

CHAPTER SIX

THE MYSTERY OF HOLY CHRISMATION

I. DEFINITION, NAMES AND DIVINE INSTITUTION

The **Holy** Mystery of Chrismation is given immediately after the **Holy Mystery** of Baptism by the **Anointing** and **Signing** of the Cross on the different parts of the one who has been baptised to transmit the **Strength** and various **Gifts** or **Charismata** of the Holy Spirit.¹ These Gifts are necessary for the strengthening and arming of **those who have** been baptised in order to grow and **perfect them** in the newness of **Life in Christ**. It is an individual and **separate** Holy Mystery **the nature and meaning of which is clarified** by the different names **applied to it**. The Divine institution is **evident from** the promises of **our** Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, concerning the richness of the **Gifts** or **Charismata** of the Holy Spirit **bestowed upon** the faithful. It is **clearly witnessed by** the laying on of hands of the Holy Apostles **that followed Baptism for the purpose of** transmitting the Holy Spirit to the faithful **as well as** by the Apostolic **Proclamations of** assurance, anointing and engagement of the **Holy Spirit..** **The Apostolic Proclamations** refer to the inner **Visitation and Action** of the Holy Spirit but they do not exclude the external use according to ancient **Ecclesiastic Tradition of oil**.

1. The Meaning of the Holy Mystery of Chrismation

When one is baptised, **one arises** from the **Baptismal Font** Regenerated from **Above**, clean, **Justified** and **Sanctified just like** infants in Christ. As the **newly** born in their natural life, regardless of their **health, have** need of air, light and nourishment for their strengthening, growth and progress **towards adulthood**, likewise **in spiritual** life. Those who **arise** from the **Baptismal Font** have the need of the **Life-giving** atmosphere and **Protection** of the Holy Spirit in order that through the various Gifts they be strengthened in the newness of **Life in Christ, armed** against sin, **enabling them** to grow into **perfection** according to the measure of the stature of Christ. It is offered to those who are baptised “...*the Divine power which gives all things pertaining to Life and Godliness...*”² through the Divine Mystery of Holy Chrismation, which at the beginning was inseparably joined **to** the Holy Mystery of Baptism.

The Holy Mystery of Chrismation is the God-instituted Ceremony, according to which those who are recently Baptised and Regenerated in Christ, being anointed with the Sanctified Myrrh on the various parts of their bodies, by the Signing of the Holy Cross and the invocation of the “...*Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit...*” they receive the Charismata or Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are necessary **for strengthening and growth** in the newness of Life in Christ

¹ Cf. Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, p. 148. Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, pp. 374-388. Kefalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 182-183. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 197-199. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 312. Labadarios, *Sermons*, v. 1, pp. 111-114. Georgopoulos, *Anthology*, pp. 17-20.

² 2 Peter 1:3.

2. Names of the Holy Mystery and its Divine Institution

The meaning of the Holy Mystery of Chrismation more or less manifests its nature and the various names with which it is ascribed, expresses either the external aspect, the internal action or influence upon the depths of the soul of the one who is anointed. Thus, in relation to the external and perceptible sign of Holy Chrismation, it is referred to in the New Testament as the "...laying on of the hands..."³ "manus imposition," "chrism," or "unction," "mystical chrism," "Holy chrism," "Heavenly chrism," "Mystery of the chrism," "Sacramentum Chrismatis," "Myrrh," "oil of God," "Holy Oil," "Chrism of Eucharist," "Mystery of the Ceremony of the Myrrh."⁴

In relation to the internal Supernatural and invisible action upon the soul of the Anointed by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the action is called "the dose of the Spirit," "Christ's Charisma," "the antitype of the Holy Spirit," "the assurance of the Confession,"⁵ "Confirmation," "the perfect," "the perfection" and "Perfectio consummation." Both aspects of the Holy Mystery are expressed by the terms: "Signaculum Dominicum," "Signaculum spiritale" and "Signaculum vitae aeternae."⁶

The contemporary books of confession refer to Holy Chrismation as the Mystery "...of assurance of the Holy Myrrh and of the Holy chrism,"⁷ "the Myrrh of Chrismation,"⁸ "Holy Chrism"⁹ or "Holy Myrrh,"¹⁰ "the chrism"¹¹ or "Mystery of the Divine Myrrh."¹²

The New Testament does not contain direct information with regard to the Divine institution of the Holy Mystery of Chrismation by our Lord Himself. However, it is signified by the Promise of Christ to send the Holy Spirit to the Disciples by Whom all those who come to Him and who thirst would be quenched: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, Whom those believing in Him would receive."¹³ Obviously this Divine Promise refers not only to a few charismatics, as mentioned in 1st

³ Acts 8:17-18. Heb. 6:2. *Apostolic Orders*, II, 32, 3, in **B**, v. 2, p. 38.

