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Due to the relationship between the Baptism of the Orthodox Church to the death, burial and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Baptism **is performed once only and** cannot be repeated. It is obvious that Baptism through sprinkling or pouring **may be performed** only **due to** great necessity and under exceptional conditions. Under no circumstances **can the canonical way of Holy Baptism be replaced by the extraordinary ways of Baptism, having been instituted** by the Founder and Master of the Orthodox Church, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Finally **the type of invocation is** Trinitarian, which is mentioned in the last chapter of the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew. The expressions

⁸³ *Shepherd of Hermas*, Parable 9, 4, n Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 276.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, Parable 9, 6-7, n Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 276.

⁸⁵ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *1 Apology*, 61, in *B*, v. 3, p. 1

mentioned in the New Testament such as “...*the Baptism in the Name of Christ...*” or “...*in Christ Jesus...*” or “...*in Christ...*” are not types of invocation but mean to be baptised according to the faith and teachings of Christ. Hence, it is obvious that any Baptism **that** is not performed with the invocation of the Names of the **three** Persons of the Holy Trinity is absolutely invalid and consequently must be repeated as it is not canonical.

1. The Use of Sanctified Water

The use of water⁸⁶ in Baptism was assigned by our Master Himself when He said to St Nicodemus: “*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.*”⁸⁷ This practice entered within the life of the Church, as witnessed in the case of the Baptism of the eunuch of Ethiopia by St Philip the deacon when “...*they came to some water ... the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptised?’*”⁸⁸ In the case of the Baptism of Cornelius, while St Peter “...*was still speaking these words...*” he saw “...*the Holy Spirit...*” falling “...*upon all those who heard the word...*”⁸⁹ and he said: “*Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptised who have received the Holy Spirit?*”⁹⁰ St Paul taught that the Church was Sanctified by the Lord cleansing “...*her with the washing of water.*”⁹¹ “...*Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope.*”⁹²

The *Didache* **instructs** that Baptism should be done in living and “...*running water...*”⁹³ and in the case where there is “...*no running water, then baptise in some other water; and if you are not able in cold water, then do so in warm. But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*”⁹⁴

In the *Epistle of Barnabas* we read: “*Now concerning the water, it is written with reference to Israel that they would never accept the Baptism that brings forgiveness of sins, but would create a substitute for them.*”⁹⁵ “*And: ‘His water will never fail.*”^{96,97} “*Notice how he pointed out the water and the cross together. For this is what he means: blessed are those who, having set their hope on the cross, descended into the water.*”⁹⁸ “*And there was a river flowing on the right hand, and beautiful trees were rising from it, and whoever eats from them will live forever.*”⁹⁹ *By this he means that while we descend into the water laden with sins and dirt, we*

⁸⁶ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 307-308. Georgopoulos, *Anthology*, p. 10.

⁸⁷ John 3:5. Cf. Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, pp. 371-372.

⁸⁸ Acts 8:36.

⁸⁹ Acts 10:44.

⁹⁰ Acts 10:47.

⁹¹ Ephes. 5:26.

⁹² Heb. 10:22-23.

⁹³ *Didache*, 7, 1 and 2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 153.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 7, 2-3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 153.

⁹⁵ *Barnabas*, 11, 1, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 176.

⁹⁶ Cf. Is. 33:16-18.

⁹⁷ *Barnabas*, 11, 5, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 177.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 11, 8, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 177.

⁹⁹ Cf. Ez. 47:1-12.

rise up bearing fruit in our heart and with fear and hope in Jesus in our spirits. 'And whoever eats from these will live forever' means this: whoever, he says, hears these things spoken and believes them will live forever."¹⁰⁰

The *Shepherd of Hermas* also observed: "The seal, therefore, is the water; so they go down into the water dead and they come up alive."¹⁰¹

St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr assured the Apostolic Tradition of the use of water in Baptism. He informed us that the Catechumen were "... brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same way as we were regenerated."¹⁰²

Justifying the use of water in this Mysterious and Supernatural Ceremony, the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church explained that "...because we are *accustomed to using* water in order to clean the stain and dirt from the body and by submersing the body into the water it becomes clean, *likewise in* this Mystical act (Baptism) we receive the cleanliness from the filth of sin and through the perceptible the radiance of the bodiless is revealed."¹⁰³ Because "...man is of two elements, soul and body..." "...and *has* visible and invisible nature, the cleansing through water and Spirit is double. The water *is the visible and receives the body*, the *Holy Spirit Sanctifies the bodiless*."¹⁰⁴ "Double *is* the cleansing: the bodiless through the bodiless, the body through the body. The water cleans the body *whereas the Holy Spirit seals the soul ...regenerating 'in the image and likeness'*¹⁰⁵ within us..."¹⁰⁶ as the water "...through the Grace of the Spirit cleans the body from sin and frees it from mortality."¹⁰⁷

Also in modern testimonies we read that "...for Baptism the *matter* is the water..."¹⁰⁸ because "...the Holy Scriptures command to baptise in water."¹⁰⁹ "Even this must be preserved in Baptism, to be pure water, neither mixed with other things nor technical, nor other liquid ... but simple and natural water."¹¹⁰

Obviously the "...water is nothing more than water..." which does not have the Supernatural Power in its own nature but receives it "...from the Grace which blesses from Above." And as *in ancient times* "...the rod of Moses was out of common wood... through which God wanted to perform the high and greater miracles..." and was "...changed into a serpent..." or "...was made into blood and separated the sea..." "...likewise one of the Prophets' mantle, although it was out of goat skin..." made Elisha a wonder worker and a great Prophet. "All these were out of lifeless matter which received Divine Power to perform great Miracles." Similarly the water of Holy Baptism "...regenerates man into spiritual Regeneration."¹¹¹ St Basil concluded that

¹⁰⁰ Barnabas, 11, 10-11, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 177-178.

¹⁰¹ *Shepherd of Hermas*, Parable 9, 16, 4, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 276.

¹⁰² St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *1 Apology*, 61, 3, in *B*, v. 3, p. 1

¹⁰³ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To the day of the Lights*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 46, 581.

¹⁰⁴ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1117.

¹⁰⁵ Gen 1:26.

¹⁰⁶ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 40*, § 11, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 372.

¹⁰⁷ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, III, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 429.

¹⁰⁸ Jeremias, (A'), in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. I, p. 388.

¹⁰⁹ Kritopoulos, ch. VII, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 530.

¹¹⁰ Mogilas, (A' 103), in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 636.

¹¹¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To the day of the Lights*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 46, 584.

“...if there is any Grace in the water, it is not from its nature, but because of the presence of the Holy Spirit.”¹¹² St Cyprian **believed** that the water alone cannot Sanctify man if it does not have the Holy Spirit.¹¹³

From the teachings of the *Didache* and St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr, one can conclude that the water **which** was used in Baptism was from **a natural spring and did not require** sanctification through prayer. And this **opinion was due to the belief that springs were Sanctified at the time of Christ’s Baptism.**¹¹⁴ **Consequently** “...the simple water receives the power of sanctification...” and only “...the invocation of the Holy Spirit and of the Son and of the Father...” was necessary. The **prayers and invocations** for the descent of the Holy Spirit **are essential** to Sanctify the water. **This we find** in the ecclesiastical tradition even before the time of Tertullian¹¹⁵ and St Cyprian¹¹⁶ who, **in** justifying this practice, refers to Ezekiel¹¹⁷ according to which God promises to sprinkle the faithful with “*clean water.*”¹¹⁸ The same opinion is expressed by the Canons attributed to St Hippolytus.¹¹⁹ In agreement **with** the above are the teachings of St Ambrosius.¹²⁰

According to the above, water is an essential element for Baptism to be valid, since the Lord and the Apostolic Tradition commanded its use. St Augustine **asked:** “*What is the Baptism of Christ? It is the washing with clean water and some invocation of words. If you remove the water, there is no Baptism; if you remove the words of invocation, and again there is no Baptism.*”¹²¹

The Orthodox Church forbidden¹²² the use of other liquid **instead of** water such as oil, sand, etc.¹²³ Also the opinion that Baptism is merely spiritual and internal and does not required to be performed in water **was** also condemned¹²⁴. Mesoloras accepts the officiating of Baptism not only in water or in the oil of the oil-candles or by sand in the deserts, but, also in the air by signing the infant with the sign of the cross and without any other element, but by simply through the invocation of the Divine Grace.¹²⁵ But again this opinion is not acceptable.

