Chapter 3
Sacraments of Initiation

57. “The sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the foundations of every Christian life. Men receive a share in the divine nature through the grace of Christ. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life ….” (CCC 1212).

These are called Sacraments of Initiation because they integrate a person into Christ and the Church.

I. Baptism

58. Holy Baptism, the first of the initiation sacraments, is the foundation of Christian life. It is the gateway to the spiritual life and the door through which one gains access to the other sacraments. It is clear from the words of Jesus that baptism is the sacrament that grants entry into Christian life: "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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.." (Mt 28:19–20). Through Baptism, a new entry is made possible into discipleship and into a new creation. (Jn 3:5)

The foundation of Christian baptism lies in both the example of Jesus Himself (Mt 3:13) and His mandate (Mt 28:19). In baptism, by cleansing with natural water and invoking the name of God-the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, a person is freed from sin, is reborn into a new life**,** and is clothed with Christ; and thus, integrated into the Church**,** which is His Body (CCEO 675 & 1).

59. The Syriac word *Mammodisa* comes from the verb root *amad*, which means "to immerse." The word *baptism* is derived from a Greek word "Baptisein" that means "to immerse" or "to dip into water."

60. In the New Testament, Christian baptism bears a notable resemblance to the ritual washings practiced within Judaism. In the process of conversion to Judaism, an individual would undergo circumcision, followed by a ritual immersion (washing) and a sacrifice. Among these rites, circumcision was the central and defining act, typically undertaken by one who had acquired knowledge of the faith. The ritual washing functioned primarily as a preparatory step for the offering of the sacrifice. During the time of Jesus, among the Jews, members of the Qumran community underwent baptism as part of the preparation to become members of the community and they believed that this baptism, which included repentance and submission to God, would impart inner purity. In this sense, baptism in the New Testament can be seen as a sign of becoming a member of the Church. Although the baptismal ritual in the Qumran community was repeated multiple times, Christian baptism was performed only once.

II. Old Testament Symbols of Baptism

61. Images that symbolically refer to baptism can be found in the Old Testament.

The Great Flood and Noah's Ark: The Church sees this as a symbol of salvation through baptism. Through the ark, eight people were saved through water (Gen 7; 1 Pt 3:20-21). It is a sign of rebirth, marking the end of sin and the beginning of righteousness.

The Red Sea Experience: The journey of the people who crossed the Red Sea and were liberated from Pharaoh’s slavery is a foreshadowing of those who, through baptism, receive deliverance from sin.

The Jordan River experience (Joshua 3): The crossing of the Jordan River by God's people is a symbol of baptism. Through it, they received the Promised Land as a gift, which is a symbol of eternal life.

Naaman's Healing: At the word of Elisha, Naaman, the leper went to the river Jordan and dipped himself seven times, and his body was restored and made clean (2 Kings 5:14). Naaman serves as a symbol of every believer who, through baptism, is cleansed from the stain of sin and transformed into a new person, renewed in the image and likeness of God.

III. Holy Baptism in the New Testament

62. According to the New Testament perspective, the person who receives baptism, participates in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom 6:3–4). The salvific work of Christ is emphasized here. It is also equally important that Baptism creates a meaningful connection between the person and Christ.

Baptism given by John the Baptist (Jn 1:26, 33; 10:40): People received baptism from John the Baptist in response to his call to repent and turn from their sins. The baptism given by John was a preview of the baptism that Jesus would later give with the Holy Spirit and fire (Mt 3:11; John 1:33).

The Baptism of Jesus: Although Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the significance of His baptism was entirely different. Being sinless, Jesus had no need for a baptism of repentance (Jn 8:46; Heb 4:15). Yet, in order to "fulfil all righteousness" (Mt 3:15), our Lord accepted baptism from John intended for sinners. At that moment, the mystery of the Holy Trinity was revealed to the world (Mt 3:16–17). Following this, Jesus began His public ministry. It was also a moment of revelation to Him with regard to His mission as the Suffering Servant foretold by the prophet Isaiah (Is 42:1–6; 50:4–8; Mt 3:16–17). Jesus later referred to His own suffering and death as the “baptism” He must undergo (Mk 10:38; Lk 12:50). Through His Paschal Mystery, Jesus caused a spring of baptism to flow to all humanity.