⁴ St. Augustine, *De baptismo contra Donatus*, III, 16, 21, in migne, *P.L.*, 43, 149. Tertullian, *De baptismo*, 7. St. Cyprian, *Epist. LXX*. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, 1, 4, 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1088, 1092 and 1089. Canons 48 and 7 of the Laodicia Synod. St. Augustine, *Contra lit. Petilianii*, III, civ, 239, in migne, *P.L.*, 43, 342. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Isaiah*, 25, 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 70, 561. Theophilus of Antioch, *I Autolyucus*, § 12, in **B**, v. 5, p. 19. St. Dionysius the Aeropagite, *About Ecclesiastic Hierarchy*, IV, 3, 12, in Migne, *P.G.*, 3, 485.

⁵ St. Isidorus of Pelusion, *book I, Epistle 450*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 78, 429. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, 3 and 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1092 and 1088. *Apostolic Orders*, III, 17, **B**, v. 2, p. 67.

⁶ Clement the Alexandrian, *Pedagogus*, I, 6. St. Ambrosius, *De sacramentis*, III, 2 and 8, in migne, *P.L.*, 16, 450. St. Cyprian, *Epist. ad Jubaien*, 73, 9, in migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1160. St. Ambrosius, *De mysteriis*, c. VII, 41, in migne, *P.L.*, 16, 453 and 419. Didymus the Blind, *About the Holy Spirit*, book II, ch. XIV, in Migne, *P.G.*, 39, 712. *Apostolic Orders*, VII, 22, 2-3.

⁷ Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, Term 15, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 757.

⁸ Mogilas, A' 104, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 637.

⁹ Kritopoulos, ch. 5, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 526..

¹⁰ Ibid, ch. 8, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 531.

¹¹ Jeremias, A', in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 389.

¹² Ibid, B', § 4, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 390 and 459.

¹³ John 7:37-38, 39.

Corinthians,¹⁴ who, according to the needs of the first Church, received special Charismata **that eventually** ceased, but **those who** from generation to generation re-appeared, being fulfilled **particularly** through the Holy Mystery of Chrismation. This can be understood from the teachings and practices of the Holy Apostles, who neither practiced nor taught anything **unless** they had heard **it from** or been guided by their Master and Teacher, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Jeremiah **declared** that “...*the Divine Mystery of the sacred Myrrh is not found in the Holy Scripture, but is delivered by the disciples of the Word.*”¹⁵

Mogilas added that “...*the second Mystery is the Myrrh of Chrismation, which began from that period, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles ... This anointing with Myrrh or this action was performed at the time of the Apostles by the laying on of the hands; because the Scripture says: ‘then they **laid** the hands upon them and received the Holy Spirit.’ Afterwards it was performed with the anointing with Myrrh.*”¹⁶

That the Holy Mystery was **initially** established by the Holy Apostles is witnessed in the case of those who believed and were baptised in Samaria, according to which “... *as yet He (the Holy Spirit) had fallen upon none of them...*” **so** they **had** sent **for** St Peter and St John who “...*when they had come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit... then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*”¹⁷ **There was** nother **instance** in Ephesus when St Paul “...*having passed through...(found) ...some disciples...*” who were baptised **according to the** Baptism of St John **but had** not received the Holy Spirit for they **had** “...*not so much heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.*” For this reason “...*they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.*”¹⁸

In both cases Baptism is **clearly** distinguished **from the laying on** of hands by **means of** which the Gifts or Charismata of the Holy Spirit were granted. This differentiation is also very clear in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which speaks **of** “...*the doctrines of Baptisms...*” and “...*laying on of hands.*”¹⁹

Biblical references **referring** to the teachings of the Holy Apostles are: “...*the Love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who has **been** given to us...*”²⁰ “...*you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of Adoption by Whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’...*”²¹ “...*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God...*”²² “...*This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing*

¹⁴ 1 Corinth. 12:29.

¹⁵ Jeremias, A’, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 390.

¹⁶ Mogilas, A’ 104, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 637.

¹⁷ Acts 8:14-17..

¹⁸ Acts 19:1-7.

¹⁹ Heb. 6:2.

²⁰ Rom. 5:5.

²¹ Rom. 8:15.

