

Dogmatic Theology

Part Two

THE SOURCES OF TEACHING IN OUR ORTHODOX CHURCH

- **The Holy Bible = Holy Scriptures**
- **The Holy Tradition**
- **The Liturgies (Ex. St. Basil, St. Gregory, St. Cyril)**
- **The Fathers of the Church (from their life and writings)**
- **The Councils:**
 1. *Nicaea: 318 Bishops; 325 A.D. ;1st part of creed*
 2. *Constantinople: 150 Bishops; 381 A.D.; 2nd part of creed*
 3. *Ephesus: 200 Bishops; 431 A.D.*

- **Art**

1. Hymnology: theology in tunes.

2. Iconography: theology in color.

3. Architecture of the Church

The Holy Mysteries (Sacraments)

The background of the image features a classical building with a prominent doorway. The doorway is open, and a bright, golden light emanates from within, suggesting a source of illumination or divine presence. The building is partially obscured by soft, white clouds that fill the sky. The overall atmosphere is serene and spiritual.

**The Life of the
Church in the Holy
Spirit**

The New Life

To enter to the Church one
must **depart** from the power
of the devil;
and become in this sinful
world

Stranger and pilgrims
(1Pet. 2:11).

One must place a decisive
boundary between oneself and
the world.

One must **openly** and
straightforwardly renounce
the devil.

One cannot serve two masters.

**One must cleanse in oneself
the old leaven,
so as to be a new dough
(1Cor. 5:7).**

**The Coptic church
recognizes seven
canonical sacraments:
Baptism,
confirmation,**

**the Eucharist,
repentance,
unction of the sick,
Matrimony,
and holy orders
(Priesthood).**

Baptism

**Man is born into spiritual life.
Become member of Christ's Body.**

Chrismation

**Become temple of God through
the dwelling of the Holy Spirit.
Gives growth and strengthens.**

Holy Communion

**Spiritually nourished.
Proclaim Christ's death,
Resurrection and Second Coming.**

Repentance & Confession

**He is healed of spiritual diseases
(sins).
Be forgiven.**

Holy Unction

Receive His healing grace

Matrimony

Share His love

Priesthood

He receives the Grace spiritually to regenerate and nurture others, by means of prayer, teaching and mysteries.

Dedicate our lives in specialized service

New Life

Birth

Growth

If only it is received **inwardly.**

If a man **sincerely desire to
remain in it.**

**“Wisdom has built her
house,
She has hewn out her
seven pillars.”**

**الحكمة بنت بيتها
نحتت اعمدتها السبعة**

(Prov. 9:1).

• *“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

(Philippians 4:19)

فِيمَلَا إِلَهِي كُلِّ أَحْتِيَاجِكُمْ
بِحَسَبِ غَنَاهُ فِي الْمَجْدِ
فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ

Psalm 23

green pastures

the still waters

restores my soul

the valley of death

You are with me

comfort me

You prepare a table before me

You anoint my head with oil

my cup runs over.

I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Spirit

Repentance

The Baptism

Put on Christ

The Comforter

The Eucharist

The Chrismation

The Chalice

Psalm 23

مراع خضر

مياه الراحة

يرد نفسي

وادي ظل الموت

لأنك انت معي

هما يعزياني

ترتب قدامي مائدة

مسحت بالدهن راسي

كاسي ريا

The Holy Scriptures

The Holy Spirit

Repentance

The Baptism

Put on Christ

The Comforter

The Eucharist

The Chrismation

The Chalice

اسكن في بيت الرب الى مدى الايام

- **“I shall not want”**

Psalm 23.

- I shall not lack for anything.

If on his part he **applies efforts** to preserve it- acts in him with the mystical power of the Holy Spirit.

“excellence of the power”

فضل القوة

(2Cor. 4:7)

“Divine power”

قدرته الالهية

(2Pet. 1:3)

**The inward life of the Church is
the mystical **cooperation** of
Christ as the Head,
with the Church as His Body,
in the Holy Spirit.**

***“This is a great mystery,
but I speak concerning
Christ and the church.”***

(Eph.5:32)

The Apostles are called
***“stewards of the mysteries of
God”***

**“Let a man so consider us,
as servants of Christ and
*stewards of the mysteries of
God.”***

(1Cor. 4:1).