Baptism in the Apostolic Era: The apostles were fully aware of Christ’s directive concerning the necessity of baptism. This understanding is clearly reflected in the Acts of the Apostles: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins”(Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5).

Baptism in the view of the Apostle Paul: Through baptism (*Mammodisa*), the believer is united with the death of Christ, is buried with Him, and is also raised with Him. (Rom 6:3–4) The person who receives baptism puts on Christ. (Gal. 3:27). It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that baptism becomes a means of cleansing**,** justification**,** and sanctification**.** (1 Cor 6:11; 12:13)

IV. The History of Baptism

63. Jesus taught that in order to enter the kingdom of God, one must be born again of water and the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:5) and commanded that all nations be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and that they make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:19-20). He empowered the apostles to do this by anointing them with the Holy Spirit and fire on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-14). From that time on, the Church has been administering baptism. This sacrament, which is the very foundation of Christian life, is also the gateway to the other sacraments. Since anointing with holy oil (confirmation) and the Holy Eucharist are inextricably linked with baptism, the early Church celebrated all three sacraments together as a unified rite.

64. **First century:** On the day of Pentecost, the apostles were anointed visibly by the Holy Spirit, and with great boldness, they proclaimed the mystery of the Resurrection. Many who heard their message accepted the truth and received baptism, and were welcomed into the faith. As the Holy Scriptures testify, they administered baptism in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:37–38). The apostles baptized in the name of Jesus to prepare the believers to confess Jesus Christ as the one true Lord and the only Savior, and to submit to His supreme authority over all things.

Even though Jesus commanded baptism "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19), why did the apostles administer baptism in the name of Jesus? In using this phrase, “in the name of Jesus” the apostles were actually invoking the fullness of the Holy Trinity because in Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit are also present**.** Moreover, the apostles being strong in their resurrection faith and were earnest in proclaiming the mystery of the Resurrection, likely stressed the name of Jesus to highlight the foundation of Christian belief because in Jewish tradition "name” indicates ownership**.** So, those who were baptized "in the name of Jesus" were being identified with Jesus and were recognized as belonging to Him**.** Peter appears to have baptized in the name of Jesus in Jerusalem (Acts 2:38) and in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:48) and Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:5). There were two patterns in which the apostles performed this sacrament: The first was the 'anointing of the Spirit followed by baptism'; the second was the 'baptism followed by anointing of the Spirit.

65. **Spiritual Anointing followed by Baptism:** According to this rite, baptism was given to those who were filled with the Holy Spirit. Even at the hearing of the Word alone, the Holy Spirit would come upon the listeners, and they would immediately be baptized. When those who heard Peter’s first proclamation of the Word were filled with the Spirit, they were immediately baptized. (Acts 2:37–42). The same thing happened in the house of Cornelius. All those who listened to Peter there, were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues. Then they too were baptized. (Acts 10:44–48)

66. **Baptism followed by Spiritual Anointing:** In this rite, baptism is administered first and the Holy Spirit is given through a special act of laying on of hands. At Ephesus, Paul baptized the disciples of John the Baptist and then laid hands on them through which they received the Holy Spirit. Similarly, when it was heard that Deacon Philip had baptized many, Peter and John came from Jerusalem to Samaria, they laid hands on the believers, and they too received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14–17). The same pattern of baptism that Jesus received in the Jordan is seen here as well. Jesus after receiving baptism came up from the water and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove (Lk 3:21–22). Even today, all Christian denominations continue to perform the sacrament of baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity following this same pattern.

The baptismal practice during the apostolic period can be divided into three stages: Instruction about the Christian life; Baptism administered by apostles or deacons in rivers or bodies of water (Acts 2:37–42; 8:12–17; 10:44–48; 9:1–19; 1 Cor 1:14–16); bestowal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands by the apostles (Acts 8:17; 19:6).

67. **The second Century:** During the second century, religious persecution and limited communication between churches made it difficult to consolidate or unify baptismal practices. Baptism was conducted in different ways in different regions, however , a general structure with four stages can be identified: Catechesis or spiritual preparation of the candidates through teaching and this included fasting for two days leading up to the Sunday of baptism, usually Easter Sunday; administering baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity either by immersing the

candidate three times in a river or water body, or where water was scarce, by pouring water three times over the head; making the baptized complete in the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands; finally receiving the Holy Eucharist, which would bring them into full communion with Christ. It is through the Eucharist that they were united with His Mystical Body and granted complete membership in the Church.

