

Some Considerations Regarding the *Ordo* of the Holy *Mysterion*¹ of Baptism in the Orthodox Church*

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This text was presented as an Orthodox contribution at the Fourth Consultation of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) held in Vienna (2008). Due to the context, it was meant to illustrate, in connection with the Holy Mysterion of Baptism, what the Orthodox usually affirm about the close relationship between the Holy Scripture, the content of the liturgical books and the works of the Church Fathers in general. By using the terminology, mainly the noun morphe (Philip 2:6,7) and the verb morphoo (Gal 4:19), the paper gives a new understanding of the way in which Jesus Christ takes shape (morphe) in us through the Holy Spirit as we receive the Baptism, the Christmation and the Eucharist. As a consequence of this process of receiving the beauty of the Son (christomorphisation), or of changing the garments of skin (Genesis 3:21) with garments of light (Gal 3:27), the Father acknowledges us as sons and daughters (baptismal hyiothesia). This new status of the human being is the most important aspect of the Baptism and has a very important significance for the ecumenical dialogue.

Keywords: *Ordo, Baptism, Christmation, Eucharist, Metamorphosis, christomorphisation, garments of skin, garments of light, baptismal hyiothesia*

In the introduction of a very important book on the ecumenical implications of our common Baptism, Thomas F. Best and Dagmar Heller noted that

“in the recent decades worship has proved to be increasingly significant for the ecumenical movement. Through the liturgical renewal movement which has developed since the 1950s, many churches have discovered a surprising degree of common ground in their understanding and practice of worship. Yet worship is also the place where the divisions among the churches become immediately and painfully evident

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¹ In his contribution at the 3rd Consultation on Ecclesiology organized by CEC and CPCE, Phanar, 2006, Professor Hans-Peter Grosshans pointed out that “the word *mysterion* used in the Eastern churches still has elements of its original meaning in ancient religion in its Christian usage... But in the Western churches this emphasis on the obligatory character of the sacraments for believers pushed too far into the background what the word *mysterion* really expresses: the self-communication of the triune God in these sacred actions.”(p. 4).