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# Canonical Norms Regarding the Administration of the Sacrament of Anointing with Holy Chrism

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## **Abstract**

The Holy Chrism is the Sacrament through which the newly baptized, immediately after baptism, receives the grace of the Holy Spirit to strengthen and enhance in the new life acquired through baptism. The relationship between the effects of this Mystery and of Baptism is similar to that of bodily growth and birth. For as the newborn needs special care to grow, so does the new born spiritual need to be strengthened by new gifts, to grow in the new life he has acquired through baptism. Therefore, the grace received through the Sacrament of the Holy Chrism is necessary for the growth and moral-spiritual perfection of the one reborn through baptism, for which some Holy Fathers, such as Cyril of Jerusalem, say that only after receiving the holy chrism, the new baptized is worthy to bear the name as a Christian. The necessity of this Sacrament is shown by Nicholas Cabasila, who says that through the Sacrament of the Holy Chrism, the powers given to man through baptism are put into work. Therefore, in this study we talked about the canonical norms regarding the ministers, the recipients, the matter and the form, as well as the special cases regarding the administration of this Sacrament.

## **Keywords**

apostolic succession, Holy Chrism, Holy Myrrh, chrismation, antimimension, canons, autocephaly, hererodox, economy.

## **I. Introduction**

The Holy Sacrament of anointing with Holy Chrism or Myrrh, instituted by our Savior, Jesus Christ, is atested by biblical testimony, namely: “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Cor. 1, 21-22); and “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (I John 2, 27). The establishment of the Sacrament of anointing with Holy Chrism was also made through various promises that the Lord gave to His disciples in connection with the power of the Holy Spirit (I John 2, 27).

In the early days of the Church, the Sacrament of the anointing with the Holy Chrism was administered by laying on the hands of the Apostles, giving the Holy Spirit to the baptized one. In the Acts of the Apostles, we are told that: “Now when the apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. Who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For he was not as yet come upon any of them; but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8, 14-17). The act of laying on the hands was later replaced by anointing with the Holy Chrism. The indelible character of the Sacrament of the anointing with the Holy Chrism is also testified by Saint John the Apostle in the following words: “And as for you, let the unction, which you have received from Him, abide in you ...” (I John 2, 27). The Holy Chrism is sanctified by the power, the action and the descent of the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup>. The tradition of the Church states that the Holy Chrism was made for the first time, by the Holy Apostles, from different spices and ointments, which were prepared for the anointing of the Lord’s body during the funeral and after the funeral (Luke 23, 56; 24, 1). By virtue of the apostolic succession, the bishops as followers in grace and faith of the Holy Apostles, had from the beginning the right to sanctify the Holy and Great Chrism, which has the same power and grace that the act of placing the hands of the Holy Apostles on the baptized ones had.

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<sup>1</sup> “Rânduiala sfințirii Sfântului și Marelui Mir, Rugăciunea întâia de sfințire a Sfântului și Marelui Mir”, in: *Arhieraticon*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1993, pp. 205-206.

## II. Canonical norms regarding the consecration of the Holy Chrism

Administered immediately after Baptism, the Sacrament of the Anointing with the Holy Chrism overflows over the baptized one the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The anointing with the Holy Chrism is also called “royal anointing, spiritual anointing□”, and the Chrism “the garment of incorruptibility, the sign of those who are signified by the divine washing and the calling of the One-Born ... and of the Holy Spirit”<sup>2</sup>.

By anointing with the Holy Chrism – the visible sign of the Sacrament – the baptized ones become “holy citizens” of heaven<sup>3</sup>, “chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation”<sup>4</sup>. Through the mystery of anointing with the Holy Chrism, the Christian receives the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which strengthens him in the new life given to him through Baptism. By anointing with the Holy Chrism, the new member of the Church, therefore, becomes part of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11, 2). By sharing with the Holy Spirit, the baptized one receives the gifts of the Holy Spirit for his strengthening and growth in life in Christ.

The Holy and the Great Chrism is the indispensable matter for the celebration of the Sacrament of Chrismation, for the sanctification of churches and antimension<sup>5</sup>. Initially, the spices and the ointments used for the celebration of the second holy sacrament were prepared by each bishop, because the preparation and sanctification of the Holy Chrism was viewed from the beginning as a privilege and a clear testimony of the autocephaly of each ecclesial community. The prerogative of autocephaly

<sup>2</sup> “Rânduiala sfințirii Sfântului și Marelui Mir, Rugăciunea întâia de sfințire a Sfântului și Marelui Mir”, p 231.

