

## ENTRY INTO THE CHURCH - NOTES

1. Baptism marks the entry into the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of which the Church of Ceylon is a part. Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body, the Church, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is complete sacramental initiation, into the Christian community commanded by Christ, given once-for-life, and being a calling and gift of God is unrepeatable and irrevocable (*Rom. 11:29*). Being the one covenant (*Eph. 4:4-6*) applicable to persons of any age on God's own initiative and action, the theology and ritual of Holy Baptism is common both to infants and adults and expressed by a common liturgical order.
2. Parents, spiritual parents and the local congregation have a special responsibility to bring those who are baptised on reaching an age of discernment before the Bishop after sufficient instruction to renew their baptismal promises, to publicly repent their sins, and to make a personal commitment of faith, and then by the laying on of hands by the Bishop to be strengthened and confirmed with grace by the stirring of the indwelling Holy Spirit already begun in Baptism. At such a confirmation and at other times the congregation too renews their baptismal commitment which is also done when a baptised person of another Christian communion is received into the Church of Ceylon. These are all related to the One Covenant made in Baptism.
3. Baptism, Confirmation and Reception should be administered during the main public service on a Sunday to involve the majority of the congregation. The Constitution suggests that it is specially suitable for candidates to be collected and for baptisms to be done on the Easter Vigil, Pentecost, Church of Ceylon Sunday (-closest to July 08), All Saints Sunday, and the Sunday after the Epiphany (-Jan 06) - Rule 1 Chapter 24.
4. The Liturgy of Baptism is used for both infants and believers baptism after the sermon at a Holy Eucharist, in the full view of the congregation. Much extempore prayer and spontaneity is encouraged but the sequence should not be changed: Hallowing of water, exhortation, renunciation, declaration of faith, baptism and welcome.
5. The number of spiritual parents, their qualifications and the instruction to be given are stated in the Constitution Chapter 24 Canon 9.
6. A threefold administration of water (whether by immersion or dipping or pouring) is a very ancient practice of the Church and is commended as testifying to the faith of the Trinity in which the candidates are Baptised. The circumnabulation round the Font three times has a similar symbolism and in addition has the cultural symbolism of the death of the old self being born again into the new life of God the Trinity – the same ceremony at Sri Lankan funerals.

7. The anointing with sacred chrism and laying hands, the giving lighted tapers or clay lamps (preferably from the Easter Candle), the vesting with a white garment, and the epheta are optional symbolic ceremonies signifying respectively the salvation in the anointed Christ through the Spirit, enlightenment through Christ (Eph. 5:14), putting on the purity of a Christian life clothed with power from on high (Gal. 3:27; Acts 1:8), and hearing and proclaiming the faith; which should not obscure the symbolism of Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit but should enrich the Liturgy. The thilaka (-forehead mark) with sandalwood and salt paste symbolic of God's protection and the spreading fragrance of a Christian example, the use of oil and a ekel for protection and health (exorcism), the water cutting for cleansing and rain, and the cutting of a lock of hair at a first visit to a holy place, are cultural ceremonies in Sri Lanka which too are optional. **If such ceremonies are used the congregation needs to be edified as to their Christian meaning.**
  
8. It would be appropriate for the kiss of peace at the welcome after the Baptism be demonstrably exchanged between the President, newly initiated, Spiritual parents, and the congregation. It is also appropriate for the lessons to be read by the candidates or sponsors, a testimony and public repentance to be given by an adult candidate, and the bread and wine and/or milk-rice or honey and curd (for later consumption by the congregation) be presented by the newly initiated or their parents and sponsors.

## THE LITURGY OF HOLY BAPTISM FOR SRI LANKA

*The baptismal liturgy takes place after the Sermon in the Liturgy of the Word, at the Font. Any Acts of Penitence usually done at the beginning of the Service and the Creed may be postponed to be done in the Baptismal Liturgy. An adult candidate may give a testimony after the Sermon.*

*Parts in parenthesis may be omitted or are alternatives.*

*The congregation sits or kneels.*

### **The Request and Declaration Prayer**

1. *Parents, Sponsors and Adult Candidates:* We as parents, guardians, sponsors and adult candidates, having had instructions in the Faith according to the Constitution, *seek Baptism and or dedication* present these candidates for Baptism and also requests this congregation to nurture them in the Lord.

*Presbyter :* Do you recognize that baptism embodies God's own initiative in Christ and expresses a response of faith made within the believing community and requiring a responsible attitude towards Christian nurture.

*Parents etc :* We accept the free gift of God's grace, love and call given unconditionally and for the growth of these persons within the Christian community (and promise to bring them to repentance of evil and affirmation of Faith at an age of reason before a Bishop)\*

*\* Only in case of infant baptism*

*Presbyter :* Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Go 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 all that I have commanded." (Our Lord also said: "Let the little children come to me, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs:)

On the day of Pentecost Peter declared:

"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, every person whom the Lord our God calls."