**These sacraments, which are rites
ordained by Christ,
are **outward** and visible signs of
inward and spiritual grace.**

**Though not enumerated together
in the New Testament,
they are **mentioned separately** in
various passages.**

The words of blessings
accompanied by outward
sacred acts are, as it were,
spiritual vessels by which the
Grace of the Holy Spirit is
scooped up and given to the
members of the Church **who**
are sincere believers.

From the apostolic age, the early fathers' writings conveyed testimonies of the practice of these sacraments in all Christian churches.

Despite their own distinctive ritual, all apostolic churches are in full agreement regarding the number of sacraments.

St. Ignatius the God-bearer,
an immediate disciple of the
Apostles, writes concerning
deacons that
they likewise are “*servants of*
***the mysteries of Jesus Christ*”**
(Epistle to the Trallians, par. 2)

**These words of St. Ignatius
overturn the assertion of
Protestant historians that in
the ancient Church the
concept of “mysteries” or
“sacraments” was supposedly
never applied to the Church’s
sacred rites.**

The Coptic church believes that sacraments are valid in themselves, irrespective of **the condition of the recipient.**

Accordingly the church prescribes the administration of baptism, confirmation, and communion to **children,**

**in spite of their inability to
profess their faith in accepting
the sacraments.**

BABTISM



BAPTISM

- ✓ **The Origin**
- ✓ **The Absolute Necessity of Baptism**
- ✓ **The Establishment of the Mystery of Baptism**
- ✓ **The Meaning of the Mystery**
- ✓ **The effect of Baptism**

- ✓ **Administration of The Sacrament**
- ✓ **The Means of the Performance of the Mystery**
- ✓ **The Immersion in Water**
- ✓ **On Infant Baptism.**
- ✓ **One Baptism**
- ✓ **The Baptism of Blood**

Baptism is the sacrament by which the recipient is regenerated through triple immersion in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, enters into union with Christ and the body of the Church.

Baptism is regarded as the first and principal sacrament,

without which **none of the other sacraments can be administered.**

The Absolute Necessity of Baptism

**Its primary importance is
manifest in the words of our Lord
Jesus Christ:**

**"Most assuredly, I say to you,
unless one is born of **water** and
the **Spirit**, he **cannot** enter the
kingdom of God"
(Jn. 3:5).**

The Establishment of the Mystery of Baptism

This sacrament was **instituted by Christ following His Resurrection, when He said to the disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 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"

(Mt. 28:18-19),

**and, "He who believes and is
baptized will be saved;**

**but he who does not believe will be
condemned" (Mk. 16:16).**

**Christ's words indicate the universal
nature of the sacrament of baptism
and its prerequisite (requirement)
importance for salvation.**

**Before Christ's institution of
baptism as a sacrament,**

Other baptismal forms had
existed,

such as that performed by St **John
the Baptist,**

which was by divine command
(Mt. 21:25; Mk. 11:30).

The disciples, too, used to baptize people during the life of Christ on earth,

before His Resurrection and the fulfillment of divine ransom.

However, in **contrast** with Christian baptism, carried out in accordance with Christ's teaching and recommendations,

**Those earlier forms of baptism
had no sacramental qualities.**

**They were merely acts of
immersion in water as an
expression of repentance on the
part of penitent Jews and their
belief in the imminent fulfillment
of the messianic hope and the
coming of Christ.**

**The sacrament of Christian
baptism, on the other hand,
is administered in the name of the
Father, the Son, and the Holy
Spirit,
to **all** believers without
distinction,
for the purpose of **penitence and
the forgiveness of sins,****

and for **the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

It is, furthermore, **an expression of belief** in Christ who has already
come,

while the earlier baptism was
nothing but **a prelude to a fuller
and more efficacious baptism**
by One greater than John and the
disciples,

**One who would baptize
with the Holy Spirit
(Mk. 1:8).**

This basic distinction between Christian baptism and earlier baptisms was clearly brought out in the writings of the early fathers.

**According to Tertullian
(c. 160-c. 220),
"in the Acts of the Apostles,**

**we find that men who had
'John's baptism,' had not
received the Holy Spirit,
whom they knew not even by
hearing. . . .**

**And so, 'the baptism of
repentance'**

**was dealt with as if it were a
candidate for the remission
and **sanctification** shortly
about to follow in Christ:
For in that John used to
preach '**baptism for the
remission of sins,****

**The declaration was made
with reference to a future
remission . . .**

**That repentance is antecedent,
remission subsequent;
and this is "preparing the
way"**

(Tertullian, On Baptism).

