

Consequently, when the baptized person emerges out of the water, it is to demonstrate the statement, “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.” (Colossians 2:12).

The baptizing priest says, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, I baptize you in the name of the Son, I baptize you in the name of the Holy Spirit” as he immerses the person in the water each time (total three times) and repeats this act three times to signify that the person is being baptized having believed in the “One God in Three Persons” doctrine of the Triune God; on another note, it is to signify that the Lord resurrected after spending three days and three nights in the tomb, and when the proclamation for the dead to rise will be sounded three times on the Day of Judgment, the baptized will too resurrect as an adult man (if male) or an adult woman (if female), without any defect.

Based on the Apostle’s teaching which says, “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (Romans 6:8), baptism is the great mystery through which we resemble our Lord Jesus Christ in His death as well as join in His resurrection.

Assurance that we are the body of Christ
During the time of the Old Testament, Abraham’s kin were confirmed as his descendants through circumcision. In Moses’ Law, circumcision expressed the identity of God’s people. God’s command for the uncircumcised was for them to be cut off from His people. (Genesis 17:14).

St. Paul the Apostle emphasized that circumcision once used as a symbol of sanctifi-

cation is replaced with baptism in the New Testament era, “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.” (Colossians 2:11-12).

As circumcision was a symbol that God’s people were partakers of the promise to Abraham, baptism is a way through which all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ can experience blessings from the Holy Church filled with His grace.

As the Apostle St. Paul said, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:27), through baptism we become one with our Lord Jesus Christ; we are unified with God in baptism. Therefore, we put on the new man that God has renewed and become followers of Christ. Circumcision was performed only once; similarly, there is only one baptism and it is not repeated. (Ephesians 4:5).

Glory be unto God

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**In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit, One God, Amen**

The Significance of Baptism (Timket)

One of the post Nicean church fathers interpreted the Evangelist St. John’s words “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power” (Revelation 20: 6); in his book called *City of God*, he portrayed that the “first resurrection” is baptism by which we are born again and have gained the name Christians. (De Civitate Dei, xx, 6).

Any faith that has established Jesus Christ as its foundation must surely implement His teaching which says, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3). As our Lord taught us, there is no redemption without baptism.

While baptism means being submerged or immersed in and out of water, through this visible act, abundant invisible blessings are received. The following outlines are the blessings bestowed through baptism:

Salvation

“He who believes and is baptized shall be

saved” (Mark 16:16). Our Savior Jesus Christ, clearly stated that whoever seeks eternal salvation must believe in the Son of God and be baptized. St. Peter, who learnt from the Lord’s own teachings, took his Teacher’s words as a source and declared, “who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine long suffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God)” (1 Peter 3: 20-21). While he indicated that the water that saved Noah and his family exemplifies baptism, he also distinctly stated that those who believe that Jesus is perfectly God within the unity of Godhead will gain salvation through baptism.

Salvation means inheriting the kingdom of God and becoming the owners of eternal life. During their night meeting, Savior of the world Jesus Christ taught Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews who was attentively listening to Him with an uplifted heart, that the door to salvation is baptism by saying, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5).

Rebirth

Baptism is considered rebirth because it is different from being born in the flesh. It is by being baptized with water we become God’s children again, a gift that we lost due to Adam and Eve’s fall. We are reborn from the Holy Trinity in baptism with water as our Lord said to Nicodemus when he saw Him by night, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5). As

our Lord said, baptism is the mystery through which we become children of God. St. Peter the Apostle also taught that baptism is the mystery through which we are born again from God in saying, “having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible,” (1 Peter 1:23). The man after God’s own heart, St. David said, “my soul also lives to Him” (Psalm 21[22]:29) to denote that this baptism is the means through which we are given eternal life. St. John the Evangelist said, “who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:13).

Our Lord clearly stated that the grace of becoming God’s children is secured through the act of immersing one in and out of water and not solely, as some say, through listening to the Gospel.

Redemption of sin

“We confess one baptism for the remission of sins” (First Council of Constantinople Nicene Creed). During 381 A.D. Council of Constantinople, 150 church fathers gathered from all over the world as a result of Macedonius’ heresy. After denouncing Macedonius as heretic, remission of sins through baptism was among the statements of faith they added to the Nicene Creed. These holy fathers adopted the Nicene Creed profession of faith to filter out heresy that slipped into the Church by way of inside enemies as well as to establish the conformity of belief and save followers from confusion.

The following evidences from the Holy Bible are the foundations for our fathers’ decision:

When St. Paul the Apostle was called to service in an extraordinary way to cleanse him of

his sins he was told, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). On the day of Pentecost, when the hearts of the gathered Jews and converts to Judaism were touched by the Apostle St. Peter’s preaching and asked “what shall we do?” his answer to them was, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”. (Acts 2:37-38). This refers to the sheep from a different barn, not the ones which were born and raised in His barn. Although the Lord Himself has taught that baptism should be done in the name of the Holy Trinity (Matthew 28:19), St. Peter said “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ,” to highlight that He is perfectly God within the unity of Godhead and teach the world to accept Him.

Resemblance to Christ in His death and a way to join in His resurrection

“... do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized 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.” (Romans 6:3-4).

Baptism should be carried out in a stream of water; however, when it is not possible to find one, it can be done by filling up water in a tub. In circumstances which do not allow either, the baptizer can scoop up water with his hands and pour it over the person so that the water reaches the entire body.

During baptism, the reason that a person’s body is fully immersed in water is to enact the saying, “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death”. (Romans 6:4).