<sup>3</sup> “Rânduiala sfințirii Sfântului și Marelui Mir, Rugăciunea întâia de sfințire a Sfântului și Marelui Mir”, p 206.

<sup>4</sup> “Rânduiala sfințirii Sfântului și Marelui Mir, Rugăciunea întâia de sfințire a Sfântului și Marelui Mir”, p 206.

<sup>5</sup> The *Antimention* is made of good-quality cloth, cut in a rectangular shape, and imprinted with the icon of the burial of Christ. The antimention is consecrated, as is the Holy Table, by anointing it with holy myrrh and holy water. In the Orthodox traditions (notably, in the Slavic tradition), the antimention contains small fragments of the relics of the saints, while in the Greek tradition those relics are planted in the Holy Table. The antimention carries the signature of the ruling hierarch and is the proof of his canonical permission to perform Divine Liturgies in that church. See Fr. Vasile MIHAI, *Orthodox Canon Law Reference Book*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Massachusetts, 2014, p. 51.

*Canonical Norms Regarding the Administration of the Sacrament of Anointing with Holy Chrism*

of any Christian community, with a bishop who preside in the Church, the sanctification of the Holy and the Great Chrism has always been a festive act in the religious life of the Christian Church. The number of spices and ointments that made up the composition of the Holy and the Great Chrism has evolved over time. Today, the Holy and the Great Chrism is prepared from clean olive oil, mixed with clean wine and with many and various spices and ointments<sup>6</sup>, essences and aromas, in number 38, most of which are the product of shrubs and plants that grow in the Orient, as for example: the myrtle tree, the iris, the aloes, the turpentine, the incense tree, etc.

The consecration of the Holy and the Great Chrism is celebrated in the Holy Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, on the Holy Thursday of Passover Week when the Holy Liturgy is celebrated united with the Vespers. The preparation of the materials starts a week before. On Lazarus's Saturday, all the ingredients and dishes are brought to the church, sitting at the place indicated for boiling. Such an event takes place at certain intervals of time, constituting a moment of great significance in the life of any Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

In the beginning, the bishops did the anointing of the baptized themselves, following the apostles' predicament. With time, however, the number of Christian communities or parishes gradually increased, the bishops transmitted this right to the priests, through the intercession of the Holy Chrism consecrated by them.

According to the canonical tradition and teaching of the Orthodox Church, each bishop, with valid ordination, has the ability to sanctify the Holy Chrism for his diocese, according to canon 6 of the Synod of Carthage. The sanctification of the Holy Chrism by the synod of the bishops of the autocephalous Church does not mean the withdrawal of the right which, in principle, each bishop has, "because in exceptional circumstances", says Prof. Dr. Iorgu D. Ivan, "each bishop could consecrate it to the needs of his own diocese"<sup>7</sup>. The act of sanctifying the Holy Chrism by the synod of the bishops not only seeks to create a festive setting for such an important moment in the life of an autocephalous Church, but it also constitutes "one of the forms that a national Church asserts its independence or its

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<sup>6</sup> Pr. Prof. Ene BRANIȘTE, "Cuvânt de învățătură la Sfințirea Marelui Mir", in: *Mitropolia Olteniei*, XXX (1978) 7-9, p. 595.

<sup>7</sup> Prof. Dr. Iorgu D. IVAN, "Sfințirea Sfântului și Marelui Mir", in: *Mitropolia Ardealului*, XI (1966) 7-8, p. 524.

autocephaly. This explains why the consecration of Holy Chrism is performed today by the bishop who preside in the autocephalous Church surrounded by the members of the hierarchy of that Church, as a manifest sign of their solidarity with their bishop who preside in that Church and of the unity of that national Church...”<sup>8</sup>. The act of sanctification of the Holy Chrism, therefore, confirms that the respective Church is autocephalous and unitary in its organization.