From the above one can understand that the Baptism in the air (aeroBaptism) is not considered to be completely canonical, but, if the infant survives it must be immersed and elevated in and out of the water according to the 51st Canon of Nicephorus of Constantinople. Also, the Holy Canons state that a man, who was

¹¹² St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, ch. 15, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 132.

¹¹³ St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 74, § 5, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1178.

¹¹⁴ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, III, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 429. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1117. Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 4, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1311.

¹¹⁵ Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 4 and 5, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1311 and 1313.

¹¹⁶ St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 70, 1 and 3, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1077 and 1080.

¹¹⁷ Ez. 36:24-29.

¹¹⁸ Ez. 36:25.

¹¹⁹ Canon 19, 112

¹²⁰ St. Ambrosius, *De myst.*, III, 14, in Migne, *P.L.*, 16, 410.

¹²¹ St. Augustine, *In Johannis evangelium. Tractatus XV*, 4, in Migne, *P.L.*, 35, 1512.

¹²² Trempeles, *Dogmatique*, v. III, p. 82. Cf. Ott, “*Precis*”, p. 491.

¹²³ Moschus, *Leimon*, ch. 176, in Migne, *P.G.*, 87, 3014. Nicephorus, *Church History*, book 3, 27, in Migne, *P.G.*, 145, 973.

¹²⁴ Dyobouniotes, *The Mysteries*, p. 52.

¹²⁵ Mesoloras, *Symbolique*, II, p. 201.

baptised by the Baptism in the air or the clinical Baptism, cannot be ordained in priesthood, for his Baptism was by necessity¹²⁶ and not by his freewill.

2. The Three Immersions and Elevations Into and Out of the Water

The ancient practice of Baptism was always by three immersions and elevations into and out of the water.¹²⁷ This practice is not only implied by the Greek verb “*Βαπτίζω*” (“*to baptise*”) which means to be immersed completely into the water but it is also witnessed by the Baptism of St John, the Forerunner and Baptist, who “...*was baptising in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there...*”¹²⁸ and when Jesus “...*had been baptised ... He came up immediately from the water.*”¹²⁹ In the case of the Baptism of the eunuch of Ethiopia “... *both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water...*” and then “...*they came up out of the water.*”¹³⁰ The full immersion into the water is required because it symbolises the crucifixion of the one who is baptised and his burial together with Jesus Christ, becoming “...*of the same nature of the likeness of His death...*”¹³¹ and being “...*buried with Him in Baptism.*”¹³² In other words, we “...*imitate the burial of Christ through Baptism. For the bodies of those who are baptised are buried...*” and “...*the water offers the image of death, as the tomb receives the body.*”¹³³ And the “...*Leader of our life...*” Christ’s “...*death was underground and became the common nature, the imitation of death is printed in the neighbouring matter...*” that is in the water.¹³⁴ St John Chrysostom observed that “...*in the water are performed Divine symbols, tomb and death and resurrection and life, and all these are done together. As like in some tomb through water the old man is immersed and is buried and being immersed he is completely hidden; then coming up the new is elevated. For, as it is easy for us to be baptised and to be raised, likewise it is easy for God to bury the old man and to raise the new.*”¹³⁵

This immersion into the water is done three times and although is true that in the New Testament, right from the beginning, we do not have any proof of the thrice immersion into water, we do have the testimonies of Tertullian¹³⁶ and the *Didache*.¹³⁷ The 50th Canon of the Holy Apostles states that “...*if any bishop or presbyter does not baptise thrice, but once, let him be deposed.*”¹³⁸

This thrice immersion into water, according to Tertullian, was performed in honour of the Holy Trinity.¹³⁹ St John Chrysostom observed that “...*thrice this (immersion and elevation) is performed, in order that you may learn that the Power of*

¹²⁶ Synod of Neocoesaria, Canon 12.

¹²⁷ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 308.

¹²⁸ John 3:23.

¹²⁹ Matth. 3:16. Mark 1:10.

¹³⁰ Acts 8:38, 39.

¹³¹ Rom. 6:5.

¹³² Col. 2:12.

¹³³ St. Basil the Great, *about the Holy Spirit*, ch. 15, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 129.

¹³⁴ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechesis*, ch. 35, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 88.

¹³⁵ St. John Chrysostom, *To John*, Homily 25, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 59, 151.

¹³⁶ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxeam*, 26, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 213. Ibid, *De coron. militiae*, 3, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 98.

¹³⁷ *Didache*, 7, 2-3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 153.

¹³⁸ 50th Canon of the Holy Apostles. , Pedalion, p.81-91

¹³⁹ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxeam*, 26, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 213.

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ... is fulfilling.” For this reason it is understandable why in each immersion we call upon the Name of each Person of the Holy Trinity.¹⁴⁰ According to other Fathers, the thrice immersion and elevation signifies “...through symbol the three day burial of Christ. For, as our Saviour remained three days and three nights in the earth, likewise...”¹⁴¹ those who are baptised imitate through the thrice immersion this three day burial “...and the three days burial of the Master signifies the Baptism through the three immersions.”¹⁴² “And as He, the Man from Above...” our Lord from Heaven “...after the earthly position...” and “...three days burial, ... was raised again to life...” likewise everyone who is baptised to His death “...instead of the earth ... is poured with water and vested *with* the element three times... (imitating) ...the three day Resurrection.”¹⁴³ St Basil the Great observed that “...in the three immersions and the equal invocations, the great Mystery of Baptism is perfected, in order that the type of death be imprinted and the deliverance of the knowing of God be given to those souls who are being baptised.”¹⁴⁴

3. One Baptism, Not Repeatable

The teachings of the Orthodox Church are based upon this relationship between Baptism and the death, the burial and the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In addition, the Baptism is performed once only and under no circumstances, as long as it is canonical Baptism, can it be repeated.. In the New Testament it is clearly proclaimed that there is only “one Lord, one faith, one Baptism.”¹⁴⁵ There is only one Lord Who was crucified for us and was buried and was raised. Hence “...we know the saving Baptism; because one is the death for the entire world and one is the resurrection of the dead, of which the type is the Baptism.”¹⁴⁶ “The Baptism is also a cross. Our old man was crucified together and we became in the likeness of the death of Christ and we were buried together with Christ through Baptism. As Christ died on the cross, likewise we die in Baptism, not in flesh, but to sin. See death and death; He died in flesh, we die to sin.”¹⁴⁷ Precisely for this reason, as well as the death of Christ, Baptism became important since the one death of Christ and His one Sacrifice was more than sufficient to perfect those who are Sanctified. Being one it must remain one. “Those who are initiated (and who) attempt to be baptised for the second time... re-crucify the Lord, killing Him twice, mocking the Divine, scoffing at the Holy, blaspheming the Holy Spirit and dishonouring the Sacred Blood as (though it were) common.”¹⁴⁸

Truthfully, since we accept that the death of Christ was offered as a Sacrifice once and for all, “...one offering perfecting through the Lord those who are Sanctified

¹⁴⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *To John*, Homily 25, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 59, 151.

¹⁴¹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogy*, II, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1080.

¹⁴² St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1117.

¹⁴³ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechesis*, ch. 35, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 88.

¹⁴⁴ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, ch. 15, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 132. Cf. Jeremias, Answer II, § 4; Kritopoulos, ch. 7; Mogilas, A’ 103, in Karmiris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, pp. 459, 530 and 636. Callistus I, Patriarch of Constantinople, in Miclosich, *Acta*, v. I, p. 439.