68. **The Third Century:** During the third century, Sunday was chosen as the most appropriate day for administering baptism. The associated liturgical practices were elaborated to align with the significance of the day and the sacrament. The tradition preserved by Hippolytus of Rome, a prominent Church leader and teacher, provides clear guidance on this development. Accordingly, the ministry of laying on of hands was permitted only to the bishop.

69. **Fourth to sixth Centuries:** Following the Church's attainment of freedom in the fourth century, many individuals expressed their willingness to embrace Christianity. However, recognizing the absence of a lifestyle aligned with the Christian faith, the Church instituted structured programs for baptismal preparation.

Though the specifics varied from place to place, by sixth century, a well-established and unified process had taken shape in the Church. This method consisted of a long period of faith formation (called the *catechumenate*), often lasting one or more years , followed by baptism administered at the end of this formation period. The catechetical training typically began at the start of Lent. Baptism was administered at the end of Lent, specifically during the Easter Vigil Holy Eucharist — on the night of Holy Saturday. This extensive system was divided into four stages: Admission (the formal entry of the candidate into the catechumenate); Religious Instruction (*Catechesis*); administration of the sacraments of initiation and the fourth is Mystagogical Teaching (Post-baptismal instruction on the divine mysteries).

V Baptism in Christian life

70. There exists an inseparable link between the baptism that Jesus received and Christian baptism. According to the understanding of the early Church Fathers, the baptism of Jesus forms the foundation of Christian baptism. As a result, baptism becomes the entry point into the Church, that is the sheepfold of Christ. (Jn 10:9; Mk 16:16).

VI. The Necessity of Baptism

71. Sacramental baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is generally necessary for salvation. However, the Church teaches that eternal salvation is still possible even without water baptism (Council of Trent Session 16; CCC 1257–1261). They are as follows:

72. **Baptism by desire**: Every person who, through no fault of his own, does not know the Gospel of Christ and his Church, but who seeks the truth and does the will of God as he understands it through the dictates of his conscience, has the possibility of salvation. It is conceivable that such persons would have desired baptism in a visible way , had they known the necessity of baptism. (CCC 1260; Lumen Gentium 16). Those who, for practical reasons, have not yet become members of the Church but who desire it, can be considered to have received baptism by desire.

73. **Baptism of blood**: This refers to the 'baptism' received by those who die as martyrs for the values of the Gospel without being officially members of the Church. Baptism of blood, like baptism of desire, produces the effects of baptism without being sacramental.

As for infants who die without baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, just as it does in the funeral rites offered on their behalf (CCC 1261).

VII Theological Perspectives on Baptism

74. When analysing baptism theologically**,** four key aspects deserve special attention:

The Baptism of Jesus as a model for Christian Baptism

75. The Eastern Church scholar Aphrahat (+345) describes the baptism of Jesus in Jordan as the origin and foundation of Christian baptism. Regarding baptism, St. Ephrem says: *"The presence of Jesus in the Jordan sanctified all the waters of baptism. Today, baptism truly takes place through the Holy Spirit.* According to Narsai (+502), a Church commentator, Jesus enabled spiritual rebirth through water at the time of His baptism. Though He was sinless and had no need for baptism, Jesus opened the door for us sinners to be a new creation by accepting baptism.

Baptism, the Restoration of the Distorted Divine Image

76. The idea that man was created in the image and likeness of God is a fundamental element of the Christian view (Gen 1:26). This image that God gave to Adam was distorted by him through his sin. Jesus, who became man, restored the distorted divine image through his baptism.

In the words of St. Ephrem, "The divine image drawn by God was darkened by Adam due to sin. But the Lord, through His baptism, redrew this royal image in him with visible colors and restored it to its former radiance. "According to Narsai, "Just as in a fiery furnace, through baptism He restored our divine likeness." The three anointings (*rushmas*) in the baptismal rite are interpreted as symbolizing the three stages in the restoration of the divine likeness in humanity: the first anointing signifies the stripping away of the old self; the second represents putting on Christ; the third symbolizes the ascent from the depths of earth to the heights of heaven.