Let us therefore pray for those to be reborn and for those of us who will nurture these persons in their life in the Christian Church.

2a. Extempore prayer

*Local new birth customs may then be done, e.g. oiling of the body, (-cleansing) striking with an ekel (protection), marking a sandalwood cross on the forehead, (-claiming for Christ).*

*OR*

2.b *Presbyter* : God the Ultimate Reality, you sent your Child, our Lord Jesus Christ to renew in forgiveness humanity's covenant of grace with you, through its sign and seal, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism of water and the Spirit, in which we die to sin, and are buried and raised with Christ our Liberator out of the water, to be born again to a newness of life. It incorporates us to Christ and unites us to one another in a common discipleship in the Church in every time and place, by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit *(-body and head may be oiled with gingerly oil)* that nurture the life of faith and anticipates your reign when those who have been claimed for your own would be fully redeemed. Protect *this/these* your *child/children* *(-may strike gently with an ekel)* about to be baptized, from Satan and all evil, and bring *her/him/them* from darkness to light to be well and happy in your loving-kindness and grace throughout life *(-may mark across of sandalwood paste on the forehead)*. Grant also wisdom and love to these parents and spiritual parents that they and this congregation may fulfil their responsibilities to *this/these child/children/candidate/s* to bring them up in a life long growth of grace in Christ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**The Thanksgiving** *(offered near the water of baptism)*

3. *Presbyter* Homage to the One God, the Ultimate Reality – That You Are – The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

*All* **Homage to the One God, the Ultimate Reality - That You Are – The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen**

*Presbyter* Lift up your hearts

*All* **We lift them to the Lord**

*Presbyter* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

*All* **It is right to give God thanks and praise**

*(The Presbyter may say the following as a single prayer or its longer Litany version inserting the words. 'The Light of Christ' at the place of the stroke (1) to which all respond 'Hallelu Yah')*

4. Gracious God, we thank you for your gift of water and the Holy Spirit, which sustains life, cleanses, satisfies and provides life giving power.

From the beginning your grace has been made known through water and the Spirit./ Your Spirit moved over the waters at the creation of light and life, and by the water of the flood you made a sign of the waters of Baptism that makes an end of sin and the birth of a new life./ *(-Salt may be added to the water symbolic of the salt of the earth)*. You led your people by light and spirit to freedom through the waters of the Red Sea./ In the fullness of time you sent the Lord Jesus, who was baptised in the waters of the Jordon and anointed by the Holy Spirit./ *(-Olive oil may be hallowed symbolic of the seal of the Holy Spirit)*. The Lord Jesus Christ was immersed in the baptism of the deep waters of

suffering and death and was raised to life, and then sent your Spirit to set hearts aflame and enlighten all people in Christ./

*The Presbyter stretches hands over the water and the candidates (making the sign of the cross)*

Pour out your Holy Spirit that those baptised in (this) water may with thanksgiving die to sin, be raised with Christ and be born to new life in the family of your Church;/ and please may this Baptism today be a sign to all of us of the reign of God and of the life of the world to come. Amen/

### **The Exhortation**

5a. *Presbyter* : Dear parents and spiritual parents,  
You have brought *this/these child/children* to be baptized with water and the Holy Spirit to become full members of the Church of Christ. You must now agree to bring *her/him/them* up as Christians that they may grow stronger in the practice and faith of Christ.

*Parents, spiritual parent*

**I am willing, with God's help.**

5b. *(For candidates who can answer for themselves) :*

*N.N.* You are now to be baptized. You will be born again of water and the Holy Spirit and thus be admitted as a full members of the Church of Christ. See that you grow in the faith of Christ day by day, keeping yourself safe from the poison of sin and evil.)

**I am willing, with God's help.**

*Presbyter* As a sign that you accept this responsibility I urge you and others here present to renew now the vows of your own baptism (and you the candidates who can understand to reject sin) repent your past lapses, and profess your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the faith of the Universal Church into which every Christian is baptized, and in which you and this parish will help these children/persons to grow. This gift and calling of God are irrevocable (*Rom 11:29*) - Holy Baptism must never again be repeated in a lifetime.

### **The Renunciation**

6. *Presbyter* Do you turn to Christ  
*All* **I turn to Christ**  
*Presbyter* Do you renounce Satan and all evil  
*All* **I do**  
*Presbyter* Do you repent of all your sins and all that denies God  
*All* **I do**

*Silence for repentance*

**Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, Have mercy on us. Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, Have mercy on us  
Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, Have mercy on us**

*Or*

*any other form of Confession from the Eucharistic Liturgy. The Presbyter will then  
pronounce the Absolution in this or any other manner :*

God is faithful and just and forgives our sins and cleanse you/us from all  
unrighteousness. (May God lead you from darkness into the light of Christ through the  
guidance of the All Holy Spirit.) **Amen**

**Declaration of Faith**

7a. President Let us make profession of our common Christian belief  
All **I believe in God, the Father almighty  
Creator of heaven and earth**

**I believe in Jesus Christ God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the  
Father,  
and will come to judge the living and the dead**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit  
the holy catholic Church  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen**

**OR**

7b. *Presbyter :* Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who made the World?  
All **I believe and trust in God**

*Presbyter :* Do you believe and trust in God the Son, Jesus Christ, who  
redeemed humankind?  
All **I believe and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ**

*Presbyter :* Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to  
the people of God?