¹⁴⁵ Ephes. 4:5.

¹⁴⁶ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, ch. 15, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 129.

¹⁴⁷ St. John Chrysostom, *To Hebrew*, Homily 9, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 63, 79.

¹⁴⁸ *Apostolic Orders*, VI, 15, 4, in *B*, v. 2, p. 104.

for ever...” we must accept **that Baptism**, which draws its Power from the death of Christ, since it is officiated canonically, **is** absolutely and under no circumstances repeatable. “For, as Christ suffered once, likewise we cannot have communion with His sufferings but only once and alone.”¹⁴⁹ And “...as Christ cannot be crucified twice (for this is the example to him) likewise neither **(are we)** to be baptised (twice).”¹⁵⁰

Undoubtedly, those who do not accept one **canonical Baptism cleansing and Regenerating them only once**, are under the blasphemous belief that it is not enough to partake in the death of Christ, **having been (spiritually) crucified** together with Him. **Their faith in Holy Baptism and its sacred benefits appears to be erroneous because of their indirect disbelief in the Power of the death of Christ on the Cross.**

4. Baptism by Sprinkling and Pouring

The practice of the Roman Catholic Church, **whereby** she replaced the three immersions and elevations in **and out of** the water and the generalisation of Baptism by sprinkling or **pouring, was** known in the ancient Church as it is mentioned in the *Didache*¹⁵¹ **although** it was only practiced in extraordinary **circumstances**, especially upon the **bed-ridden or extremely ill**, when it was impossible for them to be immersed into water. This is the Baptism of the ill (“*Baptismus clinicorum*”). **However, the fact** that Baptism by immersion and elevation was canonical, is witnessed by the many Baptismal fonts **that** are preserved in Italy and generally in **Western** Europe.

But, even in the West, Baptism by sprinkling or pouring was considered **doubtful** as **evident from the specific writings of St Cyprian.**¹⁵² In the East, Baptism by pouring or clinical Baptism was recognised **although** those who received such Baptism were forbidden **from entering** into Priesthood.¹⁵³

5. The Only Canonical and Valuable Type of Invocation

The type of invocation during Baptism is according to the Gospel of St Matthew¹⁵⁴ **whereby** “...the words of Christ to baptise in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” **were obeyed while** “...all those who were not baptised in the Holy Trinity... must be re-baptised.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Hebrews*, 6:6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 82, 717.

¹⁵⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *To Hebrew*, Homily 9, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 63, 79.

¹⁵¹ *Didache*, 7, 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 153.

¹⁵² St. Cyprian, *Epistola* 76, 12-13, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1195-1196.

¹⁵³ Synod of Neoceasarria, Canon 12. Pope Cornelius, *Epistle to Photius bishop of Antioch*, in Eusebius, *Church History*, VI, 43, 14, in Migne, *P.G.*, 20, 621.

¹⁵⁴ Matth. 28:19. Cf. Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, pp. 146-147. Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, ch. 16, p. 39. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 308.

¹⁵⁵ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1117.

St Athanasius of Alexandria stated that “...he who *misappropriates* something from the Holy Trinity and is baptised only in the Name of the Father or only in the Name of the Son or without the Holy Spirit but only in the Father and the Son, does not receive anything, but remains empty and imperfect. For the perfection is achieved only in the Holy Trinity”.¹⁵⁶

Truly from the beginning, the words of Christ were the type of invocation, which He introduced after His Resurrection, as witnessed in the Didache **and** which literally states “...to baptise ‘in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’”¹⁵⁷

St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr **confirmed** that “...in the Name of the Father of all and the despot God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit ... perform the washing in water.”¹⁵⁸

Tertullian **with regard to** this Trinitarian type of invocation during Baptism, reminded us that this was introduced by the Lord Himself **Who** instructed His disciples in the Law of Baptising in water and the type,¹⁵⁹ **clearly setting forth** the **manner** of invocation.¹⁶⁰

St Cyprian **declared** that Baptism which is performed only in the Name of our Lord Jesus is insufficient because Christ Himself instructed that the nations be baptised in the full and united Trinity.¹⁶¹

Origen recognised the only legal Baptism, which is performed in the Name of the Holy Trinity.¹⁶²

The *Apostolic Orders* reminds us that “...our Lord instructed us, saying: ‘Make disciples of all nations and then instructed to baptise them in the Name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’”¹⁶³ Elsewhere the faithful are urged to receive “...not the Baptism of the heretics, but that which is given by the faultless priests in the Name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁶⁴

Thus this type of Trinitarian invocation in Baptism appears to be continuous and unbroken **since** the time of the writers of the *Apostolic Fathers (Didache)* **until** the 4th century. **Thereafter it was** continued by the Holy Fathers **to** this very day.

In the New Testament it is mentioned **variously** that Baptism was performed “...in the Name of Jesus Christ...”¹⁶⁵ “...in the Name of the Lord Jesus...”¹⁶⁶ “...in

¹⁵⁶ St. Athanasius the Great, *To Serapion*, epistle I, § 30, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 597.

¹⁵⁷ *Didache*, 7, 1, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 153.

¹⁵⁸ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *1 Apology*, 61, 3, in *B*, v. 3, p. 194.

¹⁵⁹ Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, XIII, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1323.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, *Adversus Praxeam*, XXVI, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 213.

¹⁶¹ St. Cyprian, *Epist. LXXIII*, 18, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1166.

¹⁶² Origen, *To Romans*, 5, 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 14, 1039. *Ibid*, *To John*, 6, 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 14, 257.

¹⁶³ *Apostolic Orders*, VII, 40, 3, in *B*, v. 2, p. 134.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, VI, 15, 1, in *B*, v. 2, p. 104.

¹⁶⁵ Acts 2:38.

¹⁶⁶ Acts 8:16; 19:5.

*the Name of the Lord...*¹⁶⁷ “...into Christ Jesus...”¹⁶⁸ or “...into Christ.”¹⁶⁹ Nonetheless, St John of Damascus correctly observed that “...the Baptism in Christ manifests to baptise those who believe in Him...for if the Divine Apostle says that in Christ and in His death we were baptised, then the invocation should not be done as it is, but that the type of Christ’s death is the Baptism.”¹⁷⁰ Consequently to be baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus or in Christ Jesus does not mean that the Baptism was bestowed on the invocation of our Lord’s Name alone but that this was according to the order and full acceptance of Jesus Christ’s Teachings and upon the faith of those who believed in Him.

According to the *Didache*, Baptism was characterised as “...into the Name of the Lord...”¹⁷¹ having been performed according to the description in the 7th chapter that literally commanded it be done upon the invocation of the Name of three Persons of the Deity.¹⁷² Besides that, as we have mentioned before, a bishop or a priest who baptises only in “...one Baptism, that which is given to the death of the Lord...” is accursed by the 50th Canon of the Holy Apostles.¹⁷³

St Irenaeus commented that in the Name of Christ, the whole Trinity is understood to be included: He Who is anointed and He Who was anointed and He through Whom He was anointed. While the Father anointed, the Son was anointed in the Spirit Who is the Anointment.¹⁷⁴ This was also the proclamation of St Ambrosius of Mediolan, according to whom, he who names only one Name declares the entire Trinity.¹⁷⁵ However, these opinions do not necessarily imply that Baptism could be canonically celebrated with the invocation of the Name of Christ alone, as St Irenaeus bore witness to the fact that at the time of Baptism the invocation is done in the Names of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.¹⁷⁶

St Basil the Great supported the opinion that the Name of Christ is simultaneously a confession of the entire Deity because it implies, at the same time, the Father Who anointed and the Son Who was anointed and the Holy Spirit through Whom He was anointed. Furthermore, Baptism should not be bestowed upon the invocation of the Name of Christ alone but in the Names of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.¹⁷⁷

St Cyril of Alexandria wrote: “We have been baptised truly in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. If you shall say that we were baptised in Christ, you are not out of the truth.” In other words, St Cyril verified that the term “...in the Baptism of Christ...” means the calling upon Baptism in the Names of the

¹⁶⁷ Acts 10:48.

