



708 S Chestnut,  
 McKinney, TX 75069-6503  
 Phone: 972 529-2754  
 Email: seraphim@orthodox.net  
 Rector: Priest Seraphim Holland

**Dec 11/24 2011 Eve of St Herman and St Spyridon, and for some, the Nativity of our Lord.**

I am writing this letter on the Eve of St Herman and St Spyridon’s day, or, as some know it, Christmas Eve. I want to write weekly since I now have funds in the prison ministry account, but I see that the last letter was Dec 7<sup>th</sup>. With God helping me, I will improve – perhaps two letters a month would be doable.

The last letter I wrote was about fasting. Some of you have commented to me about this letter. If you have questions or comments, please, either mail me or ask in person. Fasting is a critical part of our “getting better”, and I want you to understand and embrace it.

There are three of you that will be baptized in January: Catechumens Vladimir, Innocent and John. I am traveling soon, and will not be back seeing you until the first week of the New Year. That Wednesday, Jan 4, God willing, Innocent and John will be baptized in the Michael Unit, just before the Lord’s Nativity. The next week, in the Hughes unit, God willing, Vladimir will be baptized.

May God bless you and help you in all things. This letter will be a little about the Jesus prayer and a little about baptism.

The Jesus Prayer..... 1  
 You must pray for those you have bad feelings about. .... 2  
 Prayer ropes for everyone. .... 2  
 A short and eclectic teaching about baptism..... 2  
 Baptism – to immerse ..... 2  
 Scripture and baptism..... 3  
 An Entry into the Church..... 3  
 The Gift of the Holy Spirit..... 4  
 The Sacrament (Mystery) of Christian Baptism - St Cyprian of Carthage..... 4  
 Address at the Baptism of Anna Elizabeth Park ..... 5  
 After baptism ..... 7

***The Jesus Prayer.***

You should be praying for those ready to be baptized and everyone else that comes to our services and classes. It is quite easy to do. Most of you have the list of names, but I can provide it to anyone who does not have them. Just pray “**Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on \_\_\_\_\_**” in your regular prayers. Do this once, or perhaps three times per person.

This simple prayer is the most powerful prayerful expression we have in the church, as it is simple, easy to remember, theologically rich, and (relatively) easy to pray with intensity. It is well

suiting to any time and place, and is very useful in prison, when things are usually loud and chaotic. It is very hard to read prayers or the Psalter, etc, with a constant din of background noise, but it is easier to say the “Jesus prayer”. I will continue to talk to you about this prayer, and encourage you to pray with it everywhere and every time.

### ***You must pray for those you have bad feelings about.***

Also, always pray daily for anybody that troubles you or that you have bad feelings about. You will not have peace until you forgive \*everyone\* who has wronged you, and this cannot happen without praying for them. **“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you”** (Matthew 5:44)

### ***Prayer ropes for everyone.***

I am also in the process of getting prayer ropes for everyone. You should submit an I-60 to the chaplain asking for permission to have “Greek Orthodox prayer beads”. This is a bit of an odd way to refer to the prayer rope, but their reference book has a picture of a black 100 knot prayer rope under this name, showing that in principle, the prison allows possession of this “devotional item”. When you get back the signed permission slip, mail it to me, and I will then be able to send you a prayer rope. You also could order one – I will work on getting you sources to send to.

### ***A short and eclectic teaching about baptism***

Since we have three baptisms coming up, I thought I would give you some things about baptism. I suppose I could write about Nativity, but this feast is not here yet for me, and I find it hard to think ahead (I am trying to develop this ability, so I can send you letters that apply topically to the season.) It is also important to understand baptism, so I think I will write a little bit in “stream of consciousness” mode. You are all aware of this mode, since I am usually in it when I see you. I would appreciate (and expect) prayers for me, because I have many deficits and organization is one of them. I have written so much stuff that I find it pretty easy to cobble together things I have written and saved. I hope it is not too incoherent to you. In my old age I have learned that it is more important to do something that is imperfect than nothing because I cannot make it perfect.