Similar interpretations permeate the writings of other **Fathers, such as **St ATHANASIUS** of Alexandria (c. 296-373) in the Treatise on Matthew 3,**

St CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

(c. 315-386) in

Catechetical Lecture 3 and

4,

and St Augustine (354-430)

in Epistle 51.

The Meaning of the Mystery

**The
Second
Birth**

(John.3:3,5).
(John.3: 6,8).
(Titus 3: 5).
(Eph.5: 26).

Salvation

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved"
(Mark.16: 16).

(Acts 22: 16).
(1Cor.6: 11).
(Acts 2: 37,38).

Baptism

**Newness
of life**

**Remission
of sins**

(Phil.3: 10).
(Rom.6: 3,4).
(Col.2: 12).
(Rom.6: 8).

**Dying and
rising with Him**

(Rom.6: 4).

1- New birth



**4- New
nature**

(Titus 3:5).

3- New graces

**2- NEW
LIFE**

The effect of baptism in

“Purification”,

“Sanctification”,

“Cleansing”,

“Justification”

“Remission of sins”,

And “Spiritual Regeneration”

**makes it an essential,
indispensable element for
salvation.**

*“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”.*

(Eph. 5:25, 26)

*“But you were **washed**,
but you were **sanctified**,
but you were **justified** in the
name of the Lord Jesus and by
the Spirit of our God.*

(1Cor.6:11)

**“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.*”**

(Rom. 6:4)

**This inherent feature was also
amply expounded by several
of the fathers, such as
Saint Justin Martyr (c. 100-c.
165),
Saint CLEMENT OF
ALEXANDRIA (c. 150-c. 215),**

**Saint Cyril of Jerusalem (c.
315-386),**

**Saint BASIL THE GREAT (c.
330-379),**

**and Saint John Chrysostom
(c. 347-407).**

**Baptism imparts the following
graces to the baptized:**

**(1) spiritual regeneration,
as explained by Christ to
Nicodemus (Jn. 3:3- 8);**

**(2) purification and remission of
sins**

**(Acts 2:38; 1 Pt. 3:21; Eph. 5:25-
27; 1 Cor. 6:11);**

**(3) membership in the one body of
Christ**

**(Gal. 3:26-29; 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts
2:41; Rom. 6:3-5);**

**and (4) release from the
punishment of sins**

(Mk. 16:16; Ti. 3:5-7; 1 Pt. 1:3, 4).

The Means of the Performance of the Mystery

As ordained by Christ **in teaching**
and **put into practice** through His
baptism in the waters of the Jordan,
the visible element used in
administering the sacrament of
baptism has always been **water**,
By **trine immersion** in the name of
the Three Hypostases of the Holy
Trinity.

Before a person is baptized, it is essential that he or she have **a firm belief in Jesus Christ the Redeemer (Mk. 16:16; Acts 16:31) and a genuine feeling of **repentance** (Acts 11:38; 3:9), make an explicit **confession of faith,****

and repeat after the priest **the formula of the renunciation of the devil.**

In the case of children, their **sponsors** (shapron) make these commitments on their behalf.

The Immersion in Water

Full immersion is symbolic
of Christ's **burial**,
hence Saint Paul's words,
"Therefore **we are buried**
with Him by baptism into
death,
(Rom. 6:4, 5).

**that like as Christ was raised up
from the dead by the glory of the
Father,**

**even so we also should walk **in
newness of life.****

**For if we have been planted together
in the likeness of His death,
we shall be also in the likeness of His
resurrection''
(Rom. 6:4, 5).**

The baptism of the eunuch by Philip.

*“And both Philip and the eunuch
went down into the water, and he
baptized him.*

*Now when they came up out of the
water, the Spirit of the Lord caught
Philip away”
(Acts 8:38,39)*

The Greek word “baptizo**”
itself signifies “**to immerse**”.**

**These principles receive
ample attention in the
writings of the church fathers.**

One Baptism

Once baptism is validly administered, **it cannot be repeated.**

Hence **the reaffirmation in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed:**

"We confess one baptism for the remission of sins."

