

The Holy Mysteries

Supplementing the talk by Father Raphael Armour

The Holy Mysteries (Sacraments)

- A Restore our life: we all need healing and Christ came to heal
- B Some are one-off events: Baptism, Chrismation, Marriage and Ordination
- C Others are regularly received (like the food we eat), especially the Eucharist
- D Others may be occasional medicines: e.g. Anointing with Oil, or Repentance (Confession).

The Holy Mysteries are symbolic:

- A Like a wedding ring
- B But with Sacraments the symbol is the reality:
 - Baptism is new life
 - Anointing is healing
 - The Bread *is* the Body of Christ
 - The Wine *is* the Blood of Christ.
- C The Sacraments are NOT dependent on how we feel.

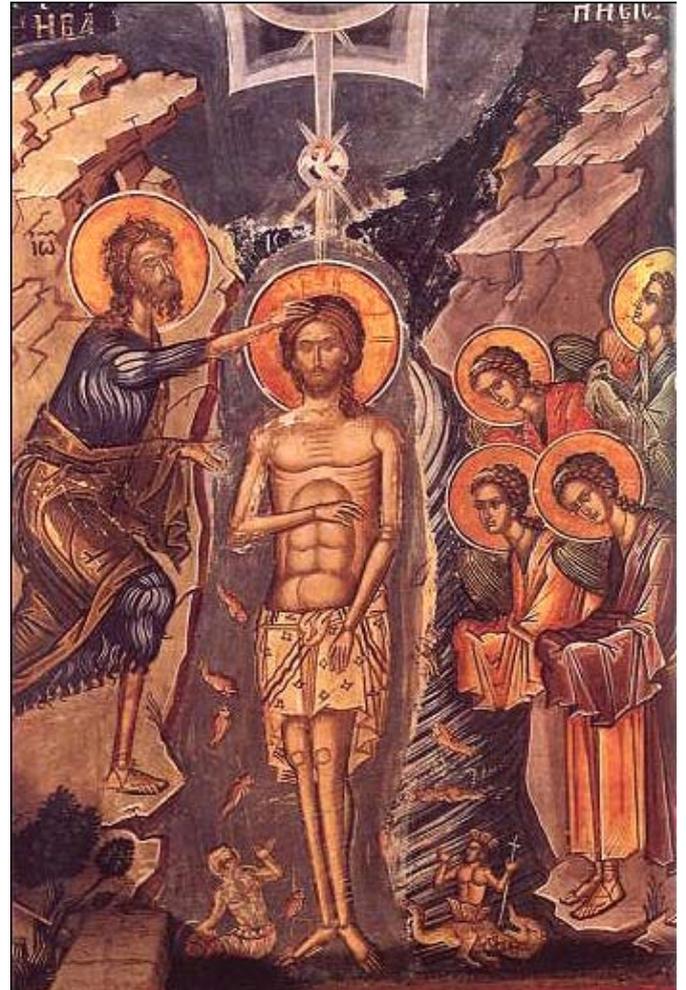
The Eucharist

- A is the central and continuing Mystery of the Christian Faith
- B is the food of eternal life (See Talk 8).

Baptism (The door into the Church)

A Preparation

The service begins with the priest breathing on the candidate (as God breathed on Adam and as Christ breathed on the Apostles after his resurrection). Then follows an exorcism, to drive away what is evil. Then the sign of the Cross to mark the person as Christ's.



The Baptism of Christ
Fresco, New Katholikon, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Meteora, Greece, c.1552 A.D.

Last, the candidate renounces Satan and is united to Christ.

B Baptism

The candidate is baptized thrice in the name of the Trinity.

This is by total immersion.

It signifies the candidate's unity with Christ in death and resurrection.

C **Chrismation**

The candidate is sealed with the Holy Spirit and empowered for service.

D **First Communion**

The newly baptized, however young, receives for the first time the Body and Blood of Christ.

Baptism is an inheritance to be constantly claimed, a death to be repeatedly undergone.

Repentance (often called 'Confession'): a repair Mystery

- A We bring our whole life, our failures, our sins before God
- B We receive God's forgiveness and restoration
- C It may take place at any time but often before the Eucharist.

Anointing with Holy Oil: a repair Mystery

- A For the sick and those in danger of death
- B At any time, at the discretion of the priest, but given to all in Holy Week
- C It is closely linked with Confession.

Ordination: an empowerment Mystery for a special calling

- A Mysteries are usually for all – this one is particular to some
- B To bishops, who are the focus of unity and the centre of authority in the Church: they are set apart to teach the Christian faith and to serve the Holy Mysteries
- C To priests, who are ordained by the Bishop to assist him in these tasks
- D To deacons, who are ordained by the Bishop to assist the Priest.

Marriage: an empowerment Mystery for a special purpose

Marriage was part of God's plan from the garden of Eden onwards

The Mystery restores marriage to what it is intended to be.



The Crowning at Marriage

© Dimitris Stamatelatos,

Parish of St Ephraim, Cambridge

'It is called a mystery because what we believe is not the same as what we see, but we see one thing and believe another ... when I hear the Body of Christ mentioned, I understand what is said in one sense, the unbeliever in another'.

St John Chrysostom

'The sacrament of baptism is the door into the Church, the Kingdom of grace, and the beginning of the Christian life'.

Metropolitan Hilarion

