

Intro:

- What did you guys talk about last week? (Baptism)
- We have 3 mysteries in our Christian Rite of Initiation – (Baptism, Chrism, Eucharist)
  
- SAT slide - “As baptism is participation in Christ’s death & resurrection, so Chrismation is participation in Pentecost
  - Two “Pentecosts”, Jews & Gentiles in Acts
  
- Actually, participation in Christ’s baptism...
  - After Christ was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him
  - Why?
  - What does it mean that Christ is the “Anointed”
  
- Slides from St. Athanasius addressing how Christ is the “Anointed” – Against the Arians
- Vocabulary slide – seal, consecrated, anointed
- Slides – Biblical References

### History of the Myron Oil:

- Our fathers the Apostles administered this sacrament by the laying on of hands directly after Baptism, as mentioned in the Holy Book of Acts.
- Phillip, the deacon, preached to the people of Samaria but did not grant them the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Apostles came and later confirmed these new believers with the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands (Acts 8).
- Eventually, as the number of believers across several countries and cities increased, it became impossible for the Apostles to lay hands on all the baptized. Anointing (in Greek, *chrismatis* = anointing) was established as an alternative for the laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit's indwelling...
  - "You have an anointing from the Holy One." (1 John 2:20)
  - "The anointing which you have received from Him abides in you...the same anointing teaches you concerning all things." (1 John 2:27)
  - "He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).
  
- The Apostles established anointing by oil as the alternative for the laying on of hands. They were the first to make the Myron oil.
- Certain fragrant oils which were used to anoint the body of the Lord Jesus during His burial were mixed with the spices which were brought by the women who went to the tomb to anoint Jesus (but discovered that Christ had risen).
- The Apostles melted these spices into pure olive oil, prayed on this mixture in the Upper Room in Zion, and used it as a holy oil (called the Myron oil) for consecration.

- When Saint Mark came to Alexandria, he brought with him some of this holy Myroon oil.
- In the beginning of the 4th century, Saint Athanasius the Apostolic, the 20th Pope of Alexandria, decided to renew it, adding more oil, as well as spices and perfumes (that God had ordered Moses to use in making the holy ointment in Exodus 30) to the original mixture.
- It now consists of 30 types of ointments and fragrances. Saint Athanasius sent some of this Myroon to the Bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Constantinople.
- Myroon is also used in the sanctification of baptismal water and in the consecration of churches, church altars, utensils, and icons.
- Bishops, the successors of the Apostles, lead by the Patriarch, renew the Myroon oil periodically so that it does not run out.
- In making this holy chrism, the new mixture is cooked four times during Holy Week, and then remains in the sanctuary until Thomas Sunday, when the Pope adds the old mixture to the new. The Myroon has been made 29 times in the history of the Coptic Orthodox Church, several times by H.H. Pope Shenouda III.

#### **The Administration of the Sacrament:**

- The Orthodox Church administers the sacrament of Chrismation (Confirmation) immediately following Baptism, in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Bible and Apostolic tradition.
- The bishop or priest administering the sacrament of Chrismation anoints the newly baptized individual with 36 signs of the cross using the Myroon oil, to sanctify all the parts/joints/senses of the body. The first 8 anointments are on the senses: forehead, nostrils, mouth, right ear, right eye, left eye, then left ear. The next anointments are the heart, the navel, the back, and then the lower back. Next are the six joints of the arm (shoulder, underarm, elbow, inner elbow, wrist, and back of wrist), right arm then left arm. Next are the six joints of the leg, right leg before left (hip, inside hip, knee, inner knee, ankle, then above the ankle). Each anointing with the sign of the cross is accompanied by a specific prayer entreating the Lord to confirm the baptized person with the Holy Spirit
  - The head is anointed for the sanctification of the mind and thoughts.
  - The nostrils are anointed for the sanctification of the sense of smell.
  - The mouth is anointed for the sanctification of speech.
  - The ears are anointed for the sanctification of hearing.
  - The eyes are anointed for the sanctification of sight.
  - The heart is anointed because in the figurative sense, our hearts must be preserved and guarded diligently, and must be kept holy and pure, and always with God. In the physical sense, the heart is a central organ which pumps blood to the entire body.
  - The navel is the center of nourishment for a fetus, and is anointed for spiritual nourishment with the Holy Spirit.
  - The back and lower back support the body and are protected by the Myroon.

- The hands are anointed because they are an instrument of Godly work, and should be protected and kept pure.
  - The inner hips contain the reproductive organs, anointed so that the confirmed may live in purity.
  - The feet are anointed to keep the confirmed walking in the way of righteousness.
  - *The right side is anointed before the left.*
- The bishop or priest anoints the baptized in order by age, males before females.
  - After the anointing, the confirmed is dressed in new white garments that are anointed three times by the Bishop or Priest. Then, he ties a red ribbon (girdle) around the waist of the baptized. Just as a soldier ties a girdle about his waist before going into battle, tying this ribbon on the baptized/confirmed signifies that he/she has now become a soldier of Christ. The girdle is red, symbolizing the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, upon which all sacraments were founded.
  - A commandment is read to the parents/Godparents of the baptized and confirmed person, instructing them to strive in bringing up the child as a Christian, teaching him/her prayer and the Holy Bible, commitment to Church and Apostolic teachings and traditions, fear of God, and virtuous life. The parents/Godparents must bring the confirmed to Church regularly and teach him/her to respect God's house, and the Holy Sacraments.
  - The Church is now accustomed to giving the baptized and confirmed person Holy Communion at the end of the Divine Liturgy, followed by a procession. After the procession, the red ribbon is untied by the Bishop or Priest as he prays the prayers of "Untying the Girdle". In the original rite, the untying of the girdle took place on the eighth day after Baptism/Chrismation.

***Conclusion: In the Holy sacrament of Chrismation, which directly follows baptism, we are sealed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, by being anointed with the Holy Myroon oil 36 times. We become temples of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we must strive with all diligence to live Godly and pure lives. The Holy Spirit aids us in our spiritual growth, enlightening us, providing us with the ability to receive spiritual knowledge, teaching us all things, reminding us of all things, granting us grace and determination in our spiritual struggles, providing us with His spiritual fruits, giving us spiritual talents and gifts with which we glorify and serve God, and granting us to abide in our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ.***