

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS -- BAPTISMAL DRAFT FORM

_____ / _____ / _____ AM / PM
(last name) (month) (day) (year) (time of baptism)
(date of baptism)

Please supply the following information as it will appear on Baptismal Certificate.

Father's full name _____
First Last

Father's birthplace (city/state/country) _____

Mother's full name _____
First MAIDEN Last CURRENT Last

Mother's birthplace (city/state/country) _____

Current address _____
Street City Zip Code

Home phone # _____ Business phone # _____

City of candidate's birth _____

Date of **candidate's** birth _____ Male Female (circle)

Candidate's name as recorded on birth certificate _____

Greek Baptismal name _____

Name of **Sponsor** _____
First Middle Last

Current address _____
Street City Zip Code

Phone _____ **Sponsor's** Parish _____

IMPORTANT Sponsors must be active stewards of the Church and free of canonical impediment. For example, if married, the Sponsor must have been married in the Orthodox Church.

IMPORTANT If the Sponsor comes from another Parish, a letter from his/her Priest **must** be requested to be sent to this office **immediately**, certifying both membership in good standing and eligibility to act as Sponsor.

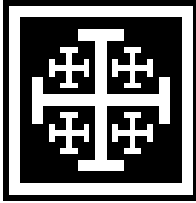
Father's faith _____ **Mother's** faith _____

Date of marriage _____ Place of marriage _____

Marriage performed by _____ *priest / minister / justice of the peace / civil official*
Name select one of the above

Please complete and mail **immediately** to : **Church of the Holy Cross, 900 Alameda, Belmont, CA 94002-1604**
or fax **immediately** to : **(650) 508-9846 (no cover sheet necessary)**

If you have any questions, please contact the church office at **(650) 591-4447** or **office@goholycross.org**.



THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS

900 Alameda
Belmont, California 94002-1604
(650) 591-4447; fax (650) 508-9846
e-mail: office@goholycross.org
website: www.goholycross.org

GUIDELINES WHEN PLANNING A BAPTISM

SCHEDULING

The date and time of the Sacrament should be arranged with one of the Priests as far in advance as possible. The latest a Sacrament may be scheduled is at 4:00 PM. An initial meeting may be scheduled with both the parent(s) and the sponsor(s) to confirm the date and discuss the Sacrament. No Sacrament will be confirmed until this time.

The **Baptismal Draft Form** is to be completed and returned **promptly** so that the Baptismal Certificate can be prepared. Parents and Sponsors should be present 15 minutes before the scheduled time to receive instruction as to the order of service.

THE ROLE OF THE SPONSOR

The newly illumined are guided in the faith ultimately by the Church yet under the direct instruction of their parents. Assisting the parents in this sacred task is the godparent (sponsor), a practice dating back to the First Century. Today, the godparent is obliged to not only observe the spiritual growth of the young Christian, but provide witness, care, and guidance in accordance with the Orthodox Faith and Tradition.

The Sponsor will be expected to make the appropriate responses and to read the Creed during the preliminary Office of the Making of a Catechumen.

ITEMS TO BE PROVIDED :

- | | |
|--|--|
| ❖ a white hand towel | ❖ a bottle of olive oil |
| ❖ an undershirt | ❖ an 18"-24" white candle
(three may be provided) |
| ❖ a large white bath towel
and sheet to wrap the
candidate | ❖ a Cross with chain |

STEWARDSHIP :

FOR PARENTS :

The Parents must be stewards of the Church of the Holy Cross. If they have not been active stewards through participation in Divine Services and/or offering their time, talent, and treasury to the Church for at least one year prior to the Sacrament, attendance at Divine Services is mandatory and a minimum pledge

commitment is required equivalent to the average yearly Stewardship pledge, on the order of \$800.