¹⁶⁸ Rom. 6:3.

¹⁶⁹ Gal. 3:27.

¹⁷⁰ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1117.

¹⁷¹ *Didache*, 9, 5, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 154.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 7, 1 and 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 153.

¹⁷³ *Pedalion*, p.81

¹⁷⁴ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book III, ch. 18, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 934. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, p. 240.

¹⁷⁵ St. Ambrosius, *De Spiritus Sanctus*, I, 44, in Tixeront, *Histoire*, v. II, p. 113.

¹⁷⁶ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book III, ch. 17, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 929. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, p. 237.

¹⁷⁷ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, XXII, § 28, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 116.

Holy Trinity. Explaining this he concluded that “...because in the Father is the Son, in the Son the Father, really in both the Holy Spirit, because of the sameness of the essence, and even if someone names by power the theorems, he made the implication of all.”¹⁷⁸

Taking into consideration that the type of Trinitarian invocation is absolutely **vital** for the validity of Baptism, it is understandable that “...anyone who was not baptised in the Name of the Holy Trinity must be re-baptised.”¹⁷⁹ A Baptism **that** was not performed in the Name of the Holy Trinity is absolutely invalid and cannot be accepted even through the *Economia* of the Church. “The invocation of the Name of the Holy Trinity is the necessary treaty.”¹⁸⁰

III. THE SUPERNATURAL RESULTS OF BAPTISM AND ITS NECESSITY

Accordingly, **the Regeneration of man “...by water and the Spirit...”** is the assurance in Baptism of the Lord¹⁸¹ **that** takes place.¹⁸² Without this Regeneration or Rebirth no one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven.¹⁸³ Hence, the Holy Apostles referred to Holy Baptism as “...the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸⁴ **The** negative attributes of Regeneration are exalted **such as** the forgiveness of sins, the justification and the release from the punishments of sins while the positive aspect is exalted **whereby** those who are baptised vest (**puts on**) Christ in the Newness of Life with Him, **having been** raised together, **becoming** sons by adoption¹⁸⁵ and joint heirs with Christ.¹⁸⁶

To this teaching of Holy Scripture, all Holy Fathers are in full agreement, clarifying to better the internal and pure spiritual and mysterious side of Baptism and the recreation of the old man who is reformed within the Holy Baptismal fount to the new man in Christ

But, if these are the Supernatural results of Baptism in Christ, then one can understand its importance and necessity according to the words of Christ Who clearly stated that if one is not born from water and the Spirit, it is impossible to be Saved.¹⁸⁷ Baptism is the only **entrance** through which one enters the Path of Salvation.

1. Negative and Positive Results of Baptism

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, described the Saving results of Baptism **with few words**, characterising them as “...*Rebirth from Above*...” which **guaranteed** one’s entrance into the Kingdom of God.¹⁸⁸ This means **spiritual**

¹⁷⁸ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Romans*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 74, 792.

¹⁷⁹ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and Baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1117.

¹⁸⁰ Androutsos, *Δογματική*, p. 333.

¹⁸¹ John 3:5.

¹⁸² Labadarios, *Sermons*, v.1, pp. 105-106.

¹⁸³ Cf. John 3:3.

¹⁸⁴ Tit. 3:5.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Rom. 8:15, 23. Gal. 4:5. Ephes. 1:5.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Rom. 8:17. Gal. 3:29; 4:7. Tit. 3:7. James 2:5. Cf. Damalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. John 3:3, 5, 7.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. John 3:3.

Rebirth, Regeneration and Newness of Life through Baptism. The Rebirth from Above is a Heavenly and Supernatural action of the Grace of God **that occurs** in the soul of the one who is **being** baptised. Through the words “...unless one is born again...”¹⁸⁹ Christ **verified** that through Holy Baptism the old sinful way of life is banished and the renewal **of** the old man **transpires** through his Regeneration, **simultaneously** introducing him to the Newness of Life in Christ.¹⁹⁰ In other words Regeneration in Christ that **happens only** through Baptism, appears as the putting to death of the old man according to its negative aspect. Consequently, **it is** the forgiveness of sins¹⁹¹ and Justification¹⁹² as well as **being** freedom from the punishments of sin, **while**, according to its positive aspect, it is Sanctification,¹⁹³ adoption as sons¹⁹⁴ and the Newness of Life¹⁹⁵ **that** springs up from our incorporation into Christ.

Thus, St Peter, **when he addressed** people who were under the great sin of **having contributed to** Christ’s crucifixion, naturally **exalted** the negative **effects** of Holy Baptism by exhorting them “...repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” **In addition, by means of saying** “...and you shall receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit...” he **reassured them by implying** the positive side of Baptism.¹⁹⁶

St Paul stressed the negative results of Baptism by **connecting** Baptism to the death of Christ on the Cross. He presented it as symbolising the participation of the one who is being baptised to the death of Christ **and** who is buried together with Him through Baptism: “... do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised 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. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His Resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”¹⁹⁷ When he **again** proclaimed that the Lord “...saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit...”¹⁹⁸ he stressed the positive results of the Holy Mystery of Baptism. **Furthermore**, both results are manifested in his Epistle to the Corinthians, when he **wrote**: “... you were washed, ...you were sanctified, ... you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God.”¹⁹⁹ And in **his letter to the** Ephesians, **referring to** the Church he **emphasised**: “Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her, that He might Sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word.”²⁰⁰ When he **declared** that “...as many of you as were

¹⁸⁹ John 3:3, 7.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Rom. 6:4; 7:6.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Acts 10:43; 13:38; 26:18. Eph. 1:7. Col. 1:14.

¹⁹² Cf. Acts 13:39. Rom. 3:24; 8:30, 33. 1 Corinth. 6:11. Gal. 2:16-17; 3:8, 24. Tit. 3:7.

¹⁹³ Cf. 1 Corinth. 6:11. 2 Tim. 2:21. Heb. 2:11.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Rom. 8:15, 23. Gal. 4:5. Eph. 1:5.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Rom. 6:4; 7:6.

¹⁹⁶ Acts 2:38.

¹⁹⁷ Rom. 6:3-6.

¹⁹⁸ Tit. 3:5.

¹⁹⁹ 1 Corinth. 6:11.

²⁰⁰ Ephes. 5:25-26.

baptised into Christ have put on Christ...²⁰¹ he added "...you are all in one in Christ Jesus."²⁰² He presented the new form and image, which those who are baptised through the washing of Regeneration receive, being vested with "...the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness..."²⁰³ and he concluded: "Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."²⁰⁴

2. The Supernatural Results of Baptism

The teachings of the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church are in agreement with the teachings of Holy Scripture concerning Baptism. Thus, amongst the Apostolic Fathers in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, we read that those who were to be baptised went "...down into the water dead and ... came up alive."²⁰⁵ Likewise in the Epistle of Barnabas, it is assured that "...while we descend into the water laden with sins and dirt, we rise up bearing fruit in our heart and with fear and hope in Jesus in our spirits."²⁰⁶

Amongst the Apologists, St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr characterised Baptism as "...the only means which can clean those who repent."²⁰⁷ It is "...the water of Life..." in which those who are baptised are "Regenerated," having been "...washed for the forgiveness of sins through the bath which was spoken of by Isaiah..."²⁰⁸ and which is the only "...path, through which the forgiveness of our sins is accomplished and the hope of the inheritance of the good things which were promised."²⁰⁹

Theophilus of Antioch considered that at the beginning of Creation God gave the blessing to the waters from which the animals came as a Sign of the "...forgiveness of sins..." and the washing of Regeneration, which men were to receive "...being Regenerated..." in the waters of Baptism "...and receiving the Blessing from God."²¹⁰

Tertullian proclaimed, "Oh blessed Mystery of our water, through which our sins are washed away and from our previous deafness we are freed in the Eternal Life."²¹¹ According to Leeming, Tertullian's teachings of Baptism clearly assert that:

- 1) the Holy Mystery of Baptism is marvellous, manifesting the Power of God
- 2) the Holy Spirit Sanctifies the waters and grants the Power to accomplish its purpose

²⁰¹ Gal. 3:27.

