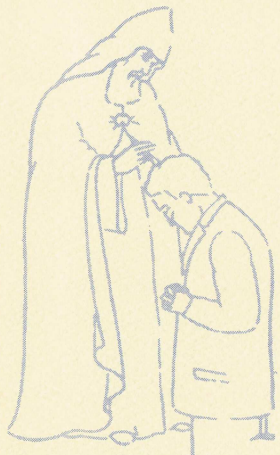
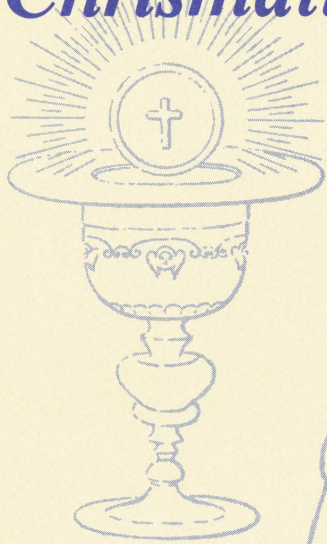
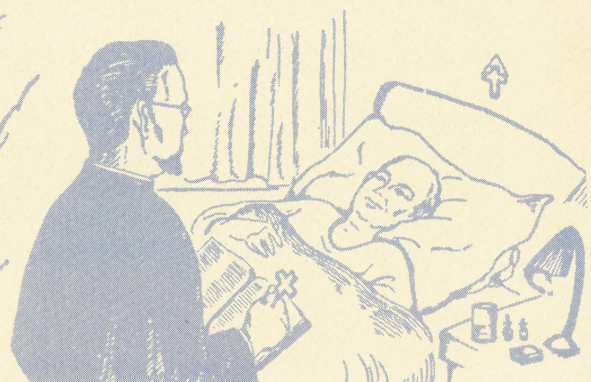


# *Holy Chrismation*



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## HOLY CHRISMATION

This is the Sacrament which completes the washing received at Baptism. While the body and soul of the infant are cleansed from works of evil, they should be filled with something else which, in this case, is the Holy Spirit.

The infant at Chrismation receives strength and courage and the presence of the Holy Spirit in him.

This Sacrament was performed in the early church either through laying on of hands, or by anointing the person, or both. Our church has kept the anointing as the customary way of giving the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized.

Thus, while Baptism gave birth to the child and gave him permission to enter into God's kingdom, Chrismation is administered to supply the vital spiritual strength, which will enable the infant to develop the promised virtues.

In the study of Christian Church history we will see that it was a widespread custom to have these two and also the Holy Communion administered right after one another. This is the custom which the Armenian Church follows, instead of waiting until the child becomes of age (7 years old) to receive Chrismation and his first communion as is the custom in the Roman Church since the 13th century.

### **What about the laying on of hands?**

This has been a ceremony which frequently has occurred both in the Old and the New Testaments. In the Old it is done with a view to the transference of divine blessing (Gen. 48:14, Num. 27:18, 23, Deut. 34:9) which again is the general idea in the New Testament.

Our Lord employed this symbol many times to bless, to heal or to bring a reinforcement of faith.

In the early church The Fathers used this symbol also as an accompaniment to prayer that the believers might receive a special endowment of the Holy Ghost.

The laying on of hands has also been referred to as meaning "ordination". But the word does in this instance mean "to separate" or "to appoint".

Therefore, both anointment and laying on of hands on the infant after the Baptism bring these thoughts to mind, that he is elected and "Anointed with the oil of gladness" (Heb. 1:9) after which the person is called upon to do supreme or spiritual missionary work, i.e. preach the gospel.

In the East the Christian Church, even before the 4th century up to the present time, had the custom of anointing with a chrisim, muron. This is prepared in the Armenian Church only by the Catholicos, making the

occasion a great festivity. In Greek the word means "sweet ointment". The base of Holy Muron is pure olive oil. Forty three different spices and powdered fragrant flowers are mixed in with the oils while it is prepared for the blessing. The number is 33 in the Greek Church. The use of flowers means that the child should become a good odor of Christ, spreading abroad the knowledge of the faith as a perfume diffuses its sweetness (II Cor. 2:14). In the Roman Church it has been the privilege of the bishop to Confirm if he is available, but if not, the parish priest may Confirm. In the East a priest is empowered to anoint a child.

In the Armenian Church right after the Baptism the god-father, receiving the infant from the priest, holds it in his arms, while the priest pours a few drops of the Holy Ointment in his left palm, and moistening his right thumb with the oil anoints nine parts of the body crosswise and says the following words:

The Forehead: Sweet ointment in the name of Jesus Christ is poured upon thee as a seal of incorruptible heavenly gifts.

The Eyes: This seal in the name of Jesus Christ enlighten thine eyes, that thou mayest never sleep into death.

The Ears: This holy anointment be unto thee for the hearing of divine commandments.

The Nostrils: this seal in the name of Jesus Christ be to thee a sweet smell from life unto life.

The Mouth: This seal in the name of Jesus Christ be to thee a guard for thy mouth and a strong door for thy lips.

The Palms: This seal in the name of Jesus Christ be to thee a cause of good works and for all virtuous deeds and conduct.

The Heart: This divine seal establish in thee a pure heart and renew within thee an upright spirit.

The Back: This seal in the name Jesus Christ be to thee a shield of strength thereby to quench all the fiery darts of the Evil One.

The Feet: This divine seal direct thy going unto life everlasting that thou mayest not be shaken. Then, "peace unto thee, thou saved of God. Peace unto thee thou anointed of God".

Anointing made in the form of the cross means that he is going to bear the standard of Jesus Christ, he is a new soldier and is ready to fight for Jesus.

All those who are baptized, but have not received Chrismation should receive it. This is another sacrament like Baptism and Ordination that cannot be repeated.

In conclusion let us say that Chrismation gives to the citizen of Christ's kingdom the right and duty to defend the faith of Christ in His church.

After the Sacrament of Chrismation the child is led to the center of the chancel where he is administered his first Holy Communion, thus receiving the spiritual nourishment, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord.



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