

## WHO IS THE CHURCH ?

The Church is a living body, consisting of 5 necessary components :

The congregation of believers, who are the baptised and anointed by the Holy Myron

The consecrated Church, which has been anointed by the Holy Myron oil

The clergy, who head the Church and officiate the sacraments and perform the holy liturgy

The angels and saints, who are in attendance during the Holy Liturgy

\* The Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, from which we partake of at the end of the Liturgy

Through baptism and being confirmed with the Holy Myron, we become Christians. Baptism involves being immersed in water three times, to represent the Holy Trinity, and also signify the three days the Lord spent in the tomb. Through baptism the baby is regenerated, having died with the Lord and being resurrected with the Lord.

The baptistery is located to the north-west of the church. After being baptised and confirmed by the Myron, the baby is dressed in white to symbolise purity, and is tied with a red ribbon; red to symbolise the blood of Christ, and the tying signifies entering into a covenant with the Lord. Now the baby is committed to the Lord.

The baby is then taken from west to east, symbolising the move from darkness to light, and from left to right, symbolising the move from the place of dishonour to the place of honour.

Having then received the Holy Communion, the baby becomes a member of the church.

During the confirmation, the baby is anointed with 36 crosses (which is the multiplication of 3 X 12; 3 representing the Holy Trinity, and 12 representing discipleship). Hence, through the anointing of the holy Myron, the baby will become a disciple of the Lord.

The anointing of the 36 crosses are :

1 : on the head, for the Lord to sanctify the mind

2-8 : on the senses (nostrils, lips, ears and eyes), for the Lord to sanctify the senses

9-10 : on the heart, for the Lord to sanctify the heart

11-12 : on the back, for the Lord to sanctify the will

13-24 : on the arms (6 crosses on each arm at the joints), for the Lord to sanctify the deeds

25-36 : on the legs (6 crosses on each leg at the joints), for the Lord to sanctify the way

It is through the holy sacraments that we enter into the Church.

Then, having been regenerated through baptism, we are renewed through Repentance and Confession, which is the 'second baptism', for as we grow older we commit sins, and therefore, the Priesthood is necessary because through the priests we practice this sacrament.

And during the liturgy, the angels and saints are surrounding us like a "Cloud of witnesses", and finally at the end of the holy Mass, we partake of the holy Body and precious Blood of the Lord. Thus we are now true Orthodox Christians.