### ***Baptism – to immerse***

The word baptism is from the Greek word “baptizo” – to immerse. Christians have always, from the beginning, immersed a person completely, in water, in the name of the Trinity. There has been no other way. There will always be those who cut corners and imitate practices outside the church, but the only normal way (outside of an emergency) to baptize the church knows is to immerse three times in water, in the name of the Holy Trinity. The priest says: **“The servant of God \_\_\_ is baptized in the name of the Father (and immerses), and the Son (another immersion), and the Holy Spirit (and the last immersion).”**

## Scripture and baptism

Scripture tells us much about baptism. A general rule of Scriptural exegesis (understanding the meaning of scripture), is that the more something is mentioned, taught about, and referred to in types and prophesy, the more important it is. We have many OT references to baptism, the cross, the resurrection, the incarnation, the Eucharist, etc. All these things are important.

“But as often as water is named alone in the Holy Scriptures, baptism is referred to, as we see intimated in Isaiah: 'Remember not,' says he, 'the former things, and consider not the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, which shall now spring forth; and ye shall know it. I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry place, to give drink to my elected people, my people whom I have purchased, that they might show forth my praise.' There God foretold by the prophet, that among the nations, in places which previously had been dry, rivers should afterwards flow plenteously, and should provide water for the elected people of God, that is, for those who were made sons of God by the generation of baptism.... Christ... cries and says, 'If any man thirst, let him come and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'

And that it might be more evident that the Lord is speaking there, not of the cup, but of baptism, the Scripture adds, saying, 'But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.' For by baptism the Holy Spirit is received...

As also, in another place, the Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman, saying, 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall not thirst for ever.' By which is also signified the very baptism of saving water, which indeed is once received, and is not again repeated." St Cyprian of Carthage (200-258 AD )" The Epistles of Cyprian," Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, pg. 360)

Here are a few of the OT references to baptism. These are “types”, which are prophesies and allusions to something to come.

- The crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel.
- The healing of Naaman the Syrian in the waters of the Jordan (after immersing himself 7 times)
- The parting of the Jordan when Elisha crossed over (after seeing Elias ascend in the chariot).
- The healing of whoever got to the water first after the waters were troubles by an angle in the pool of Besthesda.
- There are *a ton* more references. Please write them down and we can talk about them.

## An Entry into the Church

Baptism is the entry into the Holy Church. It was commanded by our Savior, and has always been understood to be the entry of a believer into the Christian Life in the Holy Church:

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” ( Matthew 28:19-20).

Baptism is not only the entry for the believer into the church; it also washes him clean of all sins prior to his holy baptism, no matter how grievous and frequent they were. Here he must remember the admonition the Lord gave to the paralytic, whom He healed of not only his physical infirmity, but of his sins also: “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (St. John 5:14).

We believe this because baptism is a complete rebirth, where the old man, with his sinful inclinations, dies, and is reborn in the Spirit. Our Lord said: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5).

Therefore, baptism is necessary for our salvation.

### ***The Gift of the Holy Spirit***

Chrismation is the imparting of the gift of the Holy Spirit unto the newly-baptized believer. Christians are “temples of the Holy Spirit”, and this sacrament bestows the Holy Spirit upon them. The Christian must always remember St. Paul’s admonition: “know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor 6:19).

After a person is baptized and chrismated, all his sins are remitted, and he is illumined with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit to enable him to embark upon the life in Christ within the ark of the Holy Church. This is also the case for infants, who are also empowered to live a Christian life. The grace of baptism, especially if it is nurtured by strong faith and piety in the household, will operate invisibly in such little ones, and strengthen them so that when they acquire reasoning powers, they will choose the Christian way of life.

Excerpted from <http://www.orthodox.net/articles/baptism-thoughts.html>

### ***The Sacrament (Mystery) of Christian Baptism - St Cyprian of Carthage*** **From a Letter written to a new convert, 246 A.D.**

I promise to share with you the grace God in His great mercy has shown me, and to tell you as simply as I can what I have experienced since I was baptized.

Until that time, I was still living in the dark, knowing nothing of my true life. I was completely involved in this world's affairs, influenced by all its changing moods and troubles, and exiled from the light of truth.

I had indeed been told that God offered men and women a second birth, by which we could be saved, but I very much doubted that I could change the kind of life I was then living. Frankly, I could not see how a person could cast off his fallen nature, and be changed in heart and soul while he still lived in the same body as before. How was it possible, I asked myself, to change the habits of a lifetime instantaneously.