According to canonical provisions and norms, priests are not entitled to perform this sanctifying work. The priests hold in the Church a power dependent on the power of the bishop, which is manifested by the administration of the Sacrament of Ordination, the consecration of the Chrism, or the assignation of the times of penance<sup>9</sup> (can. 43 of the Synod of Carthage; can. 102 of the Synod in Trullo). These means are the basis of the plenitude of the priesthood held by the bishop in the Church. This right of the bishop to perform all the functions of the priesthood derives from the very act of the apostolic succession<sup>10</sup>. As followers of the Holy Apostles, in grace and faith, the bishops also inherited the right to sanctify the Holy Chrism, an act that had been accomplished by the Holy Apostles by laying their hands on the baptized one. This canonical order of the Orthodox Church is based on the disposition of canon 6 of the Synod of Carthage, by which it is categorically stipulated that “in former councils we remember that it was decreed that the chrism ... be not done by presbyters...”<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Prof. Dr. Iorgu D. IVAN, “Sfințirea Sfântului și Marelui Mir”, p. 524.

<sup>9</sup> Canon 43 of the Synod of Carthage stipulates the following: “That to penitents the times of their penance shall be assigned by the will of the bishop according to the difference of their sins; and that a presbyter shall not reconcile a penitent without consulting the bishop, unless the absence of the bishop urges him necessarily thereto...”, in: Henry R. PERCIVAL, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Their Canons and Dogmatical Decrees, together with the Canons of all the Local Synods which have Received Ecumenical Acceptance*, in: Philip SCHAFF (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 14, Second Series, WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983, p. 601. See also canon 102 of the Council in Trullo, in: George NEDUNGATT and Michael FEATHERSTONE (eds.), *The Council in Trullo Revisited, Kanonika 6*, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Roma, 1995, pp. 183-185.

<sup>10</sup> Pr. Prof. Dr. Liviu STAN, “Succesiunea apostolică”, in: *Studii Teologice*, VII (1955) 5-6, p. 309.

<sup>11</sup> 6th canon of the Synod of Carthage, in: Henry R. PERCIVAL, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church...*, p. 576.

### III. Canonical norms regarding the ministers, and the recipients of the Holy Sacrament

The *formula* of this Holy Sacrament, “*the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit*”, is preceded by a prayer, uttered by the bishop or priest. The prayer that the bishop or priest of the Primary Church used to say before anointing with the Holy Chrism was much shorter, but essentially identical to today’s one<sup>12</sup>. The goodness of God was invoked to bestow upon the baptized the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. According to the form of the prayer in the *Constitutions of the Apostles*, the bishop or priest said:

“O Lord God ... grant at this time that this ointment may be efficacious upon him that is baptized, that so the sweet odour of Your Christ may continue upon him firm and fixed; and that now he has died with Him, he may arise and live with Him”<sup>13</sup>.

In today’s prayer, we thank God that He has conferred on us “the blessed cleansing in holy water and the divine sanctification through life-creating anointing”, then it is invoked the power of God “to grant him (her) also the seal of the gift of your holy, almighty, and adorable Spirit, and the communion of the holy body and precious blood of your Christ”<sup>14</sup>. The words “the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit”, which are spoken in the administration of the sacrament, are the form of the Sacrament of the anointing with the Holy Chrism. This formula is expressly mentioned in canon 7 of the Second Ecumenical Synod: “Thereupon, they are first sealed or anointed with the holy oil upon the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, and ears; and when we seal them, we say, “The Seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit”<sup>15</sup>.

As can be seen the anointing with the holy chrism was done from the beginning on the different parts of the body. This liturgical practice,

<sup>12</sup> See also the Prayer in the *Euchologion*.

<sup>13</sup> Philip SCHAFF (ed.), “Apostolic Constitutions”, VII, 44, 2, in: Alexander ROBERTS and James DONALDSON (eds.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. VII. *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, Homily, and Liturgies*, WM. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2004, p. 713.

<sup>14</sup> After this prayer, the priest anoints the baptized person with holy chrism, making the sign of the cross on the forehead, eyes, nostrils, ears, breast, hands, and feet, saying each time: The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen”.

<sup>15</sup> Henry R. PERCIVAL (ed.), *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church...*, p. 185.