²² 1 Corinth. 2:12.

of faith?”²³ **and** “... because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts”²⁴. Classic verses are: “Now He Who established us with you in Christ and has anointed us in God, Who also has sealed us and **has** given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee...”²⁵ “...in Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory...”²⁶ “... do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption...”²⁷ “... you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things...”²⁸ “... the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.”²⁹

No one can deny that both of the abovementioned Holy Apostles were referring to the inner action of the Holy Spirit, by **means of** which the Lord “...as by a Seal ... gave us the Gift of the Holy Spirit...”³⁰ and anointed and sealed us “...together as Prophets and priests and kings.”³¹ These Offices were anointed by Blessed Oil and in a very early stage, the laying on of hands upon those who were baptised was replaced by the Holy Apostles with the anointing with Holy Myrrh, **reminiscent of the** anointing of the high priests and kings **in the Old Testament**.

3. The Teachings of the Holy Fathers

It must be noted that since the second century, the teachings of the Holy Fathers and ecclesiastic writers of the Orthodox Church **dealt with** the Holy Mystery of Chrismation. **Neither** the Didache nor St Justin the Philosopher and Martyr **mention anything about the transmitting of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the hands** although they speak of Baptism and the Divine Eucharist. This **could** be explained by the fact that in the beginning, as Christian communities were small, all Holy Mysteries were officiated by the local Bishops. Holy Chrismation was immediately given after **Baptism as** a continuation of the **latter**. Since the right of officiating the Mystery of Baptism was given to priests, **obviously** the right of anointing with the Holy Myrrh was passed down **as well**.

Thus, the first witness **of** Holy Chrismation **is** that of Theophilus of Antioch, who explaining the reason why “...we are called Christians...” observed that “...we are anointed with the Oil of God.”³²

²³ Gal. 3:2.

²⁴ Gal. 4:6.

²⁵ 2 Corinth. 1:21-22.

²⁶ Ephes. 1:13-14.

²⁷ Ephes. 4:30.

²⁸ 1 John 2:20.

²⁹ 1 John 2:27.

³⁰ Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Ephesians 1:13*, in Migne, P.G., 82, 513.

³¹ St. John Chrysostom, *To 2 Corinthians*, Homily III, § 4, in Migne, P.G., 61, 411.

³² Theophilus of Antioch, *1 Autolycus*, § 12, in **B**, v. 5, p. 19.

St Irenaeus, referring to the ways **that** were used by heretics in Baptism and Chrismation, observed that the Holy Spirit is not given by magic, as **believed by** Simon the magician, but through the laying on of hands. According to St Irenaeus the Holy Spirit Who is the Bread of Life, is received by those who the Apostles laid their hands **upon**.³³

Tertullian, referring to the three **Holy Mysteries of** Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist, **clearly** distinguishes Chrismation from Baptism. The **latter** Regenerates by water **whereas the former bestows** the Holy Spirit. Baptism, according to Tertullian, does not give the Holy Spirit but only prepares the faithful to receive Him through Holy Chrismation.³⁴ **He** considers Baptism as a kind of contract **whereby** he who is **being** baptised **is sealed** with proclamations and promises by God.³⁵ He does not clarify exactly how the Holy Spirit bestows His Gifts **through the** laying on of hands or **through** the anointment. Although he noted that **these Gifts are bestowed** through the blessing and invocation of the Holy Spirit,³⁶ elsewhere he **observed** that the flesh is anointed, in order that the soul be Sanctified, the flesh is Signed, in order that the soul be armed **and** the flesh, through the laying on of the hands, is **overshadowed so** that the soul be Enlightened through the Holy Spirit.³⁷

Pope Cornelius (**circa** 250 AD) in his letter to Photius of Antioch **accused** Novatianus that because he was baptised with clinical Baptism **but** was not sealed “...*by the Bishop...*” he did not receive “... *the Holy Spirit.*”³⁸

St Cyprian distinguishing Chrismation from Baptism, **ascribed them as Mysteries**, for each one **he observed** that it is necessary for **the one** who is baptised to be anointed **through** Chrismation **in order to become anointed of God and thus enabling him** to have **the Grace of Christ** within him.³⁹ Elsewhere he **emphasised that** “...*two Mysteries rule in the Christian perfect birth, the one which regenerates man, Baptism, and the other which gives to him the Holy Spirit.*”⁴⁰ It is not impossible for men to be Sanctified and to become children of God **on condition that they are** Regenerated by both **Holy Mysteries**. Exalting **the Mystery of** the laying on of the hands, he determined that through Baptism one is Regenerated **and** through the laying on of the hands one receives the Holy Spirit.⁴¹ Referring to the **Book of Acts**⁴² **referring to** the Samaritans, **he noted** that the practice **of the local church** is the same as ours, for those who are baptised are presented to the Elders of the Church **so as** through prayer and the laying on of the hands they **may** receive the Holy Spirit and through the Sign of the Lord, they might be perfected.⁴³

³³ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book I, ch. 21, §§ 3-5 and ch. 23, § 1; and book IV, ch. 38, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 614-615. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 87-89, 90, 352.