The robe of glory given at baptism

77. Both Jews and Christians regard the interpretation of Genesis 3:21 as part of their shared heritage. According to this interpretation, the "garment of glory" refers to the state of Adam and Eve before their fall into sin, as described in Genesis 3:7; till then they were unaware of their nakedness. St. Ephrem compared this "garment of glory" to the shining garments of Jesus on Mount Tabor during His Transfiguration, which appeared as white as snow (Mt 17:2; Mk 9:3; Lk 9:29). This comparison points to the Christian hope that believers will be clothed in the same garment of glory at the second coming of Jesus.

Participation in Jesus' Death and Resurrection through Baptism

78. Through baptism, we are united with the death of Jesus and are buried with Him (Col 2:12). "Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom 6:4). In baptism, those who die with Christ are also united with Him in the joy of His resurrection.

VIII. The Rite and Interpretation of Infant Baptism

79. The rituals of baptism must be understood in their full depth to make the sacrament meaningful and to ensure active participation. It is important to grasp the significance of the symbols and signs used in the baptismal ceremonies.

80. **Initial Rituals of Baptism for Children**: The baptismal ceremony begins at the main entrance of the church by the priest along with the Godparents and others. The initial prayer and the subsequent psalms express the desires and heartfelt emotions of the child's parents, who long for the child to be elevated to the status of God's son. In the prayer that follows, the priest blesses the child and gives thanks to God, who has chosen to grant the child a new birth to become a member of the mystical body through the waters of baptism. The priest then blesses the child with the sign of the cross on the child's forehead, which symbolizes the seal, refuge, and the sign of salvation of a Christian. In subsequent process, smearing of holy oil on the child's forehead and chest, pouring water over the head three times in the name of the Holy Trinity and giving blessings are all done with the sign of the cross.

81**. The First Anointing:** This anointing signifies the purification in preparation for baptism. The priest asks for the child's desire to be freed from the bondage of the devil, to renounce sin and sinful circumstances, and to accept the Messiah as Savior. After this, the celebrant marks the sign of the cross with oil on the forehead of the child. This symbolizes the putting off of the old self. This anointing with oil, which was done earlier in baptism, also signifies entry into the fellowship of the Church and the participation in the one baptism and its continuity.

82. **Profession of Faith:** The baptismal candidate, who is led to the altar as a symbol of his acceptance into the Church after being purified by the first anointing, receives the Word of God and professes the Christian faith.

83. **Blessing of Oil and Water:** The celebrant, along with the congregation approaches the baptismal font and, after reciting the prescribed prayers, blesses the oil and water by making the sign of the cross with the Holy Myron (Sacred Chrism).

84. **The Second Anointing:** The celebrant anoints the chest of the candidate with the baptismal oil. This second anointing, done before the baptism with water, signifies "putting on Christ." Through this anointing with the oil of baptism, the candidate becomes a participant in Christ's holiness and royal priesthood, and is made a temple of the Holy Spirit and a symbol of the new creation.

85. **Baptism:** Baptism is administered either by immersing the candidate in water three times in the name of the Triune God, or by seating the candidate in the water and pouring water on the head three times in the form of a cross, or by pouring water in the form of a cross three times on the candidate's head. Water, which humans use daily for purification, is used symbolically in religious rituals. In baptism, water becomes a symbol of life. The water mentioned in Genesis 1:2 and the water of the Jordan River, where Jesus was baptized are Old and New Testament symbols of the life-giving water of baptism. In the baptismal rite of the Syro-Malabar Church, while blessing the water, the priest says: 'This water is blessed to become a new womb (a vessel of birth) that gives spiritual birth.' That is why the Church Fathers interpret the baptismal font — the place of baptism — as the womb of Mother Church, from which a Christian is born. The act of immersing the candidate in water three times symbolizes Christ's burial, His three days in the tomb, and His resurrection on the third day **(**Rom 6:3–4**).** In short, the water of baptism cleanses the candidate from sin and integrates him into the life of the Holy Trinity (CCC 1239**).** It is the 'new water' that has to be used in Baptism, which is the sacrament of 'new life'.

86. **Clothing in White Garments:** The white garment symbolizes that the stains of original sin and personal sin have been wiped off and that the person who has received baptism has been sanctified. Clothing the baptized person with a new garment symbolizes "putting off the old self"

(Col 3:9) and "putting on the new self" (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10), that is, "putting on Christ" (Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27).