sanctioned by custom, has always been observed in the Orthodox Church. By observing this practice the canonical disposition of the Orthodox Church was respected, which had sanctioned by law the custom of the primary Church. The Roman Catholic Church has departed from the canonical-liturgical practice of the primary Church. In the Roman Catholic Church is used the practice of anointing the baptized only at the forehead. This practice was also sanctioned by canon 880 of the Code of Canon Law of that Church, in force today, which states: “The sacrament of confirmation is conferred by anointing with chrism on the forehead in a laying on of hands, and by the words prescribed in the approved liturgical books”<sup>16</sup>. Of course, this practice is non-canonical, since both canon 7 of the Second Ecumenical Synod and canon 95 of the Synod in Trullo mention the anointing of all the main members of the human body. Canon 95 of the Synod in Trullo reiterated and stated: “... and they are sealed, that is, we first anoint them with holy chrism, on the forehead, the eyes, the nose, the mouth, and the ears, and then sealing them we say: “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit...”<sup>17</sup>. The rite of the anointing with the Holy Chrism of all parts of the baptized body, established in the primary Church, has been preserved in the old Eastern Churches, even day. The clergy who do not anoint with the Holy Chrism the newly baptized are sanctioned according to the provisions of the holy canons and the Church regulations. In this sense, *Regulations for Canonical Disciplinary Authorities and for Judicial Instances of the Romanian Orthodox Church*, in art. 29, § 6 states:

“The clergy who perform the Sacrament of the Holy Baptism and do not anoint with the Holy Chrism the newly baptized and do not communicate him with the Holy Eucharist are sanctioned with hierarchical reprimand or with the fulfillment of a canon of fasting and repentance at the monastery”<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> *The Code of Canon Law, in English translation*, Prepared by The Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland in association with the Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Canadian Canon Law Society, Collins, WB. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983, p. 163.

<sup>17</sup> George NEDUNGATT and Michael FEATHERSTONE (eds.), *The Council in Trullo Revisited*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>18</sup> *Regulamentul autorităților canonice disciplinare și al instanțelor de judecată ale Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, București, 2015, p. 40.

*Canonical Norms Regarding the Administration of the Sacrament of Anointing with Holy Chrism*

According to the canonical teaching of the Orthodox Church, this Holy Sacrament can only be administered by the bishop or priest, as mentioned, in fact, in the Constitutions of the Apostles<sup>19</sup>. Together with the anointing with holy chrism, the priest transmits to the baptized the blessing of his bishop, as a manifest sign of communion with the whole Church. In the Roman Catholic Church, according to the Tridentine doctrine, the minister of this sacrament is only the bishop. According to the provision of canon 882, from the Code of Canon Law<sup>20</sup>, the priest can only perform this holy sacrament extraordinarily, with the special approval of the bishop of Rome<sup>21</sup>.

The recipients of the Holy Sacrament of anointing with the Holy Chrism are all who have been baptized. The administration of the sacrament of anointing with Holy Chrism is done immediately after Baptism. As for the administration of the Sacrament of anointing with Holy Chrism immediately after Baptism, we have many biblical testimonies, which were also recorded in the canons of the Church. Among these biblical testimonies we mention: 1) The Holy Spirit descended upon Christ as soon as he was baptized (Matthew 3,16); 2) The Holy Apostles administered this Holy Sacrament by the act of laying on of hands, immediately after Baptism (Acts 8, 14-17; 19, 5-6); 3) Since the children are worthy to receive the grace of Baptism, there is no reason to prevent them from receiving the Sacrament of anointing with the Holy Chrism immediately after Baptism; 4) In the Bible we are told that some children were filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb of their mother, for example Saint John the Baptist (Luke 1, 15). According to the order established by Canon 48 of the Synod of Laodicea, "it is appropriate that those who are illuminated after Baptism must after Baptism be anointed themselves with heavenly chrism ..."<sup>22</sup>.

The place where this Sacrament is performed is the Church or the place where the baptism is performed.

<sup>19</sup> Philip SCHAFF (ed.), "Apostolic Constitutions", VII, 22, 1, p. 701.

<sup>20</sup> Canon 882 states the following: "The ordinary minister of confirmation is a Bishop. A priest can also validly confer this sacrament if he has the faculty to do so, either from the general law or by way of a special grant from the competent authority", in: *The Code of Canon Law, in English translation*, p. 163.

<sup>21</sup> L. PETIT, "Du pouvoir du consacrer le Saint Chreme", in: *Echos d'Orient*, III (1980) 1, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Henry R. PERCIVAL, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church...*, p. 154.