²⁰² Gal. 3:28.

²⁰³ Ephes. 4:24.

²⁰⁴ Gal. 4:7.

²⁰⁵ *Shepherd of Hermas*, Parable 9, 4, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 276.

²⁰⁶ *The Epistle of Barnabas*, 11, 11, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 178.

²⁰⁷ St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 14, § 1, in *B*, v. 3, p. 220.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 1 *Apology*, 61, § 3, in *B*, v. 3, p. 194.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, *Dialogue*, 44, § 4, in *B*, v. 3, p. 247.

²¹⁰ Theophilus of Antioch, 2 *Autolycus*, 16, in *B*, v. 5, p. 33.

²¹¹ Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 1, 4, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1197.

- 3) the Baptism can be compared to the fountain of Bethesda, restoring man “... *in the likeness...*”²¹² of God, in which condition he was **originally** created
- 4) the Baptism of St John did not forgive the sins but only gave **the** reason for repentance, whereas the Baptism of Christ gives true forgiveness and Sanctification.²¹³

St Cyprian, in addition, observed that Baptism **cleans** sins and **Sanctifies** man not because of its nature but because it has the Holy Spirit.²¹⁴

Clement the Alexandrian **stated** that “...*being baptised, we are Enlightened, being Enlightened we become sons, becoming sons we are Perfected, being Perfected we become Immortal.*”²¹⁵

St Cyril of Jerusalem, expanding on the opinion expressed by Hermas, **commented** that “...*he comes down in the water dressed with sins, but the invocation of the Grace seals the soul allowing it not to be devoured by the frightful dragon. He came down dead in sins but is made alive in righteousness... and in some way he was buried in the water, as Jesus was in the tomb Who took up the universal sins, and was raised ... (and) ... walks again in the Newness of Life.*” “And in the same (water) you die and are reborn; and that saving water became for us tomb and mother”.²¹⁶

St Basil the Great determined the two goals of Baptism:

- 1) to cease “...*the body of sin in order not to be fruitful in death...*”
- 2) to live according “...*to the Spirit and to have the fruit in holiness...*”

Furthermore, he observed that “...*the water gives the image of death, as the body is surrendered to the burial...*” **while the Holy Spirit is** “... *the Life-giving Power...*” **that Regenerates** “... *the souls from the deadness of sin to the beginning of Life.*”²¹⁷ Thus he who is baptised “...*is Regenerated without being digested; he is reformed without being crushed, he is healed without feeling pain...*” and “...*without a mother he is reborn and the old man perishes according to the desires of deceit and relives and becomes a new true flower of youth.*”²¹⁸

St Gregory of Nyssa expressed the **belief** that in Baptism “...*through the presence of the Divine Power it changes him to immortality who became mortal in nature.*” Thus, “...*the birth from Above becomes the Recreation of man.*”²¹⁹

²¹² Gen. 1:26.

²¹³ Leeming, *Principles*, p. 45.

²¹⁴ St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 74, § 5, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1178.

²¹⁵ Clement the Alexandrian, *Pedagogus*, I, 6, in **B**, v. 7, p. 92. Origen, *To John*, VI, 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 14, 225.

²¹⁶ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, III, § 9; and *Catechesis Mystagogy*, II, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 444 and 1080.

²¹⁷ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, ch. 15, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 129.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, *Homily* 13, *To the holy Baptism*, §§ 3, 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 31, 429 and 433.

²¹⁹ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *To the day of Lights*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 46, 580 and 584. *Ibid*, *Catechesis*, ch. 33 and ch. 40, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 84 and 101. *Ibid*, *To the Epitaphius*, 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 46, 793.

St Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzus **pointed out** that this Divine Bath is called “...*the Baptism as burying sin in the water.*” Thus Baptism “...*becomes a helper to the first birth, working new instead of old and Divine instead of the beings, without fire refining and recreating without crushing.*” Through this “*change*” “...*all the old characters are changed in the one form of Christ.*”²²⁰

St John Chrysostom **addressed the question of why**, since Baptism frees us from all our sins, is it not called “...*the washing of the forgiveness of sins...*” **rather than** “...*the washing of Regeneration.*” He **explained that it is indeed the washing of Regeneration** “...*not simply because it removes the offences, but it creates and makes us from Above, not forming us again from the earth...*” as once God made the body of Adam out of dust “...*but creating us from the element of the water’s nature.*” **Therefore**, it is the washing of Regeneration because “...*it does not clean the vessel, but refines it once again completely.*”²²¹

3. Total Change in Baptism

According to the **forementioned**, the Regeneration of Baptism consists of a deep and total change in human nature. It is a new birth that removes the relics of sin which **are** put to death in the Sanctified water.²²² What remains is the desire to sin or “*concupiscentia*,” a sensitive condition in which the one who is baptised is **like an invalid** recovering from a long period of sickness **or like the** weakness of a new born infant in Christ, not having anything polluted in him, but **going** from strength to strength and **slowly** progressing.²²³ This condition does not carry the guilt of ancestral sin, but consists of the reason **for cultivating** virtues **and** simultaneously being strengthened by Divine Grace.

Because of this total change **that** Regenerates inner man, Baptism once received canonically, **can never be repeated**. As one is **physically** born **only** once and **undergoes** physical changes throughout his entire life, likewise and even more so, the Rebirth and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit **occurs only** once. It is a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit **should one** doubt the perfect and complete recreation given to us through **our** Baptism **by seeking** a second and more perfect Baptism.

Moreover, since we are Regenerated and recreated in Baptism, it has an **indelible and thus irreplaceable** nature characterising Holy Baptism as a **permanent** “*Seal*” **through which** “...*the Stamp of the Lord is assigned...*” upon the one who is baptised. “*The Light of the Lord’s Face...*” is **bestowed upon one** through which **one is** recognised **as belonging** to Christ. If **anyone** does not have this Seal, “...*how can the Angel fight for him? How can he be detached from the enemies, if the Seal is not recognised? How can he say that ‘I am God’s,’ not having the characteristics?*”

²²⁰ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 40 to holy Baptism*, §§ 4, 7, 8 and 47, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 364, 368 and 397.

²²¹ St. John Chrysostom, *Catechesis*, I, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 49, 227. *Ibid*, *To Isaiah*, book A’, Homily II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 70, 96. *Ibid*, *About the in the spirit and truth ...*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 68, 752. *Ibid*, *To John*, book II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 59, 245. *Ibid*, *About the in the spirit and truth ...*, in Migne, 68, 273.

²²² St. Symeon, *Euriskomena*, Homily LI, pp. 255-258.

²²³ Cf. Kritopoulos, ch. VIII, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 531. Jeremias, B’, 4, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 459. Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, ch. 16, p. 31.