A repetition of the baptismal rite would therefore be **sacrilegious**

(blasphemous), for the following considerations.

Since baptism is an act of **spiritual birth,**

no one person can be born twice;

in its symbolic nature and sacramental representation of

Christ's death, burial, and resurrection,

it should take place **only once**;
according to the concept of
baptism, it has an **indelible**
(impossible to remove),
Ineffaceable (permanent)
character on the soul of the
baptized,
Which renders its repetition
utterly otiose (useless).

In the case of those persons seeking reconciliation with the church after having been baptized by heretics or schismatics, the sacrament is administered to them on the grounds that the earlier baptism was null and void. Hence the stipulation of Apostolic Canon 47,

**"Let a bishop or presbyter who shall baptize again one who has rightly received baptism,
or who shall not baptize one who has been polluted by the ungodly, be deposed,
as despising the cross and death of the Lord,
and not making a distinction between the true priests and the false."**

The issue of rebaptism was one of the vexed questions that troubled the church in **the third century**, giving rise to a **prolonged and serious** dispute between **Saint Cyprian**, bishop of Carthage (d. 258), and Pope Stephen of Rome (254-257).

The former maintained the urgency of rebaptism **in certain cases,**

the latter held that any baptism in the name of Christ or the three Persons of the Trinity should not be repeated.

The Council of Carthage (255)

ruled that

**“heretics and those whom they
baptized had to be rebaptized,**

**While those who had been
baptized in the church**

but lapsed were not to be

baptized.

**According to Canon 19 of the
first Council of NICAEA**

(325):

**"Concerning the Paulianists
who have flown for refuge to
the Catholic church,
it has been decreed that they must
by all means be rebaptized;**

and if any of them who in past
time have been numbered **among**
their clergy should be found
blameless and **without reproach**,
let them be **rebaptized** and
ordained by the bishop of the
Catholic church . . .”

(The Canons of the 318 Holy Fathers).

**Likewise Canon 8 of the synod of
Laodicea (between 343 and 381)
decreed that:**

**"Persons converted from the
heresy of those who are called
Phrygians,
even should they be among those
reputed by them as clergymen,**

**and even should they be
called the very chiefest, are
with all care to **be both
instructed and baptized**
by the bishops and
presbyters of the church.''**

The principle of the **non iteration (non repetition)** of baptism receives particular stress in the writings of St

John Chrysostom:

"Baptism is a cross,

and

**“our old man was crucified
with Him”**

**for we were made
conformable to the likeness
of His death'**

[Rom. 6:5; Phil. 3:10],

And again,

**“we were buried therefore
with Him by baptism into
death”**

[Rom. 6:4].

**Wherefore as it is not possible
that Christ should be crucified
a second time,**

for that is to “put Him to
an open shame”

[Heb. 6:6],

so neither is it possible to
be baptized a second
time”

(Homilies on Hebrews 9.6).

**The authority to baptize
was conferred by **Christ** to
the **Apostles** (Mt. 28:19)
who, in turn, gave it to the
bishops who succeeded
them and to the **presbyters**.**

Deacons and deaconesses
who **assist** the bishop or
presbyter **do not exercise**
the right of administering
the sacrament.

Since the apostolic age, baptism has been administered **at any time of the year,** upon condition that the candidate is deemed **worthy** to receive it.

There were, however, **certain occasions** on which large numbers of people were usually baptized, such as

on Easter Eve,
Pentecost,
and Epiphany.

"Pascha [i.e., Easter] affords a
more than usually solemn day for
baptism;
when, withal, the Lord's passion,
in which we are baptized, was
completed. . . .

After that, **Pentecost is a
most joyous space for
conferring baptisms''
(Tertullian, De Baptismo
19).**

In the Coptic church many baptisms are usually carried out on **the Eve of Epiphany (11 Tubah) in commemoration of Jesus' baptism, and also on **the sixth Sunday of the great Lent**, known as **Christening Sunday**.**

The Baptism of Blood

Believers who were **martyred for the sake of Jesus Christ without having been baptized are said to have gained an extraordinary **baptism of blood**, or martyrdom.**

It is recognized by the church through the commemoration of the martyrdom of the Holy Innocents,

**those children of Bethlehem who
were massacred by order of
Herod in his attempt to kill the
Infant Jesus (Mt. 2:16-18).**

**It also applies to martyrs **who
died during the times of
persecution** without having
previously received the
sacrament.**

Infant Baptism

Since the apostolic age, the baptism of infants has been recognized as a common and by no means premature practice.