87. **Giving the Lighted Candle:** A lighted candle is given with the blessing, "May Christ, the light of the world, be your guiding light." This symbolizes that the light of Christ—the light of life—has now entered the life of the person who has received baptism (Jn 8:12). The tradition of calling the newly baptised as the ones who received light has existed in the Church. The lighted candle serves as a reminder to the baptized that they are called to live as bearers of Christ's light, radiating His presence. (Eph 5:9)

IX. The Rite of Anointing with Oil and Confirmation and its Interpretation

88. Chrismation is administered as a continuation of Baptism. After the *Karozusa* of the Chrismation, the celebrant asks the candidates about their readiness to bear witness to Christ, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, a hymn of prayer to the Holy Spirit is sung. This is followed by the laying on of hands (epiclesis) and other sacred rites.

89. **Prayer of Laying on of Hands:** The celebrant extends both hands over the person who has received baptism and recites the prayer of laying on of hands. This gesture symbolizes the gift of the Holy Spirit. The meaning is clearly expressed in the prayer itself: "God the Father, may he be sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." The priest prays that those who are sealed with the Holy Spirit may be transformed into valiant soldiers bearing witness to the Gospel—filled with the fruits of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22).

90. **The Third Anointing:** After the prayer of laying on of hands, the celebrant anoints the candidate's forehead with the holy *Myron* (chrism oil) with the sign of the cross. This anointing with the *myron* consecrated by the bishop signifies his participation in the prophetic, priestly, and royal mission of Christ (cf. 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Samuel 16:12–13) besides expressing the unity of a Christian with the bishop (CCC 1292).

Anointing with oil is a sign of being sealed with the Holy Spirit. Both Baptism and Confirmation are sacraments that imprint an *indelible spiritual mark*—a seal of belonging to Christ. This seal signifies that the person now belongs to Christ forever. Therefore, this sacrament is received only once. Though sin can hinder the salvific effects of these sacraments, no sin can ever erase this spiritual seal (CCC 1272).

91. **Crowning:** Next, the celebrant crowns the person who has received the anointing. This symbolizes the spiritual joy of those who have been set free from the bondage of sin and demonic slavery and are now exalted as beloved children of the Church. It also signifies that they are deemed worthy of the crown of eternal glory (cf. 2 Tim 4:8). This rite is optional.

After this, the newly baptized person is led to the entrance of the sanctuary (*madbaha*). Since, through baptism, he has been raised to divine sonship and made worthy to call God "Father," the entire Church community joins with him in joyfully addressing God as "Our Father."

Then, the newly baptized (even if they are infants) is given the Holy Qurbana (Eucharist). Since the child has been newly born into the Church through baptism, it is necessary to nourish them spiritually. Just as a mother feeds her child, the Church nourishes the baptized with the Body and Blood of Christ.

X. Chrismation (Confirmation)

92. The second of the initiation sacraments is called Chrismation by the Eastern Churches and Confirmation by the Western Churches. Chrismation is the fulfilment of the anointing in the Spirit that began at baptism.

“Chrismation completes the grace of baptism. This sacrament gives us the Holy Spirit, strengthens our divine sonship, unites us more firmly with Christ, deepens our bond with the Church, and enables us to bear witness to the Christian faith in words and deeds by participating in her mission.” (CCC 1316)

The Canon Law of the Eastern Churches states: "All those who have received baptism should be anointed with holy chrism so that, being sealed with the Holy Spirit, they may become living witnesses and co-workers in the Kingdom of Christ."

The Greek word "chrism" means anointing. Since the sacrament involves anointing with oil, it is called Chrismation. The Greek word "*myron*" means oil, and so it is also called Myron anointing. The Syriac word "S*eytha*" also means olive oil; thus, the anointing with *Seytha* is sometimes referred to as *Seytha* Anointing. As the gifts of the Holy Spirit provide spiritual strength and steadfastness to the believer to proclaim the faith received through Baptism, this anointing is called the 'Sacrament of Confirmation' in the Latin tradition. Until the fourth century, only bishops had the authority to perform this sacrament.

XI. The History of the Sacrament of Anointing with Oil

93. According to the command of God, we see Moses conducting the anointing ritual ceremoniously in the Old Testament (Exodus 30:22–31). Anointing was seen as a means to be filled with the grace of God.