³⁴ Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 40, in migne, *P.L.*, 2, 54-55. *Ibid*, *De baptismo*, IV, in migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1206.

³⁵ Leeming, *Principles*, p. 197.

³⁶ Tertullian, *De baptismo*, VIII, in migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1207.

³⁷ *Ibid*, *De resurrectione carne*, VIII, in migne, *P.L.*, 2, 806.

³⁸ Eusebius, *Church History*, VI, 43, in Migne, *P.G.*, 20, 624.

³⁹ St. Cyprian, *Epist. ad Januarium* 70, in migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1078.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, *Epist.* 72, 1, in migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1083. *Ibid*, *Epist.* 73, 21-22, in migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1170.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, *Epist.* 74, 7, in migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1132.

⁴² Acts 8:14-17.

⁴³ St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 73, 9, in migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1115.

In the epistle of Firmilianus of Caesarea addressed to St Cyprian,⁴⁴ he revealed that the same order and teaching concerning the second **Holy** Mystery was practiced in **Carthage**. The transmitting of the Charismata of the Holy Spirit, the giving of Baptism and the Ordination **of priests were preserved to be officiated only by** the Bishop. These were performed by the laying on of hands.⁴⁵

In the Alexandrian Church, Origen first informs us that the Gift of the Grace of the Holy Spirit is manifested through the imagery of the Blessed Oil, so that he who returns from sin **would** not only be able to receive forgiveness **of sins** but **also** to be filled with the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶

The *Egyptian Order*, as well as the Canons ascribed to St Hippolytus, bears witness not only **of** the practice in Rome but that of Alexandria **as well**. According to both writings, he who was baptised was **immediately** anointed “...with oil which was *Sanctified*.” The **Catechumen** was anointed by the presbyter **who said**: “*I anoint you with Holy Oil in the Name of Jesus Christ*.” He was **then** presented to the **Bishop** who laid his hand **on him** and called upon Divine Grace **while** pouring the **Sanctified Oil** upon his head.⁴⁷

St Cyril of Jerusalem, who **dealt** with the Mystery of Chrismation **in** his **writings, *Mystagogy Catechisis***, observed that as Christ “...in Jordan was washed in the river...” He **emerged** from the waters “...and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him.” Likewise we **emerge from** the Baptismal font **and receive** Sacred Chrismation **which is** the antitype **of that** by which Christ was Anointed **and which** is the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸

St Ambrosius, the author of the “*De Sacramentis*,” **mentioned** the Spiritual Sign (“*signaculum spiritale*”) by **means of** which, with the invocation **of** the priest, the Holy Spirit with the seven Gifts or Charismata is poured upon those who are baptised.⁴⁹

St Basil the Great observed that **concerning the blessing** of “...the Oil of Chrismation...” and “...the anointing of the Oil...” we have been taught “...from silent and mystic tradition.”⁵⁰

St Gregory of Nazianzus **wondered** what **would** happen to **the one** who has been armed with Baptism “...and signed with Chrismation and the Spirit.”⁵¹

⁴⁴ Ibid, *Epist.* 75, 7-8, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1161-1162.

⁴⁵ Acts 19:2-6.

⁴⁶ Origen, *To Leviticus*, Homily VIII, 11, in Migne, *P.G.*, 12, 507-508.

⁴⁷ Hauler, *Didascalie Apostolorum*, p. 110. Achelis, *Die ältesten Quellen*, v. I, *Canones Hippolyti*, p. 98. Canon 19, §§ 134, 136 and 139.

⁴⁸ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1089.

⁴⁹ St. Ambrosius, *De mysteriis*, in Migne, *P.L.*, 16, 419. Ibid, *de Sacramentis*, III, c. 2, § 8, in Migne, *P.L.*, 16, 453.

⁵⁰ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, XXVII, § 66, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 188.

⁵¹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 40 to holy Baptism*, § 15, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 377.