In the Roman Catholic Church, the practice of administering this Sacrament at seven years after baptism was introduced only in the thirteenth century. Canon 891 of the Code of Canon Law states that “the Sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion, unless the Episcopal Conference has decided on a different age...”<sup>23</sup>. This “confirmation”, as they call it, can be administered even before seven years, “if the child is in danger of death or, in the judgement of the minister, a grave reason suggests otherwise”<sup>24</sup>. Administered separately from Baptism, the godfathers of the Sacrament fulfill the same conditions as the godfathers of Baptism. Roman Catholics identify the Sacrament of the Anointing with Holy Chrism with “Olio sancto” as well<sup>25</sup>. In fact, for canonists and Roman Catholic theologians, the validation of the Sacraments consists only in their administration according to the “canonical form”<sup>26</sup>. Protestants<sup>27</sup> administer the Sacrament of the anointing with Holy Chrism at the age of 14. The ceremonial character – which is particularly emphasized – acquires a legal character. The 14-year-olds, following the anointing with Holy Chrism, become members of the parish communities, with full rights and obligations.

#### IV. Special cases regarding the administration of the Sacrament of anointing with Holy Chrism

In the Orthodox Church, the Holy Chrism is administered independently of Baptism only if some of the Christians of other faiths, to whom the Orthodox Church considers valid Baptism, that is, performed in the name of the Holy Trinity, express their desire to become its members. The act by which they become members of the Orthodox Church involves the

<sup>23</sup> *The Code of Canon Law, in English translation*, p. 164.

<sup>24</sup> *The Code of Canon Law, in English translation*, p. 164

<sup>25</sup> Victor SAXER, “La prassi sacramentale della Confermazione: gesti e significati nella loro evoluzione storica nei secoli II-VI”, in: D. BONIFAZI, G. BONACCORSO, G. CROCCETTI, L. GIRALDI, W. RUSPI, V. SAXER, B. TESTA, *La Confermazione Dono dello Spirito per la Vita della Chiesa*, Massimo-Milano, 1998, p. 29.

<sup>26</sup> Benedetto TESTA, “La natura del sacramento della Confermazione”, in: D. BONIFAZI (et als.), *La Confermazione*, p. 44.

<sup>27</sup> Pr. Prof. Dr. Corneliu SÂRBU, “Sfintele Taine și ierurgiile ortodoxe în prezentare protestantă”, in: *Mitropolia Olteniei*, XVIII (1966) 7-8, pp. 706-714.

*Canonical Norms Regarding the Administration of the Sacrament of Anointing with Holy Chrism*

administration of the anointing with the Holy and the Great Chrism, since by the removal from the Orthodox teaching they were deprived of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Those who have come out of the Church and remain outside it, that is, heterodox, cannot be recognized as members of the Church whether or not they have the same teaching. The Sacraments generally do not share indelible unconditional character.

The recognition of membership as well as the issue of the validity of the Sacraments is always conditioned by the remaining or returning to the Orthodox Church. To those whom the Baptism is recognized – on the grounds that it was performed in the name of the Holy Trinity – the Orthodox Church received them by administering the Sacrament of Anointing with the Holy Chrism (canon 7 of the Second Ecumenical Synod; can. 95 of the Synod in Trullo; can. 7 of the Synod of Laodicea; can. 57 of Carthage etc.), after in advance the heterodox have anathematized their heresy. The anointing with Holy Chrism is considered by the canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church as the second ceremonial<sup>28</sup> that applies to the heterodox.

The act of the anointing of the heterodox with Holy Chrism has legal effects, since the one returned to the Orthodox Church regains his status as a member of the Church, being reincorporated into the grace of the Holy Baptism. According to the canonical teaching of the Orthodox Church, those who broke away from communion with it had neither the power to baptize nor administer the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Saint Basil the Great, in canon 1, tells us that

“those who seceded from the Church had not the grace of the Holy Spirit upon them; for the impartation thereof ceased with the intermption of the service. For although the ones who were the first to depart had been ordained by the Fathers and with the imposition of their hands they had obtained the gracious gift of the Spirit, yet after breaking away they became laymen, and had no authority either to baptize or to ordain anyone, nor could they impart the grace of the Spirit to others, after they themselves had forfeited it. Wherefore they bade those baptized by them should be regarded as baptized by laymen, and that when they

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<sup>28</sup> See C. DRĂGUȘIN, “Primirea eterodocșilor în Biserică”, in: *Ortodoxia*, IX (1957) 2, p. 287.

ca, e to join the Church they should have to be purified by the true baptism as prescribed by the Church”<sup>29</sup>.

The recognition by economy of the Sacrament of Baptism performed by some Christian Churches, outside of it, in case the respective heterodox or their groups would ask to establish intercommunion “in sacris” with it or would they return to it, leaving the heresy or schism in which they were born, it does not mean a failure to respect the dogmatic and canonical teaching of the Orthodox Church. The application of the economy must be understood as an exception from the canonical order of the Church, pursuing “the spiritual good of all and of her children, and of those who have fallen from it and want to return, and those who want to come closer of her with confidence, leaving heresy in which they were born”<sup>30</sup>.

In the practice of the Orthodox Church today, the decision of the Constantinopolitan Synod, from 1756, signed by the Patriarch Alexander of Jerusalem, is still taken into account. In the decision of the Constantinopolitan Synod, it was stated that regarding the order of the heterodox

“... we follow the Second and the Quinisext Ecumenical Councils that prescribe that those turning to Orthodoxy be considered as unbaptized who were not baptized by triple immersion, at each of which the name of one of the Divine Hypostases is pronounced, but were baptized by some other means. Adhering to these Holy and Divine decrees we consider heretical baptism to be worthy of judgement and repudiation inasmuch as it does not conform with but contradicts the Apostolic and Divine formation and is nothing more than a useless washing, according to the words of St. Ambrose and St. Athanasius the Great, neither sanctifying the catechumen nor cleanse him from sin. This is why we receive all

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<sup>29</sup> See *The Rudder (Pedalion) of the Metaphorical Ship of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of the Orthodox Christians, or all the Sacred and Divine Canons*, translated by D. Cummings, The Orthodox Christian Educational Society, Chicago, Illinois, p. 774.

<sup>30</sup> See Pr. Prof. Dr. Isidor TUDORAN, “Principiul iconomiei din punct de vedere dogmatic”, in: *Studii Teologice*, VII (1959) 3-4, p. 147; See also Gh. CRONȚ, *Iconomia în Dreptul bisericesc*, București, p. 24.

*Canonical Norms Regarding the Administration of the Sacrament of Anointing with Holy Chrism*

heretics turning to Orthodoxy as those who were not baptized properly as not having been baptized and without any hesitation baptize them according to the apostolic and conciliar canons upon which the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ — the common mother of us all — firmly rests. We affirm this, our unanimous decision which is in conformance with the apostolic and conciliar canons, with a written testament subscribed with our signatures”<sup>31</sup>.

Therefore, those who received the baptism “... performed contrary to the tradition of the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers, as well as contrary to the practice and decrees of the Catholic and Apostolic Church” means that they have not received “the baptism entrusted by God to the Holy Apostles ...”. We can thus say that, whether or not Baptism is respected, anointing with the Holy Chrism has always been administered to heterodox as the canonical law of the Orthodox Church provides. The decision of the Holy Fathers meeting at the Laodicea Synod has remained normative, authoritative and current. According to the provision of canon 7 of this Synod, those who return from heresies

“... shall not be receive until they shall have anathematized every heresy, and particularly that in which they were held; and afterwards those among them were called communicants, having thoroughly learned the symbols of the faith, and having been anointed with the holy chrism, shall so communicate in the Holy Mysteries”<sup>32</sup>.

## V. Conclusions

According to the word of Saint Basil the Great, knowing and obeying the canonical provisions and norms regarding the administration of the Holy Sacraments gives the possibility of the Church’s ministers to be “worthy of the fulfillment of the holy canons”.

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Hotărârea Sinodului in: <https://www.holy-trinity.org/ecclesiology/pogodin-reception/reception-ch3.html>, accessed on the 20th of January 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Henry PERCIVAL, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church...*, p. 127.

The care to properly administer the Holy Sacraments, implicitly the Holy Sacrament of the Anointing with Holy Chrism, and to be worthy of the fulfillment of the holy canons was a constant pastoral-canonical concern for the service of our Church.

The holy Chrism is the Sacrament through which the newly baptized, immediately after baptism, receives the grace of the Holy Spirit to strengthen and enhance in the new life acquired through baptism. The relationship between the effects of this Mystery and of Baptism is similar to that of bodily growth and birth. For as the newborn needs special care to grow, so does the new born spiritual need to be strengthened by new gifts, to grow in the new life he has acquired through baptism. Therefore, the grace received through the Sacrament of the Holy Chrism is necessary for the growth and moral-spiritual perfection of the one reborn through baptism, for which some Holy Fathers, such as Cyril of Jerusalem, say that only after receiving the holy chrism, the new baptized is worthy to bear the name as a Christian. The necessity of this Sacrament is shown by Nicholas Cabasilas, who says that through the Sacrament of the Holy Chrism, the powers given to man through baptism are put into work.