In the Old Testament, anointing with holy oil was considered a spiritual anointing through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28; Eze 36:26–27). This was done by pouring oil on the head or applying it on the forehead. Through anointing, kings (1 Sam 10:1), priests (Ex 28:41), prophets (1 Kin 19:16), as well as objects and places (Gen 28:18–19) were consecrated for God. In the New Testament, Jesus received the name "Messiah," means "The Anointed One" (Lk 4:1).

Just as athletes apply oil to prepare their bodies for physical training, those anointed with oil are made ready to run the race of faith as its defenders. The mixing of perfume with the oil signifies the union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ. It is clear that those who are united and strengthened in Christ through anointing should be a divine fragrance to others through their lives (2 Cor. 2:15).

Until the fourth century, the Sacrament of Chrismation (Confirmation) was not considered distinct from the Sacrament of Baptism. However, with the granting of religious freedom to the Church in the fourth century, a large number of people began embracing Christianity. This created situations where the initiation sacraments had to be administered in multiple places on the same day, making it difficult for the bishop to be present everywhere. As a result, in the Latin Church, the Sacrament of Anointing was postponed to another occasion depending on the availability of the bishop, and it came to be known as Confirmation. In contrast, in the Eastern Churches, this authority was delegated to priests by the bishop. Therefore, the tradition of administering Baptism and Chrismation together continued. Yet, the practice of using the Holy Myron consecrated by the bishop for this sacrament has been faithfully preserved. (CCEO 695 & 1; 696 & 1)

XII. Chrismation in Christian Life

94. Although the early Church tradition did not provide a detailed explanation of the Sacrament of Chrismation, the Church Fathers understood it as confirming and completing all that took place in Baptism. The specific characteristics of this sacrament are as follows:

The Seal of the Holy Spirit

95. Chrismation is the sacrament that deepens and strengthens the grace received in Baptism (CCC 1303). Through it, those who are reborn in Christ are sealed with the Holy Spirit so that they may grow in faith and remain steadfast in it until the end of their lives. In this way, they enter into a deeper communion with the Church and become heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30). Through this sacrament, they come to a fuller understanding of the mystery of Christ and become apostles who proclaim Him before all people—especially those who do not yet know Him (Lumen Gentium 11). By making use of every opportunity to proclaim the truth and bear witness to Christ, they become the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and messengers of hope to those who dwell in darkness and in the valley of death.

A Courageous Witness of Christ

96. This sacrament imparts a special strength of the Holy Spirit to boldly proclaim and defend the faith through word and deed, to courageously confess His name (Acts 5:41), and to never be ashamed of the cross (1 Corinthians 1:23) as true witnesses of Jesus Christ. Thus, Chrismation empowers believers to bear fearless witness to Christ—even to the point of offering their lives if necessary.

Participation in the Mission of Christ

97. Along with being firmly united to Jesus through a deep relationship, those who receive the Sacrament of Chrismation also become active participants in His mission. This sacrament grants a profound share in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly roles (1 Peter 2:9). As royal priests, those sealed through Chrismation inspire others to draw the fullest benefit from the Church's worship. Through their words and deeds, they fulfil their *prophetic mission* by being witnesses to Christ in their daily lives. Through silent missionary activity, they lead many to the truth and to the Kingdom of God, thereby fulfilling their *royal mission*. In doing so, by God's grace, they come to share in the royal glory of Christ.

XIII. Baptism and Chrismation of Adults

98. As in the general tradition of the Church, the Syro-Malabar Church too did not originally have separate rites for children and adults. The same rite used for the baptism of infants was also used for adults. Therefore, the Syro-Malabar Church has formulated the rite for adults based on the general tradition of the universal Church. According to this rite, Baptism is given to adults who personally profess their faith. The Catholic Church, in both Eastern and Western canon law, clearly teaches that no one should be forced to receive Baptism. The initiation sacraments for adults are completed in four distinct stages**,** and normally, a specific period of time is observed between each stage.

First Stage: Admission to the Catechumenate (Preparation for Baptism)

99. The first stage involves officially admitting the candidate into the sacrament of initiation. The questions asked by the celebrant and the answers given by the candidate, followed by the singing of the Psalm (Psalm 43:2–5), indicate this initiation. This stage expresses the hope that

the candidate who seeks Jesus and desires to come into Truth, Light, and Life, will soon be reborn through baptism and become a member of the mystical body of Christ. With the first anointing, the candidate is brought to the Table of the Word (the place of the Scriptures). The celebrant then prays that the candidate may receive the grace to renounce the works of darkness and confess Christ as Savior while embarking on a pilgrimage toward a new life. In the following prayer of exorcism, the Church prays for the candidate to receive strength to overcome demonic temptations that may arise on the candidate's journey in search of Christ. The candidate is then given the Book of the Gospels and is led to the door of the baptismal font. The entire community wishes that the meditation on the Gospel will be a strong fortress against the forces of evil throughout the candidate's journey towards the goal.

