



GUIDE TO GREEK ORTHODOX CHRISTENINGS

A Guide to the Baptism of a Child

The Significance of the Day

In the Greek Orthodox tradition, a child's baptism is a beautiful celebration of faith and community. It is the moment a child is officially welcomed into the Church family, beginning their spiritual journey surrounded by the love of their parents and godparents.

The Role of the Godparent (Nounos/Nouna)

The Godparent is chosen to be a lifelong spiritual mentor for the child. To ensure the ceremony proceeds smoothly, the Godparent traditionally prepares:

- **The Baptismal Outfit:** A complete set of new white clothes (including shoes and undergarments) to represent a fresh start.
- **A Gold Cross & Chain:** A sacred gift the child will wear for years to come.
- **The Lathopana (Linens):** A set including a large white sheet, one large bath towel, and one small hand towel for the Priest.
- **Ceremonial Essentials:** A large, decorated candle (Lambada), a small bottle of olive oil, and a bar of soap.

Administrative & Clergy Honorariums

While the sacraments themselves are a gift of grace, it is customary to cover the costs associated with the use of the church and the time of those serving:

- **Parish Fees:** There is a fee for the official certificate and for the use of the church facilities. Please consult the priest at the time of booking to confirm the fee and how it is to be paid.
- **The Priest & Chanter:** It is customary (though not mandatory) to provide a monetary honorarium to the Priest and the Chanter (Psalti) for their time. This is typically handled by the Godparents in a sealed envelope following the service.
- **The Sexton (Neokoros):** A small token of appreciation is also customary for the church sexton who prepares the font and cleans up the oil/water afterward.

- **A Growing Connection:** It is a cherished tradition to attend the Divine Liturgy and receive Communion for the next three consecutive Sundays to fully embrace your new spiritual life.

A Look at the Service

- **The Naming:** The child is officially given their Christian name, often named after a Saint.
- **Triple Immersion:** The baby is immersed three times in the baptismal font, symbolising Christ's three-day resurrection.
- **Chrismation:** The Priest anoints the child with "Holy Myrrh," sealing them with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- **The First Procession:** The Godparent carries the child around the font three times, signifying their first steps as a member of the Church.

Lovely Traditions

- **Koufeta:** Guests are given sugar-coated almonds in odd numbers, representing the indivisible bond between the child and the Church.
- **Martyrika:** Small witness pins are given to all who attend to commemorate the occasion.

A Guide to Adult Baptism & Reception

Welcome to the Faith

Choosing to enter the Greek Orthodox Church as an adult is a deeply meaningful and respected step. This journey is one of personal commitment, and the community is delighted to support you as you begin this new chapter.

The Path to Initiation

- **Catechism:** Before the ceremony, you will spend time in instruction with your Priest to explore the teachings and traditions of the Church.
- **Choosing a Sponsor:** You will select an Orthodox Sponsor (Godparent) to stand by you during the ceremony and offer spiritual guidance afterward.
- **Entry via Chrismation:** If you were previously baptised in another Christian faith, you may be received into the Church through the beautiful anointing service of **Chrismation**.

The Ceremony Ritual

- **Your Personal Vows:** Unlike an infant, you will personally renounce the devil and recite the Nicene Creed, declaring your faith in your own words.
- **The Ritual:** Triple immersion takes place in a large vessel or natural water. For modesty, candidates usually wear a simple white robe over swimwear.
- **The Light of Christ:** You will hold a lit candle during the service, symbolising the light that will guide your path forward.

The First Steps Following Baptism

- **Holy Communion:** You will receive your first Communion immediately following the rite.

Administrative Logistics

As you prepare for your initiation, there are a few practicalities to keep in mind regarding the parish:

- **Certificates & Paperwork:** Your Priest will need to record your baptism in the official church registry. There is often a small administrative fee for the issuance of your official Baptismal or Chrismation Certificate.
- **Fees:** There is a fee for the official certificate and for the use of the church facilities. Please consult the priest at the time of booking to confirm the fee and how it is to be paid.
- **Honorariums:** Following the ceremony, it is traditional for the Sponsor (or the candidate) to offer an honorarium to the Priest, the Chanter (Psalti) and the Sexton (Neokoros). These offerings support the clergy and the musical ministry of the parish.