Male infants were due for baptism **forty days** and **females eighty days** after birth,
(Lev. 12)

**when the mother had completed
her purification days.**

**In cases of illness or fear that an
infant might not survive this
prescribed period,**

**he or she could be taken to church
by another woman who acted on
this occasion as sponsor.**

Hence the obligation that the church places on parents, requiring them to have their offspring baptized at the first available opportunity after the aforementioned duration of time.

The reasons for this practice are several.

First,

baptism is a sacrament of

purification,

cleansing from original sin,

and spiritual regeneration.

So that growing in body and spirit

they might grow in Christ.

Second,

**baptism is a prerequisite for
salvation**

**And entry into the kingdom of
God.**

**To deny it to infants is to deprive
them of this grace.**

**The argument that at this age
children are still immature**

and lacking in the ability to understand matters of faith is refuted on the basis that they are to be baptized in accordance **with their parents' or their sponsors' faith, just as in the Old Testament **circumcision** on the eighth day after birth was routine ritual**

**Not dependent on the age of
discretion.**

**Baptism in the New Testament
is the counterpart of
circumcision in the Old.**

**Crossing the Red Sea
Eating the Passover Lamb**

Third,

we learn from the Acts of the

Apostles that the apostles

administered baptism to **entire**

****families,****

grown-ups as well as youngsters.

St Peter baptized **Cornelius the**
centurion, one of the early converts

to Christianity, and his household

(Acts 10:44-48).

St Paul baptized the family of Lydia the dealer in purple fabric (16:14-15);
the jailer at Philippi and his whole family (16:33);
Crispus, who held high office in the synagogue at Corinth, and his family (18:8);

And the household of **Stephanas
(1 Cor. 1:16).**

**Nowhere is it mentioned
that infants were excluded
from this.**

Fourth,

the fathers placed particular emphasis on infant baptism.

Origen (185-253), the "greatest scholar of Christian antiquity," wrote:

"The church received from the apostles the tradition of giving baptism even to infants.

**For the apostles, to whom
were committed the secrets of
divine mysteries,
knew that there is in everyone
the innate stain of sin,
which must be washed away
through water and the Spirit.''**

**Similarly clear views are
expressed by a host of other
fathers, such as
St Clement of Alexandria,
Tertullian, Saint John
Chrysostom, Saint Augustine,
and many others.**

**The issue was also debated
in church councils,
and the church's decision was
given its definitive form in the
provisions stipulated by
canon 110 of the Council of
Carthage (419):**

**"... whosoever denies that infants
newly from their mothers' wombs
should be baptized,**

**Or says that baptism is for
remission of sins,**

**but that they derive from Adam
no original sin,**

**which needs to be removed by the
laver of regeneration,**

from whence the conclusion follows, that in them the form of baptism for the remission of sins, is to be understood as false and not true, **let him be anathema"**

(Canons of the 217 Blessed Fathers).

**Baptism: the Door to
the Reception of Other
Grace- giving Gifts**



CHRISMATION CONFIRMATION

CONFIRMATION, sacrament by which the newly baptized receives **the grace of the Holy Spirit.**

Confirmation is a **complement** to the sacrament of baptism.

Despite being complementary to baptism and **following immediately** after it,

**confirmation must be regarded as
a **distinct** sacrament,
with its **own** rites and prayers.
In view of its intrinsic qualities,
confirmation is also referred to as
laying on of hands
(Acts 8:14-17)
(Acts 19:2-6)**

**What most probable, the
Apostles themselves changed
the visible sign of the Mystery
(the laying on of hands), in
case where they themselves
were absent,
replacing it with another
visible sacred act**

**(the anointing of the newly
baptized with myrrh which had
been received from the hands of
the Apostles)**

**Anointment undoubtedly
comes from the Apostles.**

*“Now He who establishes us with
you in Christ and has **anointed**
us is God,
who **also has sealed** us and
given us the Spirit in our
hearts as a guarantee.”*

(2Cor. 1:21-22)

و لكن الذي يثبتنا معكم في

المسيح

و قد مسحنا هو الله

22 الذي ختمنا ايضا

و اعطى عربون الروح في قلوبنا

(2Cor. 1:21-22)

“But you have *an anointing from the Holy One,*
and you know all things.”