St John Chrysostom advised that one should cry for “...*those departed without the enlightenment, those without the seal.*”⁵²

Didymus the Blind taught that “... *the anointing of Aaron ...*” was sacred “...*and all those who are anointed are called anointed ones because they bear the Sanctified Chrismation, which we receive.*”⁵³

St Cyril of Alexandria observed that “...*we are anointed with Myrrh at the time of Baptism, which is the seal of the Holy Spirit.*”⁵⁴

St Augustine noted that the visible anointment is the Mystery of the spiritual anointment by the Holy Spirit⁵⁵ and this Mystery of Chrismation is equal to the Holy Baptism.⁵⁶

II. EXTERNAL SIDE, OFFICIATORS AND TIME OF RECEIVING HOLY CHRISMATION

In the early period, with the invocation and special prayer for the calling of the Holy Spirit and the laying on of hands, the use of Sanctified Myrrh appeared. The Newly Illumined was anointed in a cross-shape sign on different parts of the body. The invocation was: “*Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*” This use was also common in the Old Testament and appeared to be in general use within the Orthodox Church since the Apostolic era. The person who was baptised was immediately anointed with Sanctified Myrrh followed by the laying on of the right hand of the Bishop upon his head. Special prayers recited for the preparation and making of the Holy Myrrh, which takes place every seven years. The invocation and the cross-shape anointing are the external and visible aspects of the Holy Mystery of Chrismation. Since the beginning, it was officiated by the Holy Apostles and afterwards by the Bishops. After many centuries the right of anointing with Holy Myrrh in the service was given by the Bishops to the Presbyters. Thus, the preparation of the Holy Myrrh is only conducted by the gathering of all the Bishops of the universal Orthodox Church. This Service of the Making of the Holy Myrrh takes place at the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Istanbul) every seven years.

1. The Transmission of the Holy Spirit Through the Laying on of Hands with Prayer

The laying on of the hands for the receiving of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit accompanied by a special invocation and prayer to God, is witnessed by Holy Scripture such as in the case of the Holy Apostles who were sent from Jerusalem to

⁵² St. John Chrysostom, *To Philipppians*, Homily 3, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 62, 203.

⁵³ Didymus the Blind, *About the Holy Spirit*, II, 14, in Migne, *P.G.*, 39, 712.

⁵⁴ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Isaiah*, book III, 1, Migne, *P.G.*, 70, 561.

⁵⁵ St. Augustine, *In Epist. I Johannis, Tractatus III*, § 5, 12, in migne, *P.L.*, 35, 2002 and 2004.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, *Contra lit. Petilianii*, II, 104 and 239, in migne, *P.L.*, 43, 312.

Samaria. Before they lay their hands upon those who were baptised, “...they prayed that they might receive the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁷

Tertullian stated that by the laying on of hands and prayer the Holy Spirit was called to come upon the Newly Illuminated.⁵⁸

St Cyprian assured that the Holy Spirit is given “...by our prayers.”⁵⁹

The *Egyptian Order*, the Canons of St Hippolytus, the *Apostolic Orders* and the *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi* witness the liturgical practice of the 3rd century and refer to a special prayer that accompanied the laying on of the hand by the Bishop. To this day, within the Orthodox Church, the Holy Myrrh is anointed in a cross-shape sign on different parts of the Newly Illuminated, together with prayer, by the Bishop or Presbyter.⁶⁰

The prayer accompanying the laying on of the hands differs from the prayer used for the Sanctification of the Myrrh.

St Cyril of Jerusalem commented in his *Mystagogy Catechisis* addressed the Newly Illuminated: “Be watchful that you do not think that Myrrh is simple. Because, as the Bread of the Eucharist after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is no longer simple bread, but the Body of Christ, likewise this Holy Myrrh is not simple nor should anyone say that is something common with invocation but that it is the Gift of Christ and the Presence of the Holy Spirit.”⁶¹ In other words St Cyril believed that through the anointing with the Holy Myrrh a mystical change occurs such as at the Consecration in the Divine Eucharist

The importance of prayer together with the anointing of Sanctified Myrrh is expressed in the *Apostolic Orders* that stress “...if the pious priest does not pray with the laying on of the hands upon him who is baptised, then the latter is like going down in water only...”⁶² just as in the baptismal purifications of the Jews.

2. The Anointing with Myrrh

The use of Sanctified Myrrh appeared to be in use since the end of the 2nd century. There is no doubt “the anointing” in the Old Testament is similar to the Holy Mystery of Chrismation. “Aaron was anointed with chrism by Moses and all those who were anointed from the hieratic horn were called the anointed ones.” “Solomon, becoming king, was anointed by the high priest after he washed in Geon.” This chrism of the Old Testament is considered to be a prefiguration “...of Sanctified Myrrh

⁵⁷ Acts 8:14,15.