**All**            **I believe and trust in the Holy Spirit**

*Presbyter*      This is the faith of the Church

**All**            **This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

*Presbyter*      Will you obediently keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of your life?

**All**            **I will, by God's help**

OR

7c.    *The Thiranaya*

**Call for Commitment**

8.      President : This Sacrament lays solemn obligations upon you, the people of God. Be faithful to your calling as members of the Church of Christ, so that this child/person (*these children of God*) and others present may grow up in the knowledge and love of Christ. In acceptance of this responsibility let us all stand.

**The Holy Baptism**

9.      *The President immerses or pours water on each candidate three times saying:*

N. is baptised in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

*All*        :        **Amen**

*(These Eastern words indicate that Baptism is by God and not by a human)*

*(A lock of hair may then be sheared from the crown of the candidate's head, which is a national custom at a first visit to a religious place and a traditional baptismal custom in the Christian East.)*

*The President may then anoint each candidate in the forehead making the sign of the cross, and lay hands on the head.*

President : N. receive the Seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit: may it make you a faithful witness to Christ of God.

*All*        :        **Amen**

10.    *Reception from another Christian communion or conditional Baptism or symbolic reaffirmation of Baptism of those who so insist in adult life may then take place with a blessing. Pots of water from font and/or lighted candles may be passed from hand to hand through the congregation as an offering of thanksgiving for renewal of baptismal promises. The newly baptized are taken to face the congregation.*

**Welcome**

11. *The newly baptized are clothed in a white garment (Gal. 3:27, Titus 3:5) and on their behalf the parents and spiritual parents given a lighted lamp or candle (Eph 5:14) a Warden or senior member of the congregation saying:*

*N.N.* For you there is a new creation, liberated to a new humanity and clothed in Christ, and renewed by the Spirit of light to be a full member of the body of Christ, the Church, being called out of darkness into Christ's marvellous light.

**Hallelu Yah!**

**All We welcome you into the Fellowship of Christ's Church. Hallelu Yah!  
Hallelu Yah!**

*All applaud*

**The Peace**

**Reaffirmation and Reception**

*(10a. As the congregation too has reaffirmed their Baptismal Promises or any one else who specifically wishes to do so, the Presbyter turns to them, raises hands in blessing and says:*

May the Holy Spirit, who has begun a good work in you direct and uphold you in the service of Christ and the reign of God.

**All : Amen**

*10b. There may be some who insist on the use of water in adult life in re-affirming their Baptismal promises. Though this must be discouraged so as not to appear as a re-baptism', they may be washed ONCE with a minimal quantity of the baptismal water without any loud splashing, and following or similar text used by the Presbyter :*

*N,* as you have already been baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, so now in commemoration of THAT ONE BAPTISM ONCE, and in renewal of its meaning to you, you are symbolically washed in this water in the name of the One God – Creator, Liberator and Sanctifier. **Amen**

*10c. If there is reasonable doubt as to a person being baptized with water in the name of the Holy Trinity, that person is baptized in the usual manner, using the following words by the Presbyter :*

If you have not been Baptized, *N* is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, wherein to be sealed with the Holy Spirit to make you a faithful witness to Christ of God. **Amen**

*10d. When a person of good standing in another Christian Communion wishes to be received into the Church of Ceylon, or after recovery of a person who received an*



*emergency baptism privately, the reception is done at the baptismal font, the Presbyter saying a blessing using the following or similar words:*

*N, we recognize you as a member of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, and we receive you into the fellowship of this Communion/parish. God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you. Amen*

*10e. Pots of water from the font and/or lighted candles may be passed from hand to hand throughout the congregation in symbolism of thanksgiving for the renewal of baptismal promises/covenant. Either at the font or after being taken to face the congregation the newly baptized may be clothed in a white garment (Gal. 3:27, Titus 3:5) and adult candidates, parents and spiritual parents given a lighted candle or lamp (Eph 5:14). All those around the font then process to face the congregation.)*

### **Welcome**

*Presbyter or a Lay Officer : N.N. for you there is a new creation, liberated to a new humanity and clothed in Christ, and renewed by the Spirit of light to be a full member of the body of Christ, the Church, being called out of darkness into Christ's marvellous light. Hallelu Yah! Hallelu Yah!*

**All : We welcome you into the fellowship of Christ's Church. Hallelu Yah!  
Hallelu Yah!**