“But *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”
(1John 2:20,27)

**“Do not touch My
anoointed ones”**

(Ps. 104/105:15)

Through **baptism**, a person is
spiritually **reborn**;
confirmation conveys special
grace that **strengthens** the
recipient for the practice of
the Christian faith.

“The Seal of the Lord”

(St Cyprian)

A “Seal”

**(St Clement of Alexandria, St
Cyril of Jerusalem)**

“The Spiritual Seal”

(St Ambrose)

“The Seal of the Eternal Life”

(Leo)

“The Confirmation”

(The Apostolic Constitution)

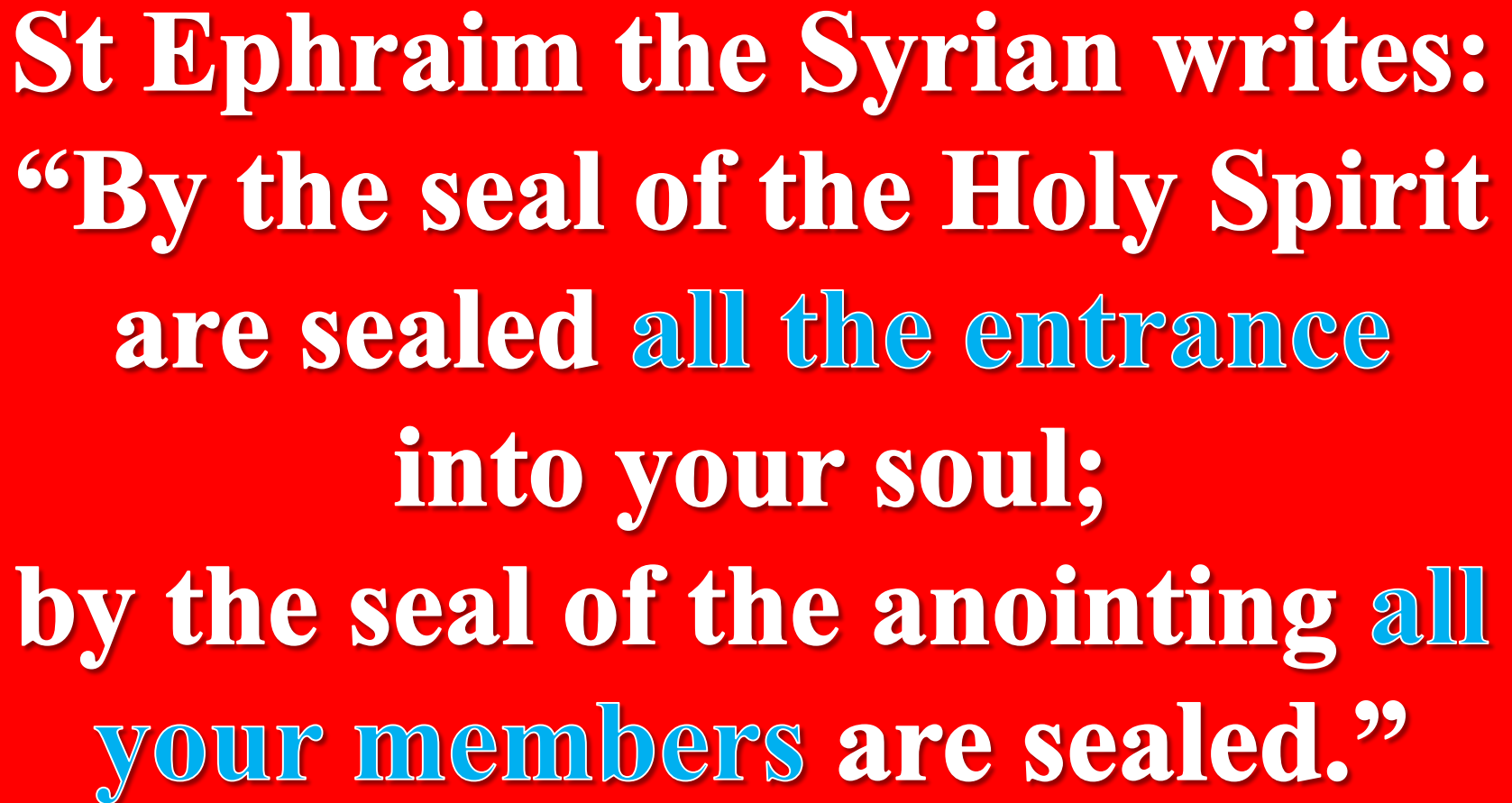
“The Perfection”

or “Columination”

