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## *Baptism*

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Through Baptism sin is forgiven (Acts 2:8). Cleansing and blessing is attained through Baptism. (1Pet. 3:21; Tit. 3:5-6). In our church, we baptize children. In the Old Testament, children were considered as people of the covenant after they were circumcised. In the New Testament, children are baptized in their infancy and become members of the family of Christ. God has never isolated children from His grace. For example Jeremiah was blessed while he was in the womb of his mother. (Jer. 1:5). John the Baptist was likewise filled with the Holy Spirit while in the womb of his mother (Lk. 1:15). Our Lord and Savior during the period of His teaching has blessed children. This shows that the age of children does not prevent them from being brought to God (Mt. 19:13-15; Mk. 10:13-15; Lk. 18: 15-17; Acts 16:33; 1Cor. 1:16). In the practice of our Church a boy is baptized on the fortieth day after birth and a girl on the eightieth day after birth. In the Old Testament males entered the house of God forty days after birth. Females also

entered the house of God eighty days after birth (Lev. 12:15, Lk. 2:21-24). Since children cannot confess their faith a godfather and a godmother are assigned to them respectively. Baptism is done by dipping and sprinkling. (Mt. 28:19-20). Those martyrs who shed their blood in martyrdom are considered as having been baptized by their blood (Mt. 10:32, 16:25).

## **Order of Baptism**

The priest after completing the prayer makes the baptized person bow in the four directions by saying, I make you bow down to the Father, I make you bow down to the Son, I make you bow down to the Holy Spirit. I baptize you in the name of the Father, I baptize you in the name of the Son, I baptize you in the name of the Holy Spirit, so saying he baptizes him/her. (Mt. 28:19 20).

-Before baptism, the hair is shaved and clothes are taken off.

-Immediately after Baptism, he/she is blessed and receives the Holy Communion, which is the culmination of the sacraments.

-If the one to be baptized is an adult, he is made to receive basic religious education (Catechism) and is baptized after having accepted and believed in the teaching.

-Males can only be godfathers to males and females can only be godmothers to females (Fetha Negest 3: Dida. 34; Nic. 24).

-If any unbaptized person is seriously ill and his life is endangered, he is baptized. (Fetha Negest Article 3).

-If the ones to be baptized are grown ups and can pray, they recite the creed.

-If the ones to be baptized are children, their godfathers and godmothers promise to teach and cultivate them spiritually.

-Children born of Christian families are baptized after forty days if male and eighty days if female. However, there is no restriction of age if the person believes in salvation in Christ.

-Baptism is in the name of the Trinity (Mt. 28:19).

-Baptism is not repeated for one person (Rom 6:3,4; Eph. 4:4-7).

-Baptism is by water only (Fetha Negest 3: Jn. 3:5).

-After his/her baptism, a cord is put around his/her neck. This is the sign or identification of a Christian.

-Baptism symbolizes the death and burial of Christ. The resemblance of death and burial is the partaking of death and resurrection of Christ (Didas. 34; Rom. 6:5,6). Furthermore, Baptism is performed according to the book of Baptism and Fetha Negest.