THE SPONSOR(S) :

The Sponsor(s) must be of the Orthodox faith, free of any impediment as regards Church law, and a *practicing* member of the Church. If the sponsor is not an active, pledging steward of Holy Cross, s/he will be required to fulfill the minimum Stewardship commitment, i.e., participation in Divine Services, participation in the "Study Class," and a pledge commitment of the average Stewardship pledge. If a member of another Parish, s/he must request the Priest of that Parish to forward a letter to Holy Cross attesting that s/he is an active steward in good standing and is free of any canonical impediment to act as Sponsor, at least 3 weeks in advance.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Discreet taking of photographs and/or video (without flash) is permitted. The Priest must be consulted beforehand.

BAPTISM PROGRAM

If you are providing a program on the Sacrament of Baptism, it is preferred that the "Rite of Baptism in the Orthodox Church" text be used. It may found on our website or may be sent to you via email.

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

Please remember that the Church is first and foremost a house of worship. It is therefore requested that there be no gum chewing, loud talking, clapping, or other inappropriate behavior that interferes with the prayers and worship of others.



If you have questions about the sacrament,
please contact Father Peter at (650) 591-4447 or frpeter@goholycross.org.
Otherwise, general questions may go to the church office
at (650) 591-4447 or office@goholycross.org.

The Baptismal Garment

The newly illumined Christian is then dressed in his/her baptismal garment: "the servant (handmaid) of God is clothed with the garment of righteousness, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The white garment symbolizing the gifts of baptism: regeneration, righteousness, kingship, and immortality in Christ reminds the neophyte of his/her responsibility to remain whole and faithful to the baptismal pledge. The neophyte is robed in this white garment as the priest chants: "Most merciful Christ our God endow me with a robe of light, You who array yourself in light as with a garment" and concludes the baptismal prayers.

The Rites of the Eighth Day

The neophyte, donning the white baptismal garment is brought before the celebrant who now performs two rites that were, in antiquity, performed eight days following the baptism. First, the celebrant washes the neophyte's forehead, indicating that the visible signs of the mysteries (the oils, et. al.) must now become inner realities and the very essence of his/her life. Second, the celebrant through the laying on of hands upon the neophyte, beseeches God that the newly illumined servant "matures in stature and attains venerable old age, [that] he (she) may offer up all glory to You and behold the good things of Jerusalem all the days of his (her) life."

The Eucharist

The newly-illumined Christian, accompanied by his/her godparent, and two or three other witnesses who hold lighted candles, process around the font three times, with the singing of "As many as have been baptized in Christ, have

put on Christ. Alleluia" (Gal. 3: 27). This action is reminiscent of the ancient practice of processing from the baptistery with the clergy to the nave of the Church where the newly illumined would join the faithful in preparation for the Eucharist. Two excerpts from the New Testament are then read: the Epistle to the Romans (6: 3-11) explaining the meaning of baptism; and the Gospel of Matthew (28: 16-20) recalling the command of the Lord to the Church to instruct and baptize. The neophyte then receives the Holy Eucharist.

The Cross of Christ

At the conclusion of the service, the newly illumined receives a Cross blessed and presented by the priest on behalf of the godparents and the worshipping community. The Cross is placed on the neophyte with the words, "And the Lord said, 'he who wishes to come after me, let him take up his Cross and follow me.'" The Cross is worn faithfully by the neophyte-Christian who witnesses to the world Christ's victory and triumph over death of which he/she now participates.

The Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

900 Alameda

Belmont CA 94002-1604

(650) 591-4447 fax (650) 508-9846

www.goholycross.org e-mail office@goholycross.org

The Rite of Baptism in the Orthodox Church

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matt. 28:19).



The Rite of baptism in the

Orthodox Tradition is rooted in the ancient Church. As the rite of re-creation or the "passage" from an old to a new, it is a personal Pascha and a personal Pentecost for the newly illumined. This rite is not simply a vehicle for the "removal" of original sin and the conferring of grace. Instead, this mystery imparts a Christian "philosophy of life", that is, a radically new and ever-developing relationship with Creator as the person is "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11).

Baptism is the "door" or "gate" to the Kingdom of God. Age has therefore never been a prohibitive factor for baptism in the Orthodox Church. Most were and are still baptized as infants, beginning their process of becoming like God (theosis) from their first months of birth. The baptism of infants, a general practice of the Church since the third century, is performed upon the profession of faith by the parents, the sponsor(s), and the community gathered to celebrate the mystery and pledging themselves to providing an environment conducive to growth in

the Grace and Knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The newly illumined are guided in the faith ultimately by the Church yet under the direct instruction of their parents. Assisting the parents in this sacred task is the godparent (sponsor). This practice dates back to the first century when Christians ran the risk of persecution for their faith under Nero. The sponsor(s) would nurture the neophyte Christian in the Church in the event that his/her parents were martyred. Today, the godparent maintains a similar responsibility, obliged to not only observe the spiritual growth of the young Christian, but provide witness, care, and guidance in accordance with the Orthodox Faith and Tradition.

The baptismal rite of the Orthodox Church is comprised of several separated but interdependent rites. In Christian antiquity these rites were performed over the course of several days. Today, however, the Orthodox Church celebrates this mystery as one "single rite." This practice is in accordance with the order and rubrics of the Euchologion (the priest's service book) of the Orthodox Church.

The Catechesis

The first part of the rite, the "Catechesis", is preparatory in nature. It takes place in the Narthex of the Church where the instruction of catechumens once took place. This service begins with the invocation of the Trinity; contains the prayer for the making of a catechumen; three prayers of exorcism; the renunciation and condemnation of the devil; the acceptance of Christ; the recitation of the Nicene Creed; and the call to baptism. If the candidate is an infant,

the godparent speaks on behalf of the child, denouncing Satan, accepting Christ, and professing the Creed of the faithful.

The Rite of Holy Baptism

The second part of today's sacrament is the Baptism proper, which takes place at the baptismal font. This service as with all sacraments begins with the intoned "Blessed in the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages." It includes a series of petitions; two prayers of invocation for the presence of the Holy Spirit and the sanctification of the baptismal waters; a prayer for the blessing of the olive oil so that it becomes "an anointing unto incorruption, and armor of righteousness...to the averting of every assault of the devil, to deliverance from all evil of those who shall be anointed therewith in faith" and; an anointing of the candidate with the "oil of gladness" as a sign of both healing from our fallen nature and becoming enlisted in the service of Christ).

When these actions have been completed the officiating clergyman with three immersions baptizes the candidate in the font and emersions using the liturgical formula "the servant of God (name) is baptized in the name of the Father. And the Son. And the Holy Spirit." The baptismal font becomes at once a tomb and a womb: "at the self-same moment you die and are born; the water of salvation is at once your grave and your mother" (St. Cyril of Jerusalem). Likewise, this liturgical act gives expression to two realities: the death of the old man, who in solidarity with Adam, is subject to sin and death, and the birth of the new man, who in his union

with Christ, is provided with new members and faculties in preparation for the life to come.

The Chrismation

At this point the celebrant administers the mystery of the Holy Chrism (Myron) to the neophyte using the liturgical formula "the seal the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen." While baptism incorporates us into Christ's new risen existence, chrismation makes us partakers of His Spirit, the very source of this new life and our illumination. Chrism is applied to the senses and other parts of the body in the pattern of the Cross, signifying the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The continuous presence of the Holy Spirit makes possible the constant, progressive, personal growth of the Christian into the image and likeness of God.

The Tonsure

After the newly illumined has been sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, he/she then "makes a first offering from the hairs of his (her) head." The tonsure or cutting of the hair is an offering made to the Lord as a Christian steward. Originally taking place on the eighth day after baptism, it is now included in the baptismal rite and initiates one's servitude and obedience to the Lord.