How can one suddenly rid oneself of accumulated guilt and break with sin that has become so deeply rooted in one's life? Can a man whose life has been characterized by feasting and luxury,

learn frugality and simplicity in a single moment? A person who craves public distinction and honor cannot bear to be passed over and unnoticed.

Another who is accustomed to throngs of flattering attendance, takes it a terrible penance to be left alone. Is every species of temptation suddenly to lose its force? Should we no longer feel the enticement of wine and good living, where pride no longer swells our heads or anger blazes our breasts? Shall we no longer be troubled by covetousness or cruelty or ambition or lust?

These were my thoughts. My past life was so burdened with so many sins, that I saw no way ever to be rid of, that I had grown accustomed to giving way to my weakness. I despaired of ever being any better.

Consequently, I simply humored my evil inclinations, and made no attempt to combat them. But at last I made up my mind to ask for Baptism. I went down into those life-giving waters, and all the stains of my past were washed away.

I committed my life to the Lord. He cleansed my heart and filled me with His Holy Spirit. I was born again, a new man.

And then in a most marvelous way, all my doubts cleared up, I could now see what had been hidden from me before. I found that I could do things that had previously been impossible.

I saw that as long as I had been living according to my lower nature, I was at the mercy of sin, and my course was set for death. But that by living according to my new birth in the Holy Spirit, I had already begun to share God's eternal life. You know, as well as I do, what sins I died to at that moment, just as you know the gifts the Holy Spirit gave me with my new life. I have no desire to boast, but it is surely right to thank God for His free gift. It was through faith in Him, that I received the power to break with the sins into which my own folly had led me.

We have received the seal of the Holy Spirit. Our task now is to preserve the integrity of what we have received by living a truly Christian life. We must give time to prayer, and to the study of scripture. Now speaking to God; now listening to His word to us, and letting His teaching mold us. He has enriched us with a treasure no one can take away.

We have eaten and drunk at His heavenly banquet, and can never again know the pinch of poverty.

Source: <http://www.orthodox.net/articles/sacrament-baptism-cyprian-of-carthage.html>

## ***Address at the Baptism of Anna Elizabeth Park***

**2003**

*By Fr. Seraphim Holland, Celebrant and Grandfather*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

This is an unique opportunity for me, and I want to take advantage of it. Normally when I baptize someone, I'm speaking to the parents, exhorting the parents to raise their child in piety: that this is a beginning for their child, and that they must continue in the ways of our Lord, following the commandments, so she may grow to maturity.

But I know the parents *pretty* well. I don't need to exhort the parents to do this, because it would be like

... literally ... preaching to the choir! So Anna, I want to say these words to you. And since I will record these words, and they will be eventually transcribed, perhaps at some time in your life, when you have a difficulty, these words will help you.

Anybody who's been around me for a while knows that I have certain pet verses; regardless of what the text of the day is, I always seem to mention these things. My favorite verse in the Bible is from St. John. He says, "We love Him because He first loved us." This explains why we are capable of holiness, greatness, why we love, why we do everything that is good. Because the Lord loved us first. And His love imbued us with the ability to love — to give love and accept love. It imbued us with the ability to do all good things. And the reason why He imbued us with this ability was of course because of His love, and His love made Him desire that we would know Him.

Anna, this is the purpose of your life. You don't know it yet, but you'll know it soon enough, and your parents will teach you. You will learn what the purpose of your life is: to know God. Our Lord described it in His High-priestly prayer. He said, "And this is life eternal: that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." This is the reason you were born, not to give joy to your parents, to your grandparents, not to do any great work on the earth, not to go to school, or to play, or to learn anything temporal. You were born to know God.

The only way you can know Him is to become good. Now, you're good now, but you're good because you're unspoiled. The great despoiler, the evil one, will attempt to defile you. So when you grow older, it will be harder to be good. But you will have knowledge then, and the Lord will help you.