Second Stage: (Formation and Instruction)

100. This stage is a period dedicated to teaching the catechumen (baptismal candidate) the doctrines of faith. The question posed during the rite, whether he has tried to find Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life, through the Word of God is particularly significant for the candidate who has already received the Book of the Gospels. Psalm 23, which begins with *"The Lord is my Shepherd…"* convinces the candidate of the importance of accepting Jesus as his Helper, Protector and, above all, Savior. In the subsequent prayer of deliverance, the Church prays that the candidate be given the grace to renounce sin and sinful situations, and walk in the path of holiness. Through the readings from the Scripture, the candidate is made aware of the need to profess faith in Jesus, the Saviour. The profession of faith that follows should be seen as an appropriate response to this realization. If the Gospel was given at the end of the first phase, what is given here to the catechumen is the Cross, the symbol of salvation. With a prayerful blessing that the Cross of Jesus Christ may protect the candidate from all dangers, the second stage comes to a close.

Third Stage: The Lord's Prayer and Anointing

101. The third stage begins with a profession of faith in the Cross, the symbol of salvation and the source of hope, which was given at the end of the second stage. This stage focuses on two main elements: Formally introducing the 'Lord's Prayer' to the catechumens (It is typically done through readings from the Holy Scriptures). Second is the anointing with holy oil. The purpose of *Karozusa* in this stage is to convince the candidate of the need to be born again of water and the Spirit. Through the subsequent prayer of laying on of hands and the anointing with holy oil, the Church as a community prays that the candidate be strengthened to share in the royal priesthood of Christ, and to become a temple of the Holy Spirit. In this way, the third stage concludes with the most immediate preparations for baptism.

Fourth Stage (Holy Baptism - Māmōdīsā)

102. The fourth stage involves receiving three sacraments of initiation together: Holy Baptism (Māmōdīsā), Chrismation (Anointing with Holy Oil), and the Holy Eucharist. This rite begins by inquiring about the Christian name that the candidate who accepted Christ as Savior, wishes to select. It is in this stage that the prayer "Our Father in Heaven" is recited for the first time in the baptismal liturgy, because it was during the third stage that the candidate was formally taught the Lord's Prayer. The Psalm that follows (*Psalm 104*) is a proclamation of the overwhelming joy of the candidate at having been chosen by the Lord.

The purpose of the Scripture readings is to convince the candidate of the necessity of partaking in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus through Baptism and to make him aware of the

call to continue Christ's mission on earth. Then, upon professing the Creed and receiving the life-giving sacrament of Holy Baptism, the individual is spiritually reborn, gaining membership in the body of Christ and inheriting the right to eternal life.

Through the laying on of hands and prayer, the community prays that the Spirit of Sonship be sent upon the candidate, enabling him to call God "Abba, Father". Following this, the newly baptized person is filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit through the anointing with oil (Chrismation). He then participates in the Holy Qurbana (Holy Eucharist**)**, receives the Divine Body and Blood of Christ as spiritual nourishment and gives thanks to God. At the conclusion of the service, the candidate is presented with the Holy Scriptures and a lit candle**,** exhorting him to live according to the Word of God and glorify the Heavenly Father through good works.

XIV. Infant Baptism

103. Infant baptism is one of the most ancient traditions of the Church. We have strong evidence about this practice dating back to the second century.

Infants receive baptism based on the faith of their parents, relatives, and above all, the Church. The Bible provides several examples that show how the faith of others can benefit an individual. For instance: The paralytic was healed because of the faith of those who brought him (Mk 2:5). The centurion's faith brought healing to his servant (Lk 7:1–10). The demon-possessed boy was delivered due to his father's faith (Mk 9:17–27). In infant baptism, the parents, godfather, godmother, and the whole community profess the faith on behalf of the child. This is because baptism is a grace received from above (John 3:35). The Lord Himself says that baptism is necessary for eternal salvation (Jn 3:5). During the time of the apostles, entire households received baptism, and it is very likely that infants were included in this. For example, we see that the entire household of Cornelius believed and received baptism (Acts 10).