⁵⁸ Tertullian, *De baptismo*, 8, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1316.

⁵⁹ St. Cyprian, *Epist.* LXXIII, 9, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1160.

⁶⁰ *Apostolic Orders*, VII, 22, 2, in *B*, v. 2, p. 123. Ibid, VII, 44, 1, in *B*, v. 2, p. 136.

⁶¹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1092.

⁶² *Apostolic Orders*, VII, 44, 3, in *B*, v. 2, p.136.

which we receive.” Hence **in the Old Testament** “...these took place typically for them (Jews) but for us truthfully because we are truly anointed by the Holy Spirit.”⁶³

The practice of the anointing with Holy Myrrh **was generally** accepted by the entire Orthodox Church. **We must** take into consideration that the early Fathers were very strict in keeping the instructions of the Holy Apostles.⁶⁴ The question **of how** this practice was accepted by the universal Church is answered by the fact that the Holy Apostles, seeing the Church expanding, introduced the use of Holy Myrrh.

The **Sanctification** of the Myrrh is witnessed by Tertullian⁶⁵ as well as by St Cyprian.⁶⁶ St Basil the Great characterised it as “...being received from the silent and **mystical tradition...**” the Apostolic Tradition.⁶⁷ It is also mentioned in the New Testament.⁶⁸

The laying on of hands **with invocation of prayer took place** after the prayer of anointing by the Elders. The Newly Illuminated were presented **to** the Bishop who **then** lay his right hand **upon those who** had been anointed by the Presbyter with Myrrh.

3. The Officiator of the Mystery

If we take into consideration the Book of Acts the officiator of the Holy Mystery of Chrismation **was at that time** only the Holy Apostles. **Later this** authority was passed down to the Bishops.⁶⁹

According to the *Egyptian Order* the Myrrh is blessed by the Bishop but **the Newly Illuminated are** anointed by Presbyters.⁷⁰ **In addition,** the *Apostolic Orders* recognise different authorities between that of the Bishops and those of the Presbyters.⁷¹

St John Chrysostom speaking **of** the authorities of the Bishop **commented** that “...through the ordination alone they (Bishops) are considered to be higher than the Presbyters.”⁷² The same observation was expressed by St Hieronymus.⁷³

⁶³ Didymus the Blind, *About the Holy Spirit*, II, 14, in Migne, *P.G.*, 39, 712. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1093. Mogilas, A’ 105, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 637. Jeremias, II, § 4, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 459. Kritopoulos, ch. VIII, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 531. Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, pp. 375-376. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 313.

⁶⁴ 1 Tim. 6:20. 2 Thess. 2:15.

⁶⁵ Tertullian, *De baptismo*, 7, in Migne, *P.L.*, 1, 1315.

⁶⁶ St. Cyprian, *Epist. 70 ad Januarium*, 2, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1078.

⁶⁷ St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, XXVII, § 66, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 188.

⁶⁸ 1 John 2:20 and 2 Corinth. 1:21, 22.

⁶⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *To Acts*, Homily XVIII, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 60, 144. St. Isidorus of Pelusion, *Book A’, epistle 450*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 78, 429. St. Cyprian, *Epist. Jubaïen 73*, § 9, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1115. Georgopoulos, *Anthology*, p. 18.

⁷⁰ St. Hippolytus, *Canon 19*, §§ 134 and 139. *Testamentum Domini*, book II, ch. VIII and IX.

⁷¹ *Apostolic Orders*, VII, 42, 22 and 44, in *B*, v. 2, pp. 135, 123 and 136. Cf. Kritopoulos, ch. 8, and Mogilas, A’ 105, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, pp. 531 and 637-638.

⁷² St. John Chrysostom, *To I Timothy*, Homily 11, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 62, 553.

In the West, the anointing with Holy Myrrh was preserved only for the Bishop whereas in the East this authority, as that of Baptism, was passed down to the Presbyters.

III. THE RESULTS AND NECESSITY OF THE HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISMATION

St Cyril of Jerusalem stressed that “...through the visible Myrrh the body is anointed, through the Holy and Life-giving Spirit the soul is Sanctified.”⁷⁴ In other words, through the Holy Mystery of Chrismation the Gifts or Charismata of the Holy Spirit are transmitted, which are necessary for the strengthening of the Regenerated in the Baptismal font. Through these Gifts the faithful become invincible soldiers of Christ and are able to face the assaults of the invisible enemy. This Holy Mystery is absolutely necessary for one’s perfection in the Newness of Life in Christ.