However, **should** one manage “...to seal his soul and body with the anointment and the Spirit as Israel once sealed their homes with the blood of the animal and saved their firstborn, he will be without fear. For as a sealed sheep he will not be attacked easily, and the thieves do not **see him** as an easy prey.” This Seal remains “...alive for the security even after the departure (from this life). It is as a bright vestment, more honourable than gold and **greater** than a majestic tomb.”²²⁴

4. The Necessity of Baptism

The necessity of Baptism²²⁵ was **accentuated** by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who **guaranteed** that it is impossible **for those who are** not Regenerated through Baptism and **have** not participated in the saving change and recreation, to enter the Kingdom of God. “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”²²⁶ “He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”²²⁷

Dositheus of Jerusalem **accurately verified** that “...the Holy Baptism, which was ordered by the Lord, and performed in the Name of the Holy Trinity, is one of great importance. For without this no one can be saved, as the Lord said, that whoever is not born by water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. And for this reason it is necessary for the new born infants.”²²⁸

Jeremiah declared that “...even the infants must be baptised and should not be left for a long time ... For if one is not Regenerated by water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”²²⁹

According to Mogilas, through Baptism “...the entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven **is allowed**, according to the words of our Saviour Who said: ‘Unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.’”²³⁰

Kritopoulos numbered Baptism first among the three necessary **Holy** Mysteries, counting the “...threats and the promises” **that Christ pronounced** such as: “If one is not Regenerated by water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven...” **and** “...he who believes and is baptised will be saved.”²³¹

It is also **most** essential to note that in the case of Cornelius, although the Holy Spirit descended upon all those who **heard** the words of St Peter, it was considered important for them to be baptised in water “...in the Name of the Lord...” as St Peter not only instructed but commanded them.²³²

²²⁴ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 40, §§ 4 and 15, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 364 and 377. St. Basil the Great, *Homily* 13, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 31, 432.

²²⁵ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 310.

²²⁶ John 3:3.

²²⁷ Mark 16:16.

²²⁸ Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, Term XVI, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 759.

²²⁹ Jeremias, (A'), in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 394.

²³⁰ Mogilas, (A' 102), in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 636.

²³¹ Kritopoulos, ch. 5, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 525.

²³² Cf. Acts 10:44-48.

That which was always believed by the Orthodox Church is expressed in the ancient writings of the *Shepherd of Hermas* whereby "...they go down into the water dead and they come up alive."²³³ It is also understandable that those who were not made alive through Baptism remained dead. "*For before a man bears the name of the Son of God, he is dead, but when he receives the seal, he lays aside his deadness and receives Life.*"²³⁴

Origen confirmed that "...there is no forgiveness of sins without Baptism."²³⁵

St Cyril of Jerusalem strongly declared that "...if one does not receive Baptism, he cannot have Salvation..." no matter how good he is because "...he who does not receive the Seal of the water, cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."²³⁶

Also the practice of the Orthodox Church whereby new born infants who face the threat of death may be baptised through Baptism in air (Aero-baptism), demonstrates the importance and necessity of Baptism for Salvation.²³⁷

5. The Baptism of Martyrdom

The Baptism of Martyrdom²³⁸ was considered as the only type of Baptism that was able to replace Baptism in water. This belief was based on the teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who declared: "*Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father Who is in Heaven...*"²³⁹ as well as His assurance that "...for whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."²⁴⁰ The Baptism of Martyrdom was called the "*Baptism of Blood*" as Christ called His death on the Cross "*Baptism.*"²⁴¹

Tertullian mentioned that there is a second Baptism among us, which is the Baptism of Blood and of which the Lord said: "*I have a Baptism with which I will be baptised...*"²⁴² even though He had already been baptised.²⁴³

Origen certifying "...that Martyrdom is given to us as Baptism..." justified Baptism of Blood by observing that it "...is called in this way... because it manifests..." the question asked by our Lord: "*Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptised with the Baptism that I am baptised with?*"²⁴⁴ Elsewhere our Lord pronounced: "*I have a Baptism to be baptised with, and how distressed I Am until it is accomplished!*"^{245 246}

²³³ *Shepherd of Hermas*, Parable 9, 16, § 4, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 276.

²³⁴ Ibid, Parable 9, 16, § 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 276.

²³⁵ Origen, *Admonition to martyrdom*, 30, in *B*, v. 9, p. 52.

²³⁶ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, III, §§ 7 and 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 440 and 432.

²³⁷ Androutsos, *Dogmatique*, p. 324.

²³⁸ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 310.

²³⁹ Matth. 10:32.

²⁴⁰ Luke 9:24. Matth. 16:25.

²⁴¹ Matth. 20:22-23.

²⁴² Cf. Matth. 20:22.

²⁴³ Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, c. 16, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1326.

²⁴⁴ Matth. 20:22.

²⁴⁵ Luke 12:50.

St John Chrysostom, referring to the words of St Paul according to which “...we were buried with Him through Baptism into death...” and “...we have been united together in the likeness of His death...”²⁴⁷ called “...the Baptism a cross...” **concluding** that “... the cross is a Baptism...” because “...the Baptism with which I am to be baptised...” He said, “...you will also be baptised with...” and again “...the Baptism which I have to be baptised with, you do not know.”²⁴⁸

What inner inspiration and Divine Visitation presupposes in order that one suffers death for Christ’s sake, one can understand if he recalls the God-inspired words of St Paul, according to which “...no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”²⁴⁹ Hence St John Chrysostom observed that “...do not admire if the Baptism is called Martyrdom; **for here** the Spirit flies over with great attention.”²⁵⁰

Generally speaking, **right from the beginning** within the Orthodox Church it was believed that Martyrs “...without water receive the Kingdom...”²⁵¹ “...and as those who are baptised in water, likewise those who are Martyred are washed within their own blood.”²⁵² **During** the persecutions **when** a Catechumen was killed, although **before his death** he **had been** forbidden to participate in any of the Holy Mysteries of the **Church**, **through** Martyrdom he **would** be justified by God “...because he received the Baptism with his own blood.”²⁵³

According to St Cyprian, these Catechumens received Baptism in their own blood **of which** Christ had spoken and which is greater in Grace, higher in Power **and** more valuable in honour because with it no one sins. **It** perfects our faith and transmits us from this life directly to God **and** while Baptism in water **bestows** forgiveness of sins, that of Baptism of Blood **bestows crowns** of virtue.²⁵⁴

St Gregory of Nazianzus said that Baptism “...through Martyrdom and blood... **with which** Christ was baptised ...” is characterised as “...more respectable than any other type of Baptism because no one is polluted with the stain (of sin).”²⁵⁵

Tertullian believed that this Baptism of Martyrdom replaces that of the washing through water, even if the latter **has not yet been** received but, if lost because of a renouncement of faith or **due to** serious sins, it **reinstates the Blessings of Holy Baptism.**²⁵⁶

²⁴⁶ Origen, *Admonition to martyrdom*, 30, in **B**, v. 9, p. 52.

²⁴⁷ Rom. 6:4, 5.

²⁴⁸ St. John Chrysostom, *To John*, Homily 25, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 59, 151.

²⁴⁹ 1 Corinth. 12:3.

²⁵⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *To saint Lucianus the martyr*, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 50, 522.

²⁵¹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, III, § 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 440.

²⁵² St. John Chrysostom, *To saint Lucianus the martyr*, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 50, 522.

²⁵³ St. Hippolytus, *Egyptian Order*, ch. 44.

²⁵⁴ St. Cyprian, *Ad Fortum. praef.* 4, in Migne, *P.L.*, 4, 680. Cf. *Ibid*, *Epist.* 73, 22, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1170.

²⁵⁵ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *To the holy Lights*, Homily 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 356.

²⁵⁶ Tertullian, in Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. III, p. 103, note 26.

The question of whether “... *those who died in battle (could) be considered as Martyrs of Christ...*”²⁵⁷ is answered in the light of history and theology and not from a political aspect. Martyrs were greatly honoured as they were considered to be like other Christs (“*alter Christus*”). Christ died not simply as the only Innocent One but He faced death with absolute patience, longsuffering and without any resistance or defence. He is the First-Martyr, “*the faithful Witness.*”²⁵⁸ Consequently, those who died for Christ’s sake, enduring Martyrdom with tremendous patience were always considered as Holy Martyrs by the Orthodox Church. A Martyr is proclaimed not because of death but because of the reason for which that death is enforced; not the passion itself, but the intension of him who endures it, according to the teachings of St Paul who wrote “... *though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.*”²⁵⁹ Thus those who die in battle for the protection of their nation may be considered Martyrs and heroes of the nation but they are not Martyrs of Christ except when one is captured and refusing to be forced to renounce his Orthodox Christian Faith is killed for Christ’s sake. Then he would be considered a Holy Martyr of the Faith as well as a Martyr of the nation - an ethno-Martyr.