The Apostle Paul makes it clear that through the faith of one person, others will be saved. He explains, "The unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband" (1 Cor 7:14).

Therefore, the faith of the parents and the Church is sufficient for the baptism of infants (see Acts 16:14, 30–33; Acts 14:15). Parents make decisions regarding their children's food, education, and medical care, not based on the child's desires but based on what is good for them. Later, when the children grow in awareness, they voluntarily accept and affirm the decision their parents made for their well-being. (The grace received through baptism is a gift from God, not earned or deserved). If, even the life of a child is a gift given to the parents by God, then surely the complete care of the child — both physical and spiritual — is also the responsibility of the parents. Just as the grace of baptism needs the support of the parents to be nurtured, so is the role of the godparents. They must be firm believers, capable of supporting the baptized person, whether an infant or an adult, in their growth in faith (see Catechism of the Catholic Church 1255, Sacred Liturgy 67).

XV. Celebrant of Baptism

104. According to the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO), the ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop or a priest. In the Latin Church, a deacon is also considered an ordinary minister of baptism. In cases of necessity, any Christian may administer baptism 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' (CCEO 677 & 2). According to the Latin Code of Canon Law, even a person who has not been baptized may validly administer baptism in the

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit provided he has the necessary mandate. 'Necessary mandate' means the desire to do what the Church does when it administers baptism. The essential point is that the person administering baptism must share the Church's belief that the one who receives baptism will be saved (CCC 1256).

XVI. Home Baptism

105. In cases of emergency (especially situations involving the danger of death), when baptism is administered by someone who is not a priest, it is called "Home Baptism. "As previously mentioned, the person who gives Home Baptism must, according to the tradition of the Eastern Churches, be a validly baptized Christian. Home Baptism is administered by pouring water on the head in the sign of the cross three times, while clearly pronouncing the words: "Baptism is given to (the name of the person) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The person who administers baptism must promptly inform the parish priest of the date of the baptism with the testimony of at least one person so that the baptism can be recorded in the parish baptismal register. If the person who received the baptism is of the age of understanding, his own testimony is sufficient to confirm it. If a valid Home Baptism has been given, it should not be repeated with water. Instead, the remaining rites of the sacraments of initiation such as anointing (Chrismation), giving of the white garment, presentation of the candle, anointing with Holy Myron (Oil), receiving the Holy Communion must be completed separately. This is because baptism imparts an indelible spiritual seal, and a person who has once received a valid baptism must never be baptized again (CCEO 679)

XVII. Godfather and Godmother

106. The Church provides clear guidelines regarding the selection of godparents (*Talathottappan* and *Talathottamma*) for the baptism ceremony. Godparents must be firm believers in the Christian faith. Whether the person receiving baptism is a child or an adult, the godparents must be capable of assisting them in their growth in faith (CCC1255, Liturgy 67). However, in complex social situations, the Church allows certain exceptions. This amendment states that at least one of the god parents (either godfather or godmother) must be a person who has been baptized Catholic (CCEO 684 & 1). To ensure that godparents perform their responsibilities properly, the Church stipulates a few additional norms (CCEO 685): If the one being baptized is of catechetical age (i.e., capable of understanding), godparents must be mature enough to profess the faith along with them. If the one being baptized is a child, godparents must be able to publicly profess the faith of the Church along with the parents. They must be good Catholic believers who can help the parents in raising the child in the Catholic faith. They must have received the sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation (Confirmation), and the Holy Eucharist. They must be members of the Catholic Church who led an authentic Catholic life. They must not be under any canonical penalties. The godparent must not be the mother, father, or spouse of the one being baptized. According to the particular laws of the Syro-Malabar Church, the godparent must be at least 18 years old. If the godparent is from outside the parish, a testimonial letter from their own vicar is required (Art. 132 & 1, 2).

Footnotes :

1. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Mrs Margoliuth) Oxford 1903,416.

2. J.P.Audet (ed.) *Didache: Instructions des apotres*, Paris 1958.

3. Narsai, "On Baptism", *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai,* R.H.Conolly, Cambridge 1909.

4. Code of Particular Law of Syro-Malabar Church, Mount St. Thomas Kochi, 2013.