Truly the only way to know God is to become like Him. The only way to know algebra is not to read the book only, but to do the problems. The only way to learn to play baseball is not to watch it, but to participate, to play. The only way to understand the joy I feel, as both a grandparent and the celebrant of your baptism, is ... to be me. You can only understand someone, and know someone, if you enter into their life. Otherwise, you cannot know them. This is why the Lord stresses, again and again, His commandments — certainly the Old Testament is a continual stressing of following the ways of God, of following His commandments. And our Lord Jesus Christ spoke often also of righteousness, of goodness, of humility, of love. These things are necessary, because if we do not do these things, we cannot know Jesus Christ, because that is the person He was, and is. The Lord said that the life eternal is to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ. You cannot know God without becoming like Him.

Anna, you have made a beginning today. A beginning was made for you, of which you will become aware, soon enough. And those who love you, those who pray for you, feel as the Apostle Paul felt, for his loved ones: "We are confident in this very thing, that He which hath began a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Christ Jesus." Now He will help you in all things, but you must supply the effort, the desire, the sense of priorities, the ordering of your life according to the commandments. He will give you ability.

Now, you'll have problems in your life, as everyone does. Perhaps you'll have times of doubt, sadness, perhaps times of sin, times of being unsure, times of great difficulties. But remember, that the kingdom of heaven is within you, Anna. It's not for later on; it's now. God has given you everything you need to grow to know Him. He has given you parents who are pious and sweet souls who love you. He has given you the Church; the Holy Spirit abides in you. You have everything you need. Now, you'll learn this soon enough.

My favorite number is 153. This number is the number of fish that the Apostle Peter pulled to land when they saw the Lord after his resurrection. It's a great big number, and it means a lot for a Christian who has ears to hear. "Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred

and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.” The key to living the Christian life is to believe in the resurrection. Not just in terms of believing it’s an event that occurred, but believing that it is an event that is occurring, again and again, in you. The kingdom of heaven is within you.

Now, this great number of fishes broke the nets, and yet they were able to pull them to land. God can make you capable of great things, Anna. Great, incredible things. To become righteous, to become holy, to become perfected. Things which are beyond our understanding. Just as the apostles caught a great catch of fish. Earlier in their ministry — actually, before their ministry began — the Lord sent them out to fish, and when they let down the net, they had so many fish that their boat began to sink. And Simon Peter, when he saw this, said to Lord, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.” He wasn’t able to bear the goodness of Lord yet, but three years of training, three years of difficulties, three years of learning from the Master, three years of being humble, and even after his threefold denial of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord sent them out again, and when they caught the fish, a greater catch of fish, it didn’t make the boat sink, and they were able to bring it to land.

Now there’s all kinds of meanings for what these fish are. The most important meaning for us is that the Lord makes us capable of doing everything, things we cannot imagine. We will be prepared for more and more. We will mount up like eagles, continually becoming better and better. All we need do is attempt to live the Christian life. You’ve been given everything you need, you are lacking nothing.

May God help you, Anna, through the prayers of your parents, and my poor prayers, through the prayers of your grandparents, and those who love you, and teach you about eternal life. But no matter what we say to you, no matter what we show you, no matter what our example is, you must bring this example into your heart. You must decide that you want to live righteously because there is no other important thing in all the world than to know Jesus Christ. And there’s only one path to know Him: to become like Him.

May God bless you, and help you, and grant you salvation. Amen.

Source: [http://www.orthodox.net/sermons/baptism\\_2003-11-10+anna-park.rtf](http://www.orthodox.net/sermons/baptism_2003-11-10+anna-park.rtf)

---

I will leave you with some gleaning from the Holy Fathers about baptism. I have a couple of hundred quotes, so for now, I will try to focus of what happens (and what we should do) after baptism.

### ***After baptism ....***

Baptism does not destroy our self-will and willfulness but it *frees us from the tyranny of the devil*, who can no longer rule over us against our will. After baptism, it begins to lie within our will either of our own accord to obey the commandments of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, in Whose name we were baptized, or to deviate from the right path, and return again to the devil, our adversary and foe. St. Simeon the New Theologian (Practical and Theological Precepts no. 121, Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart; Faber and Faber pg. 126)

---

Abba Gregory said, 'These three things God requires of all the baptized: right faith in the heart, truth on the tongue, temperance in the body.' Gregory the Theologian in The Desert Christian