III. THE OFFICIATORS OF BAPTISM

The officiator of the Holy Mystery of Baptism is the bishop followed by the presbyters. If necessary and in the absence of a presbyter, the deacon or even a layman, man or woman, who are already members of the Orthodox Church and uphold the true Faith, may conduct a Baptism. In order for anyone to be accepted in the Orthodox Church it is necessary for him to go through the indispensable preparation, which is the Catechism, the renouncement of the old sinful life, the acceptance of the Truth of the Orthodox Christian Faith and the Confession of this Faith. However, when the one is baptised as an infant or a young child, they are immediately accepted in Holy Baptism by relying on parents and God-parents to seriously undertake the responsibility of teaching them the Orthodox Faith.

1. The Officiators of Holy Baptism

The Commandment and Authority was given by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to His Holy Apostles and Disciples to “...*go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...*”²⁶⁰ and to “...*go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*”²⁶¹ Since the early years of the Church this Authority has been passed down by the Holy Apostles to others, as in the case of the Ordination of the seven deacons,²⁶² the Baptism of the Samaritans by St Philip the deacon,²⁶³ the Baptism of Cornelius and

²⁵⁷ Bartmann, *Theologie Dogmatique*, v. II, p. 290.

²⁵⁸ Rev. 1:5.

²⁵⁹ 1 Corinth. 13:3.

²⁶⁰ Matth. 28:19-20.

²⁶¹ Mark 16:15.

²⁶² Cf. Acts 6:2-6

²⁶³ Cf. Acts 8:12.

his household by St Peter.²⁶⁴ St Paul **however, informing** us that he did not baptise anyone “...except Crispus and Gaius...” and “...the household of Stephanas...” stated that “...Christ did not send (him) to baptise, but to preach the gospel.”²⁶⁵ St Paul **himself** received Holy Baptism²⁶⁶ not from any of the Apostles but from St Ananias who is described in the Book of Acts **as being** a simple “disciple.”²⁶⁷

Consequently, it was believed that bishops had the duty and the right to baptise. **For this reason** St Ignatius of Antioch **exhorted the Christians to** “... all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the presbyter as you would the Apostles; respect the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no one do anything that has to do with the Church without the bishop. Only that Eucharist which is under the authority of the bishop (or whomever he himself designates) is to be considered valid. Wherever the bishop appears, there let the congregation be; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic Church. It is not permissible either to baptise or to hold a love feast²⁶⁸ without the bishop. But whatever he approves is also pleasing to God, in order that everything you do may be trustworthy and valid.”²⁶⁹

Tertullian **confirmed** the bishops’ right to baptise and that it was later permissible for the presbyters and deacons to do so but not without the bishop’s permission.²⁷⁰

In agreement with the 47th, 49th and 50th Canons²⁷¹ of the Holy Apostles,²⁷² which confer **that bishops** and presbyters should baptise, are the Canons of the *Apostolic Orders* which **forbid those** in the lower priesthood (readers, chanters etc.) to baptise, **permitting** “...only the Bishops and presbyters being served by the deacons.” Elsewhere they order **exactly** that the “...Deacon ... does not baptise, neither offers; for only the bishop offers or the presbyter, **(while)** he (the deacon) gives to the people, not as a priest but as serving the priests.”²⁷³

Conversely, although this was the canonical practice of the Orthodox Church, when in time of extreme danger and threat of death it was **impossible to find** a canonical officiator to **conduct** the Holy Mystery of Baptism, it was allowed **for** a deacon or any Orthodox member of the Church to do so.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁴ Cf. Acts 9:44-48.

²⁶⁵ Cf. 1 Corinth. 1:14-16, 17.

²⁶⁶ Cf. Acts 9:18.

²⁶⁷ Acts 9:10.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Jude 12. 1 Corinth. 11:17-34.

²⁶⁹ St. Ignatius, *To Smyrnaeans*, 8, 1-2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 112-113.

²⁷⁰ Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 17, in migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1218.

²⁷¹ See Pedalion, pp. 68, 76, 80-81, 81-91.

²⁷² Rallis, *Canons 2*, p. 66.

²⁷³ *Apostolic Orders*, III, 11, and VIII, 28, 4, in *B*, v. 2, pp. 64 and 162. Georgopoulos, *Anthology*, p. 10.

²⁷⁴ Cf. Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, c. 17, in migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1218. Owen, *Theology*, p. 401. St. Augustine, *Contra ep. Parmenia*, II, 13, 29, in migne, *P.L.*, 43, 71. St. Hieronymus, *Dialogus contra Lucif.*, 9, in migne, *P.L.*, 23, 173.

Tertullian **forbade women from officiating** the Mystery of Baptism based upon the teachings of St Paul²⁷⁵ **whereby women were not** allowed either to speak, to teach or to baptise at the gatherings of the Church.²⁷⁶

St Epiphanius **pointed out** that if it was allowed **for** women to baptise, our Lord would have had received Baptism from His Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary and not from St John the Forerunner and Baptist²⁷⁷ although this argument was used to prove that women are not allowed “...*to officiate or to act anything canonical in the Church.*” This forbiddance of women ceased in the West only after the year 1,000 AD.

In the East **until** the 4th century Baptism by laymen was **regarded with great reluctance**. St Basil the Great under no circumstances accepted Baptism of heretics, officiated by laymen. St Gregory of Nazianzus **believed** that anyone **could** receive Baptism from any canonical bishop or presbyter **although** he did not mention that if necessity **arose** it **could** be officiated by a layman.²⁷⁸ In any case, in the 51st Canon of Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, it is stated that “...*if an infant was baptised by a layman through immersions in the Name of the Holy Trinity and recovers from the danger of death, the ecclesiastic canons determine that the priest should perform the entire service of the Holy Baptism upon the infant which is to be baptised except not to repeat the three immersions and the invocation of the Holy Trinity.*”²⁷⁹ Concerning the Baptism in air (Aerobaptism), since the three immersions and elevations are not performed in water, if infants survived, the Service must be repeated²⁸⁰.

It is clearly understandable that under no circumstances can anyone who is not canonically baptised and **who** is not a member of the Orthodox Church, baptise.

2. Who Are Accepted in Baptism?

The question **of** who are accepted in Holy Baptism²⁸¹ **was addressed by** St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr who said: “*Anyone who is convinced and believes truthfully in our teachings and promises to live accordingly, and prays and asks with fasting from God to be forgiven of their previous sins ... and afterwards are presented where water is...*” **may** receive Baptism. **Initially** Catechesis preceded the evangelism of those who were to be baptised. Hence from the 2nd century we have the Order of Catechumen. **After** expressing their steadfast faith and promising to follow the moral teachings of the Holy Gospel **they** were accepted in **Holy** Baptism. This was practiced according to the teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who instructed His Holy Apostles to “*teach*”²⁸² the nations and afterwards to baptise them, promising that “...*he who believes and is baptised will be Saved.*”²⁸³

²⁷⁵ 1 Corinth. 14:34.

²⁷⁶ Tertullian, *De virg. Veland.*, in Migne., *P.L.*, 2, 950.

²⁷⁷ St. Epiphanius, *Panarion, Heresy* 79, 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 42, 744.

²⁷⁸ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 40 to *holy Baptism*, § 26, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 396

²⁷⁹ According to quotation in Androutsos, *Dogmatique*, p. 534.

²⁸⁰ Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. III, p. 109.

²⁸¹ Labadarios, *Sermons*, v. 1, p. 107. Georgopoulos, *Anthology*, p. 15.

