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The Sacrament of Holy Baptism in the Orthodox Christian Church

Ορθοδοξία και Ορθοπραξία / Ορθόδοξη πίστη



Why infant Baptism ?

Holy Baptism is the first of seven Sacraments in the Orthodox Christian Church. Together with the Sacrament of Holy Chrism it joins the candidate to the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. Some people argue that the only valid baptism is that of an adult who believes in Christ first. They argue that to baptise a helpless infant only a few weeks old who is unable to believe is meaningless. So why baptise a baby when it doesn't know yet what is happening? Why not wait for the baby to grow and believe in Christ and ask for baptism? If we were to follow this line of reasoning, we wouldn't inoculate the baby against diphtheria until he grows up and asks for it! But we know better. Baptising infants before they know what is going on is an expression of God's great love for us. It shows that God loves us and accepts us before we can ever know and love Him. It shows that we are wanted and loved by God from the very moment of our birth. Nothing shows the nature of God's grace more than infant baptism. The Orthodox Church does not belittle personal faith in an adult who seeks baptism, but instead insists that the whole emphasis of baptism is not an what the baby does or the parents or the godparents, but on

what God does. The fact that we are Christians is not due to any act on our part; it is due to the act of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Of course Baptism demands a personal response on the part of the baptised child when it reaches the age of reason. The child must accept what God did for him or her in Baptism. Baptism is not a divine pass that will get us into Heaven automatically. It must be followed by a personal awareness or awakening to the many gifts of God's love bestowed upon us through this great sacrament. (περισσότερα…)