

Baptismal Preparation Form

The following information will assist you in fulfilling the appropriate requirements for the Orthodox Holy Mystery of Baptism. If there is need for further explanation, please contact Fr Demetrios at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

- 1) Please complete **the information sheet** (the last page of this packet) and return to Father Demetrios at least one week before the scheduled Baptism or as soon as possible.
- 2) The Priest will make every effort to accommodate for the specific date request. However, in consultation with the Ecclesiastical Calendar and schedule, the Priest will make the final decision as to the scheduled date. These arrangements must take place prior to the printing of invitations or announcements.
- 3) Following canonical order, we conduct the Holy Mysteries of the Orthodox Church only in Orthodox Churches. Canonical tradition prohibits the celebration of an Orthodox Christian Mystery in a non-Orthodox house of worship except in extenuating circumstances, and only with the permission of the Metropolitan who possesses canonical administrative authority for the parish in which you wish to celebrate the Holy Mystery.
- 4) Guest clergy who are Orthodox may participate in the Holy mystery. However, the Parish Priest shall extend an invitation to them in order to ensure that, if necessary, the visiting clergyman first secures proper permission from the Metropolis. If they are Orthodox Christian clergy, in communion with our Archdiocese, there are no hindrances. Clergy within the Metropolis of Pittsburgh do not need to request permission from the Metropolis in order to participate in the Holy Mystery. However, clergy from outside the Metropolis of Pittsburgh should forward their request to His Eminence Metropolitan SAVAS.
- 5) Non-Orthodox clergymen may attend the Holy Mystery **only as guests**. Canonical Tradition prescribes that non-Orthodox clergy may not appear vested nor participate in any Orthodox Holy Mystery.
- 6) Every Orthodox Christian over the age of 18 should support the work of God through their stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. Therefore, the parents must be active members in canonical good standing of an Orthodox parish for the

current year. If only one is Orthodox, he or she must be an active registered member of an Orthodox parish for the current year.

The Holy Orthodox Church does not charge a fee for the celebration of any Holy Mystery. However, there are financial obligations the Church must meet in order to provide the opportunity to celebrate your scheduled Holy Mystery. For this reason, the Church will accept a good will donation from non-current stewards and out-of-towner (see (a) and (b) below) of \$ 500 to offset facilities. Clarification:

- a) Non-Current Stewards: parishioners who have not made a stewardship pledge and are not on the church mailing list or who are not current with their present or past stewardship commitments according to the UPR (current year and year prior). If you are not yet Stewards, ask one of the priests, parish council members or call the office during the week day and seek how to become stewards of Christ's Church and become in good standing.
- b) Out-of-Towners or Non-Members (Orthodox Christians living out of town): parishioners from other Orthodox communities requesting to celebrate a Holy Mystery at the Church.

Again, if your family has not yet become stewards, plan to attend the Annunciation Cathedral and raise your family here, ask and we will simply instruct you to fill out a stewardship card with any amount that you and your spouse decide and can afford. We all simply try to support Christ's Church and its expenses with what we can afford in good faith. While we all should give to the church systematically and from the heart, it is never an obstacle to participate in the sacraments.

- 7) **The Sponsor (Godfather or Godmother)** must be an Orthodox Christian in canonical good standing in the Orthodox Church, and a show evidence of being a current and active steward of a Holy Orthodox parish. Their parish priest should prepare a "Membership Letter of good-standing" and mail that letter to: "Attn: Father Demetrios Gardikes; The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral; 555 North High St.; Columbus, Ohio 43215" at least one week before prior to the Sacrament.
- 8) A person whose marriage did not occur within the Holy Orthodox Church, or who has not received an ecclesiastical divorce cannot serve in the canonical, capacity of Sponsor.
- 9) Non-Orthodox or non-Christian persons cannot serve in such capacity precisely because such are the canonical responsibilities of Orthodox Christians.

10) The Sponsor should provide the following:

Items Necessary for the Mystery of Baptism

- A new white outfit to be changed into after the child/adult is baptized.
- A new white tee shirt (adult) **or** one-zy & cloth diaper(infant).
- A large bottle of Olive Oil.
- A Cross and chain of gold or silver.
- A Baptismal Candle and some smaller candles
- A bar of Dove Soap
- Two small white hand towels
- One large white bath towel
- One twin size white bed sheet
- Martyrika (witness pins) for everyone witnessing the Holy Mystery

11) The Sponsor should prepare to recite the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The parish priest will provide a copy on the day of the Baptism.

12) Following the Baptism, Chrismation, and Tonsuring, the neophyte will appear wearing their new baptismal garment. Please keep in mind that the towels, sheet, diaper, and undergarments will contain Holy Chrism, Holy Water, and Oil. Please take special care in cleaning these items. Before washing them in your laundry machine, place them in a hand tub or basin filled with soapy water. Hand wash them, pour the soapy water out of doors onto the earth in a place upon which people do not normally tread, and then refill the basin with fresh water and rinse the items. Wring out the items, dispose of the rinse water as you did with the soapy water, and then launder the items as you would normally.

13) Every Sunday, following the Baptism, the Sponsor and parents are to bring the newly baptized child to Church to partake of Holy Communion.

14) Orthodox Tradition does not stipulate that the newly baptized child receive Holy Communion for only the first three Sundays after Baptism. Rather, the Godparent(s) and parents should receive Holy Communion with the child every Sunday. If it is impossible for the Sponsor to do so because he or she lives a significant distance from the child, then the parents should see to it that the entire family prepares for and partakes of Holy Communion.

15) As in the case of other guests, if you desire the Priest to attend a reception celebrating the Holy Mystery, please send a formal invitation to the Church requesting his attendance. Please note that additional sacramental responsibilities scheduled for the same day may prevent the Priest from attending your reception. However, should he attend, it is customary for the Priest to offer a blessing at the onset of the reception.

16) To insure proper dignity and solemnity during the Holy Mystery, please discuss the Priests' picture taking policy before the service begins. Photographs and video recording are permitted as long as they do not impede or distract from the Holy Mystery. There are certain places a photographer is not permitted.

17) Due to the great demand for our Social Hall, please mention this to the priest so when scheduling that sacrament he might coordinate the availability with the Social Hall. Once scheduled, the priest will put you in contact with the Social hall coordinators.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call at 614-593-6370.

With Pastoral Love in Christ,

+The Reverend Father Demetrios Gardikes
Dean, The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral