**BAPTISM INFORMATION**

**Preparing For Your Child's Baptism Please read before completing and returning Baptism Information Form**

Dear Parents: You have requested a baptism for your child at Greek Orthodox Church, an event which will certainly bring great joy to both your family and our community. This letter provides you with important information on preparing for that important event in your child’s life as he/she is “born again” into the new life of our Savior Jesus Christ.

CONFIRMING A DATE: Prior to the baptism, a date and time must be confirmed by the administrator before commitments (such as receptions) are made. You can call at

 416 425 2485 or send an email to the following address: administration@togreekcom.org

SELECTING A GODPARENT: The selection of a Godparent is the next item and must be done with great personal care, respect for the guidelines of the Church and a desire to choose a spiritual guardian who will be able to participate in your child’s life and whose life and commitment to Christ will be an inspiration for your child. A Godparent must be an Orthodox Christian in good standing in every way with the Orthodox Church. It is mandatory to have a copy of his/her baptismal certificate and a copy of his/her marriage certificate.

Both parents if Orthodox, must be members in good standing with our church and the Greek Community of Toronto. (Good standing does not only refer to financial but also ecclesiastical).

The sponsor (koumbaro/koumbara – godmother/godfather must be Greek orthodox or an Orthodox Christian and must be a member in good standing of the Greek Community. If the sponsor is married the marriage must have been blessed in the Orthodox Church and provide the marriage certificate. If sponsor has been married or baptized outside the Orthodox Church or Orthodox Church with the Old Calendar, he/she is not spiritually in good standing, not an eligible candidate and he/she cannot serve as a sponsor.

If the sponsor (koumbaro/koumbara- godfather/godmother) has been divorced, they must provide an ecclesiastical divorce and the civil divorce in order to serve as a sponsor.

The sponsor should be ready to recite the Nicene Creed in either English or Greek.

PAPERWORK: All documents and payments should be sent to the Church Office no less than four weeks before the day of the sacrament.

1. The attached baptismal form

2. A copy of the parents' marriage certificate
3. A copy of the godparent's baptism certificate and a copy of the marriage certificate
4. A payment of $400.00 for the baptism fee. GREEK COMMUNITY OF TORONTO (cash, credit card, or cheque)

 ARRIVING AT CHURCH: On the day of the baptism, please be sure that you, the Godparent and the child arrive at the church at least 15 minutes prior to the service. Keep in mind that a spirit of reverence and respect is required at all times in the church.

WHAT TO BRING: You will need the following items for the service. These items should all be new. They are traditionally provided by the Godparent, but who provides what is left completely to your discretion.

**The sponsor provides the following:**

* Gold Cross for child
* 1 Large candle (ornamented)
* Small bottle of olive oil
* 2 small white candles (you can purchase them from the Church)
* 1 bar of soap
* 2 small white hand towels
* 1 large white bath towel
* 1 twin white bed sheet
* 1 Outfit white, 2 outfit any color
* 3 underwear
* 1 pair of shoes white
* Martyriatika (small crosses with a pin and ribbon).

ABOUT THE SERVICE: The service to be held will involve three Holy Mysteries (or Sacraments): Baptism, Chrismation and Holy Communion. Each of these has a personal and significant meaning in the life of a Christian:

Baptism is our personal Pascha experience. In the Font, we die as the old Adam and are born anew in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the New Adam, through the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Chrismation is our personal Pentecost experience. We receive the “Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit” through anointing with Holy Chrism.

Holy Communion is received by the child after Baptism and Chrismation. It mystically unites us with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the receiving of His Precious Body and Life- giving Blood.

 AFTER THE SERVICE: Please keep in mind that the towels, the sheet, the diaper and the child's undergarments will have Holy Oil and Chrism on them, so special care should be taken in cleaning the sacrament from these items after the Baptism.

• First, place them in a hand tub or a wash basin filled with soapy water • Carefully wring the items to remove all the Holy Oil • Pour the contents of the basin into the ground outside where it will not be trampled by people walking (not down the drain, please). This special care is out of respect to the sacrament, which should not be cast into the drain or trash. • After that, they may be washed as usual in the future.

FOLLOWING-UP: For three consecutive Sundays after the service, the Godparent should accompany you and the child to the Divine Liturgy for Holy Communion with the child dressed in the new baptismal outfit and the Godparent carrying the baptismal candle. If it is not possible for the Godparent to attend, please choose someone else special to stand in or bring the child yourself.

LIFE IN THE CHURCH: The on-going commitment to keep the child involved in the life of the Church continues from the day of Baptism forward. The child should be brought for all Sundays and feast days of the Church. He/she should also participate in Church School, attendance at worship services and frequent Holy Communion. These things and more will help you and the Godparent fulfill your calling to raise the child in the Holy Orthodox Faith and in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

INFORMATION FORM AND BIRTH CERTIFICATE: Please complete the Baptism Information Form see attached and return it as soon as possible, along with a copy of your child’s official Birth Certificate and the documents from Godparent. These may be emailed, mailed, or delivered in person. If you have any questions, please call the church office at (416) 425-2485. May the blessings of the Lord will be with you as you prepare for this great event. ****