---



*Do not despair* of whatever sins you may have committed since baptism and find yourself in true repentance, but await God's mercy. However many and however great and burdensome your sins may be, with God there is greater mercy. Just as His majesty is, so likewise is His mercy. Only guard yourself from sinning henceforth, and walk according to the aforementioned points. St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, Journey to Heaven

---

Faith and baptism are two kindred and inseparable ways of salvation: *faith is perfected through baptism, baptism is established through faith*, and both are completed by the same names. For as we believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, so are we also baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; first comes the confession, introducing us to salvation, and baptism follows, setting the seal upon our assent" 367 AD St. Basil the Great, The Holy Spirit 12[28].

---

Faith consists *not only* of being baptized in Christ, but *also in fulfilling His commandments*. Holy Baptism is perfect and gives us perfection, but *does not make perfect* those who *do not follow* the commandments. St. Mark the Ascetic

---

92. Everyone baptized in the orthodox manner has received mystically the fullness of grace; but he *becomes conscious of this grace only to the extent that he actively observes the commandments*. Saint Kosmas Aitolos +1779

---

Baptism is the first Mystery (Sacrament) in Christianity; it makes a Christian man worthy to be vouchsafed the gifts of grace through the other Mysteries also. St Theophan the Recluse, "The Path to Salvation" p 35

---

...from the instant we are baptized, grace is hidden in the depths of the intellect, concealing its presence even from the perception of the intellect itself. When someone begins, however, to love God with full resolve, then in a mysterious way, by means of intellectual perception, grace communicates something of its riches to his soul. Then, if he really wants to hold fast to this discovery, he joyfully starts longing to be rid of all his temporal goods, so as to acquire the field in which he has found the hidden treasure of life (cf. Matt. 13:44). This is because, when someone rids himself of all worldly riches, he discovers the place where the grace of God is hidden. For as the soul advances, divine grace more and more reveals itself to the intellect. St. Diadochos of Photiki (On Spiritual Knowledge no. 77)

---

...when a wound has gone deep into the body, even if there has been a healing, the scar remains, so sin wounds soul and body, and the marks of its scars remain in all; and they are removed only from those who receive the washing of Baptism. The past wounds therefore of soul and body God heals by Baptism; against future ones let us one and all jointly guard ourselves, that we may keep this vestment of the body pure, and may not for practicing fornication and sensual indulgence or any other sin for a short season, lose the salvation of heaven, but may inherit the eternal kingdom of God; of which may God, of His own grace, deem all of you worthy. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechetical Lectures: Lecture 18 no. 20)

---

...when you have been deemed worthy of the grace [of baptism], He [Christ] then *gives you strength to wrestle against the adverse powers*. For as after His baptism He was tempted forty days (not that He



was unable to gain the victory before, but because He wished to do all things in due order and succession), so you likewise, though not daring before your baptism to wrestle with the adversaries, yet after you have received the grace and are henceforth confident in 'the armor of righteousness' (2 Cor. 6:7), must then do battle, and preach the Gospel, if you will. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechetical Lectures: Lecture 3 no. 13)

---

Are we only dying with the Master and are we only sharing in His sadness? Most of all, let me say that sharing the Master's death is no sadness. *Only wait a little* and you shall see yourself sharing in His benefits. 'For if we have died with Him,' says St. Paul, 'we believe that we shall also live together with Him.' For in baptism there are both burial and resurrection together at the same time. He who is baptized puts off the old man, takes the new and rises up, 'just as Christ has arisen through the glory of the Father.' Do you see how, again, St. Paul calls baptism a resurrection? St. John Chrysostom, Baptismal Instructions

---

For he who has been sanctified, his sins being put away in baptism, and has been spiritually re-formed into a new man, *has become fitted for receiving the Holy Spirit*; since the apostle says, 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' St Cyprian of Carthage (200-258 AD ), "The Epistles of Cyprian," Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, pg. 387-388)

---

Grace has been given mystically to those who have been baptized into Christ; and it becomes active within them to the extent that they actively observe the commandments. Grace never ceases to help us secretly; but to do good - as far as lies in our power - depends on us. St. Mark the Ascetic (No Righteousness by Works no. 61)