1. The Perfection of Baptism through the Gift of Holy Chrismation

The main invisible result of the Holy Mystery of Chrismation imprinted on the soul is the transmission of the Gifts or Charismata of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁵ The Regeneration that occurs in Holy Baptism is achieved through the Holy Spirit. According to St Cyprian there can never be Baptism without the Holy Spirit.⁷⁶ In any case our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, taught us that Rebirth takes place “...by water and the Spirit.”⁷⁷ It is a common belief of all Holy Fathers and ecclesiastic writers that the fruit of Baptism is the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸

Only Tertullian believed that in Baptism “...we do not receive the Holy Spirit, but in the water we are cleansed by the angels and we are prepared for the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁹ He also argued that if the Baptism of St John, the Forerunner and Baptist, was from Above as that of our Lord Jesus, it would have granted forgiveness of sins.

St Cyprian observed that through Baptism we receive the Holy Spirit.⁸⁰ However, if we receive the Holy Spirit through Baptism, what do we receive through Holy Chrismation? St Dionysius the Aeropagite explained that “...the Myrrh is the perfection of the anointing.”⁸¹

⁷³ St. Hieronymus, *Epist.* 146, § 1, in Migne, *P.L.*, 22, 1194.

⁷⁴ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1092.

⁷⁵ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 313-314.

⁷⁶ St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 74, § 5, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1178.

⁷⁷ John 3:3, 5.

⁷⁸ St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book III, ch. 17, §§ 2-4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 929-930. Cf. *Ibid.*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 237-239. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 29, in *B*, v. 3, p. 233.

⁷⁹ Tertullian, *De baptismo*, 6, in Migne, *P.L.* 1, 1314.

⁸⁰ St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 63, 8, in Migne, *P.L.*, 4, 391.

⁸¹ St. Dionysius, the Aeropagite, *Ecclesiastic Hierarchy*, ch. II, § 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 3, 404.

St Ambrosius commented that after Baptism the Spiritual Seal follows for the **purpose of** perfection when, with the invocation by the priest, the **outpouring** of the Holy Spirit takes place.⁸²

St Cyril of Alexandria, referring to the initiation and to the three Holy Mysteries, **remarked** that Holy Chrismation “...is given to us as **the rain gives us the living water of the Holy Baptism, as the wheat gives us the Bread of Life and as the wine gives us the Blood. Similarly the Sanctified Oil works towards the perfection of those who are Justified in Christ through Holy Baptism.**”⁸³

The putting to death of the old man **that occurs** in Baptism **as well as** the Rebirth of the new man with the outpouring of the richness of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit through Holy Chrismation, **strengthens** and **leads** to perfection. The Myrrh “...through the presence...” of the Holy Spirit “...becomes active...” transmitting to the new born in Christ, through Baptism, strength and power “...in order that the fragrance of Christ remains certain and consolidated **in him.**” **The** “...Reborn and recreated through the Washing of Regeneration partakes of the Gift of the Holy Spirit and is secured **so that** through this Seal he will remain strong and unmoveable, unharmed and unlooted, uninfluenced, unschemed, living according to the faith and with the knowledge of the truth until the end.”⁸⁴

St Augustine **believed** that “He anointed us, because He made us fighters against demons.”⁸⁵

St Cyril of Jerusalem added that Chrism “...is Holy...” because “...it is the spiritual safe keeper of the body and the salvation of the soul.”⁸⁶

2. The Gifts Transmitted Through the Holy Mystery of Holy Chrismation

St Ambrosius, determining the Charismata which are transmitted through the second Holy Mystery **in more detail**, referred to the Prophet Isaiah who said: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a blossom shall come up from his root: and the Spirit of God shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness shall fill him; the spirit of the fear of God.”⁸⁷ The Holy Father **urged** each newly Illuminated to **always remember** that he **had** received the spiritual seal, the “...Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and godliness.”⁸⁸

⁸² St. Ambrosius, *De sacramentis*, III, 2, 8, in Migne, *P.L.*, 16, 453.

⁸³ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Joel*, II, 21-24, in Migne, *P.G.*, 72, 452. *Ibid*, *To John*, books VII and VIII, in Migne *P.G.*, 74, 49. *Ibid*, *To Isaiah*, book III, 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 70, 561.

⁸⁴ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1092.