²⁸² Matth. 28:19.

²⁸³ Mark 16:16. Cf. Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12; 9:37; 10:34-38; 16:14.

The hearing of the word of the Gospel, faith in it, repentance for their previous way of life and disbelief, renouncement of Satan and joining with Christ, official Confession of Faith and the promise to follow the virtuous and new Life, were the requirements from those who were prepared to receive the Holy Mystery of Baptism. Hence St Cyril of Jerusalem in his 1st Catechesis characterised that period of Catechesis as “...*a period of confession*...” according to which Catechumen were called to confess “...*their sins which they committed in deeds, in words, during night or in day.*”²⁸⁴ Tertullian²⁸⁵ and St Ambrosius²⁸⁶ greatly **appreciated** Repentance before Baptism.

3. Infant Baptism

It is **uncertain but** very possible that from the Apostolic Era infants and children were accepted in Baptism.²⁸⁷ Thus, the Book of Acts and St Paul **mention entire** families accepting Baptism **such as** Cornelius and “*his household,*”²⁸⁸ Lydia and “*her household,*”²⁸⁹ the Philippian Jailor “*and all his family,*”²⁹⁰ “*Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue...with all his household*”²⁹¹ **and** the “*household of Stephanas*”²⁹² **while** in the case of St Timothy, St Paul **mentioned** that “...*from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures.*”²⁹³ In these families it is quite possible that children **were included**. Baptism was considered by St Paul **as** “...*the circumcision of Christ,*”²⁹⁴ which replaced the circumcision of the flesh according to Judaic Law. Besides, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, proclaimed the necessity of Baptism regardless of one’s age and expressed a special love towards the “*little children,*” instructing the Holy Apostles not to **forbid mothers** who presented them to Him, in order that He may bless and pray for them. “*Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for such is the Kingdom of Heaven.’ And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.*”²⁹⁵ **Furthermore**, St Paul referred to the children **of** mixed marriages **declaring** that “...*they are Holy*” too.²⁹⁶

St Irenaeus remarked that Christ came to save all, **especially** those who through Him will be Regenerated in God: children, infants, youths and the elderly.²⁹⁷

²⁸⁴ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, I, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 376.

²⁸⁵ Tertullian, *De poenitentia*, 6, in migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1349.

²⁸⁶ St. Ambrosius, *In Luce*, VI, 2, in migne, *P.L.*, 16, 1754.

²⁸⁷ Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, ch. 16, pp. 39-41. Labadarios, *Sermons*, v. 1, p. 110. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 289-290. Pedalion, pp.688-690.

²⁸⁸ Acts 11:14

²⁸⁹ Acts 16:15.

²⁹⁰ Acts 16:33.

²⁹¹ Acts 18:8.

²⁹² 1 Corinth. 1:16.

²⁹³ 2 Tim. 3:15.

²⁹⁴ Col. 2:11.

²⁹⁵ Matth. 19:13-15. Mark 10:13-16. Luke 18:15-17.

²⁹⁶ 1 Corinth. 7:14.

²⁹⁷ St. Irenaeus, book II, ch. 22, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 784. Cf. Ibid, in Hadjephraimides, p. 156.

Tertullian proclaimed **even** more clearly **that the innocent state** of infants makes the acceptance of Baptism unnecessary, **while others** must receive Baptism **after having been** taught the Christian Faith. **This he believed because** our Master **had warned** not to forbid children when they came to Him. **Rather** let them come to Him **and** when they are adolescent, after they **had been** taught, let them become Christians, when they are able to know Christ.²⁹⁸

On the contrary, St Cyprian **felt** that it is not **permissible** to forbid recently **born children from receiving Holy Baptism as they have no other sins besides that with which they were born according** to Adam, **bearing** the pollution of death of the ancient Offence and which is forgiven so easily.²⁹⁹

Origen, **bearing** in mind the practice of the Church during his time **with regard to** infant Baptism, **commented** that “...*the children are baptised for the forgiveness of sins...*” **and when the question arose** “*What sins? When have they sinned?*” he replied “*because no one is free from sin, the stain is placed aside through Baptism, and for this reason the children are baptised.*”³⁰⁰

St Gregory of Nazianzus more than anyone else dealt with infant Baptism. He **would ask** “*Do you have an infant? ...Do not give time to the evil one...Let it be Sanctified from infancy, in the Spirit.*” He reminded people of St Anna who “...*before Samuel was born ... promised him to God*³⁰¹ *and when he was born, (promised) to make him a priest immediately and sowed the priestly vestments.*³⁰²” He also **dealt** with the argument that infants do not have **a conscience nor suffer** damage **that** occurs **when** being deprived **of** Holy Baptism or the Grace which those who are baptised receive. He expressed the opinion that **infants** should be three years old “...*or younger or older than this...*” so that “...*even if they do not understand completely ... they are imprinted...*” in the memory of the little child “...*thus being Sanctified and the souls and the bodies being perfected in the great Mystery.*” He **further emphasised** that it is advisable to baptise infants “...*for if a danger occurs. It is greater to be Sanctified unconsciously rather than to depart without being Sealed.*” He **referred** to the eight days circumcision as a typical Seal. He **pointed out** “...*the use of the anointing of the lintel...*”³⁰³ with the blood of lambs during the time of the exodus of the Israelites from the land of Egypt, which “...*through the use of the unconscious...*” the first-born of the Jews were saved.³⁰⁴

The subject of infant Baptism was **seriously** dealt with during the 4th century between St Augustine and the Pelagians. St Augustine was searching for a reason to **justify Original or Ancestral Sin through** infant Baptism, since Baptism is offered for the forgiveness of sins. The Pelagians refused to accept the inheritance of this sin, **for** their **own** reason, **believing that** it was **to** their benefit to **deny** that infant Baptism was a universal and ancient practice of the Orthodox Church. They believed that infants were baptised, **not to be healed** from sin but **to become greater in goodness from**

²⁹⁸ Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 18, in migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1330.

²⁹⁹ St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 59, 5, in migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1054.

³⁰⁰ Origen, in Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. III, p. 114.

³⁰¹ Cf. 1 Samuel (1 Kings) 1:11; 2:11.

³⁰² Cf. 1 Samuel (1 Kings) 2:18-19.

³⁰³ Ex. 12:22.

³⁰⁴ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, in Trempelas, *Dogmatique*, v. III, p. 114.

whatever they were **for should** they die without being baptised, they believed that **infants** would not go **to** the Kingdom of Heaven but **instead** would be introduced to Eternal Life.

It is obvious that Baptism is offered only to the living. Consequently Baptism for the dead is a misinterpretation of the Apostolic verse: “*What will they do who are baptised for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptised for the dead? And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour...*”³⁰⁵ **which** was **correctly** condemned by the Church.³⁰⁶ In Africa, according to the witness of St Augustine³⁰⁷ and Fulgentius,³⁰⁸ this **practice** was in use especially by the heretics. **However**, these heretics were correctly characterised by St John Chrysostom as “...*playing in a tent.*” Theophylactus of Bulgaria observed that “...*those who believed that there is Resurrection of the dead bodies and are baptised for such hope, what are they doing since they are deceived? Why are they completely baptised men for the Resurrection, in other words for the hope in the Resurrection, if the dead are not risen?*”³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ 1 Corinth. 15:29-30.

³⁰⁶ St. John Chrysostom, *To 1 Corinthians*, Homily 40, § 1, in Monfaucon, v. 10, p. 440.

³⁰⁷ St. Augustine, *Opus imperfectum contra Julianem*, VI, 38, in migne, *P.L.*, 45, 1597.

³⁰⁸ Fulgentius, *Epistola XI*, 4, in migne, *P.L.*, 65, 379. Ibid, *Epistola XII*, 20, in migne, *P.L.*, 65, 383.

³⁰⁹ Theophylactus of Bulgaria, *Epistle to 1 Corinthians*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 124, 768.