---

Greater than baptism itself is the *fountain of tears after baptism*, even though it is somewhat audacious to say so. For baptism is the washing away of evils that were in us before, but sins committed after baptism are washed away by tears. As baptism is received in infancy, we have all defiled it, but we cleanse it anew with tears. And if God in His love for mankind had not given us tears, those being saved would be few indeed and hard to find. St. John Climacus, "The Ladder of Divine Ascent," (Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1978), Step 7: On Joy-Making Mourning

---

If we shall be eager to make brighter by good deeds the light within us -- I mean the grace of the Spirit -- so that it is never quenched, we shall enjoy the title of newly baptized for all times. But just as the sober and vigilant man whose conduct is worthy can continue to be a neophyte, so it is possible after a single day for a man to relax his vigilance and become unworthy of that title. St. John Chrysostom, Baptismal Instructions

---

'But the king came in to look at the guests, and saw there a person not clothed in a wedding garment.' What do we think is meant by the wedding garment, dearly beloved? For is we say it is baptism or faith, is there anyone who has entered this marriage feast without them? A person is outside because he has not yet come to believe. What then must we understand by the wedding garment but love? That person enters the marriage feast, but without wearing a wedding garment, who is present in the holy Church, and has faith, but does not have love. We are correct when we say that love is the wedding garment because this is what our Creator Himself possessed when He came to the marriage feast to join the Church to Himself. St. Gregory the Great, Forty Gospel Homilies

---

So that you may act on the aforementioned points, you *must remember the vows you made at holy Baptism*. For though not you yourself but your sponsor made those vows before God on your behalf, you promised then, spitting on Satan, and on his pride, and on his service, and on his evil works-you promised, I say-and vowed to serve Jesus Christ your Lord and Redeemer in faith and in truth, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Consider, Christian, what vows you made and to Whom. It is a grievous thing to lie to a man; how incomparably more grievous it is to lie to God. God is not mocked (Gal. 6:7). When a Christian does not stand on his promises and does not keep them, what mercy, then, should he expect from God, to Whom he lied? He that keeps his promises shall find himself in God's mercy and in His Kingdom. He remains faithful to God, and God will hold him in mercy and in His protection as His own. And this is what the prophet sings to God, With the holy man wilt Thou be holy, and with the innocent man wilt Thou be innocent. And with the elect man wilt Thou be elect, and with the perverse wilt Thou be perverse (Ps. 17:26-27).

Christians! All they that commit iniquity and act against their conscience do not keep their vows. These include fornicators, adulterers, and all defilers, robbers, thieves, brigands, the sly, and crafty, deceivers and the guileful, revilers and men of evil speech, drunkards, fault finders, the hateful, and the malicious; they that live in the pride and pomp of this world, and all that do not fear God. They have all lied to God and have not kept their vows, and are outside of the holy Church, though they may even go to churches and pray and receive the Mysteries and build churches and adorn them and display other signs of a Christian.

Since they shall be powerfully put to the test at the Judgment of Christ and tormented more there than Turks and idolaters, avoid these deeds, Christian and do not imitate the aforementioned doers of iniquity, lest you be condemned with them to eternal fire by the just judgment of God, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:44, 46, 48), but by all means endeavor so to live and act as the word of God teaches, as was said above. Keep in mind those vows of yours, and this will guide you toward the Christian life and restrain you from every evil and do you good. If you notice that you do not keep those vows, then repent and begin the Christian life anew, lest you appear before God in a lie, and perish with liars.

The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Apoc. 21:8). St. Tikhon of Zadonsk (A chapter from The Journey to Heaven, translated by Fr. George Lardas)

---

This document is at:

- <http://www.orthodox.net/prison-ministry/prison-ministry-pastoral-letter-2011-12-24-the-jesus-prayer+baptism+gleanings-from-the-fathers-on-baptism.html>
- <http://www.orthodox.net/prison-ministry/prison-ministry-pastoral-letter-2011-12-24-the-jesus-prayer+baptism+gleanings-from-the-fathers-on-baptism.doc>
- <http://www.orthodox.net/prison-ministry/prison-ministry-pastoral-letter-2011-12-24-the-jesus-prayer+baptism+gleanings-from-the-fathers-on-baptism.pdf>