⁸⁵ St. Augustine, *In Johannis evangelium, Tractatus*. XXXIII, 3, in Migne, *P.L.*, 35, 1648.

⁸⁶ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1092.

⁸⁷ Is. 11:1-3.

⁸⁸ St. Ambrosius, *De mysteriis*, c. VII, § 42, in Migne, *P.L.*, 16, 419. *Ibid*, *Sacramentis*, III, c. 2, §§ 8 and 10, in Migne, *P.L.*, 16, 453.

St Cyril of Jerusalem **believed** that the newly Illuminated “...*became Christs of the Holy Spirit by receiving the antitype...because you are images of Christ.*”⁸⁹

St John Chrysostom **declared** that God, through the Anointment and His Spirit “...*made us together Prophets and priests and kings.*” Hence “...*not one, but three offices we have.*”⁹⁰

In other words we become “...*taught by God...*” **by** receiving the Charisma of God **and** receiving the Prophetic Charisma through the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding **that** is transmitted to us. **Alternatively**, we rule over the passions and ourselves **through the Spirit of Counsel and Strength**, according to the imitation of Christ the King. **Furthermore**, through the Communion with **Christ** we are **elevated** to kingship and through the Spirit of Knowledge and Godliness **as well as** the Spirit of the fear of God, we are consecrated to Him as priests in all godliness, worshipping Him and offering logical sacrifices **with** humbled hearts before Him.

Thus, **according to St Cyprian**, each one who is baptised becomes Christ of God **containing** the Grace of Christ **within him**.⁹¹ Being in the complete image of Christ he is related to Him, **just like** the dough is to the Holy Dough. Christ is “...*the beginning of our Salvation...*” because “...*He is truly the beginning and we are the dough. If the beginning is Holy, it is obvious that Holiness will be transmitted to the dough.*”⁹²

These Charismata of the **Holy Spirit** are **deeply and indelibly** imprinted in the soul of the anointed one. Hence, Holy Chrismation under no circumstance can be repeated **for an Orthodox Christian who remains steadfast in his Orthodox Faith**. The Holy Canons **demand those** who return from heresy **to be** anointed “...*first with Holy Myrrh...*” **and sealed** with the invocation “...*Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit.*” This is **due to the fact that** “... *heretics do not have Holy Chrismation...*” and being deprived of canonical Priesthood, “...*the Bishop alone officiates the Chrismation with the Grace from Above.*”⁹³ In other words, if for some heretics their Baptism is recognised, this is done **out** of the *Economia*, (e.g. the Roman Catholics are accepted in the Orthodox Church only through the Holy Sacrament of Chrismation whereas all other Protestant Christian denominations require canonical Baptism). The rest of the heretics’ Mysteries are completely invalid. All Orthodox Christians who have fallen into heresy or schism, simultaneously fall from Priesthood, as all those who are ordained by heretics do not receive **the Grace of Priesthood**. Consequently, the heretics or schismatics do not have consecrated Chrismation nor **do** those who are anointed by them receive **the Gift of the Holy Spirit**.

Those who have renounced their Orthodox Faith and joined heretics or schismatics, when they repent and return, they are **reinstated in the canonical Church**

⁸⁹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1092.

⁹⁰ St. John Chrysostom, *To 2 Corinthians*, Homily 3, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 61, 411.

⁹¹ St. Cyprian, *Epist. ad Januarium*, 70, 2, in Migne, *P.L.*, 3, 1078.

⁹² St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogia*, III, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 1093.

⁹³ Didymus the Blind, *About the Holy Spirit*, ch. 15, in Migne, *P.G.*, 39, 720.

of Christ with the anointing of the Mystery of Holy Chrismation. This does not mean that the Holy Mystery is repeated.⁹⁴

The anointing of kings is performed according to the imitation of the Old Testament anointing. Furthermore, the anointing of Holy Images (Icons), Holy Altar, and other ecclesiastic items used in the Divine Services is to signify their Liturgical importance.

From the aforementioned, one can understand the significance of the Holy Mystery of Chrismation for Salvation. If anyone is baptised but willingly disregards this Holy Mystery and rejects it, then he excludes himself from Salvation because he commits the sin of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, since it is He Who grants the Gifts and Sanctifies man. However, if anyone was baptised but for specific reasons had not the opportunity to be anointed, then he would not be excluded from Salvation. Consequently, the Holy Mystery of Chrismation is necessary for the further perfection of the Newness of Life in Christ.

⁹⁴ Androutsos, *Dogmatique*, pp. 340-341.