**(St Clement of Alexandria, St
Ambrose)**

“The Mystery of the Spirit”

(St Hilary, Tertullian)



St Ephraim the Syrian writes:
“By the seal of the Holy Spirit
are sealed all the entrance
into your soul;
by the seal of the anointing all
your members are sealed.”

St Basil the Great asks:
“How will your angel
dispute over you,
How will he seize you from
the enemy,
If he does not know the
seal?

St Basil the Great asks:

**Or do you not know that the
destroyer passed over the houses of
those who were sealed and killed the
firstborn in the houses of those who
were unsealed?**

**An unsealed treasure is easily stolen
by thieves;
an unsealed sheep may be safely be
taken away.”**

**The Established of this
Sacrament**

**In John 7:37-39 our Lord Jesus
established this sacrament:**

**“If any one thirst, let him
come to Me and drink.**

**He who believes in Me, as the
Scripture has said, out of his
heart shall flow rivers of
living water.**

**(Now this He said about the
Spirit,
which those who believed in
Him were to receive;
for as yet the Spirit had not
been given,
Because Jesus was not yet
glorified.”**

**The descent of the Holy Spirit
at Pentecost granted
confirmation to the apostles,
and, in their turn, they were
able to grant it to other
believers by administering
this sacrament to them.**

Many canons passed by various councils assert the independence of confirmation and its **separateness from baptism.**

According to **Canon 38 of the Council of Laodicea (between 348 and 381),**

**"They who are baptized,
must after baptism be
anoointed with **the heavenly
chrism,**
and be partakers of the
kingdom of Christ."**

In connection with the various categories of heretics who return to the fold of orthodoxy,

Canon 7 of the Council of

CONSTANTINOPLE (381) states,

"Those . . . we receive upon their giving a written renunciation [of their errors]

**and anathematize every heresy
which is not in accordant with
the holy, catholic, and apostolic
church of God.**

**Thereupon they are first sealed or
anoointed with the holy oil upon
the forehead, eyes, nostrils,
mouth, and ears;
and when we seal them,**

we say,

**"The seal of the gift of the Holy
Ghost . . ."**

**(Canons of the One Hundred and Fifty
Fathers, 1956, p. 185).**

**The Means of the
Performance of this
Sacrament**

The visible element in the sacrament of confirmation comprises **four parts:**

(1) An epiclesis of the Holy Spirit upon the water;

(2) The holy chrism,

by which the baptized rightfully becomes a "Christian";

**(3) the signing with the holy
chrism—**

**the priest anoints the baptized,
using **thirty-six signs** of the**

CROSS,

**which cover almost all the
members of his body;**

and (4) **the prayers said during
the process of anointing,**

ending with the words:

"Receive the Holy Spirit

**and be a purified vessel of our
Lord Jesus Christ."**

The Coptic church, in line with other Orthodox churches, has a distinctive stand toward administering the sacrament of confirmation.

Whereas in non-Orthodox churches, confirmation is the exclusive right of bishops,

**there is no such restriction
imposed on Coptic priests,
as they receive this right at
ordination.**

**Second, unlike other churches
where confirmation is **delayed** till
the age of discretion,**

Orthodox churches administer it together with two other sacraments, that is, preceded by baptism, and followed by Holy Communion. Not only is this practice based on solid historical grounds, as it was observed by all churches, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike,

until the thirteenth century,

**when the Roman Catholic church
chose to delay confirmation until
the age of discretion.**

**It also provides the necessary
precaution against the likelihood
of an unbaptized and
unconfirmed child's death before
attaining that age.**

Tertullian writes:

**“After coming up from the
font,**

**We are anointed with blessed oil,
According to the ancient rite,
as of old it was the custom to
anoint to the priesthood with
oil from a horn.”**