



An Order of Self Dedication Service

H.G. Mathews Mar Barnabas

Introduction:

This is to help the children to have self dedication. This is to be conducted every year for those who complete 12 years old.

❖ **The need for Self Dedication**

We Christians are those who have entered into a covenant with God in our baptism. Those who had baptism in infancy have received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:39) and forgiveness of sins (1 Jn. 2:12). But they were not able to take part consciously in the covenant, i.e.: the promise renouncing Satan and accepting faith in Jesus Christ. As the children grow up, we help them to have a dedicated life. The god-parents and Sunday School teachers are doing their part in this respect.

Now it is considered by the Holy Episcopal Synod that it is good to have special service to help the children to understand the meaning of the covenant, made by the god-parents on behalf of the children and make them dedicate themselves, through a special service. It was at the age of twelve that our Lord went to the Jerusalem temple, as it was the rule of the Jewish church that from the age of twelve, every Jew was bound to observe the commandments of God. Hence this age is taken up as the proper time for this service.

Since the covenant made by our Lord in His blood is the new covenant, let us examine the meaning of the Old covenant and the new covenant.

❖ **The Old Covenant**

The old covenant or agreement was made between God and Israel at Mount Sinai. The Israelites who were saved from the slavery in Egypt, were asked by God to obey the commandments. "I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, you shall have no other Gods before me" (Ex. 20: 1-3). Again according to the command of God, the Israelites made a covenant or promise saying "All that the Lord had spoken, we will do, and we will be obedient". Then "Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said: Behold the blood was to make the promise irrevocable. The implied meaning is that, even if their blood were to be shed, they will never break this promise. But unfortunately the Israelites broke their promise, by worshiping a golden calf.

❖ **Prophecy about the new covenant**

This prophecy was made by God through prophet Jeremiah. "Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. I

will put the law within them and I will write it upon their hearts and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying: Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin in no more: (Ju. 31:31-34).

❖ **The new covenant into which we all Christians have entered**

It was through His blood that our Lord made this covenant. It is through Holy Baptism and Holy Qurbana that we enter into this new covenant. It is through Holy confession and Holy Qurbana that we renew this covenant again and again.

On the eve of our Lord's death, our Lord took the cup, blessed it and said "this is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins" (St. Matt. 26:28). When our Lord shed His blood on the cross, the new covenant was made. We enter into this covenant through Holy Baptism. In the Holy Baptism, we renounce Satan and declare our faith in Jesus Christ. After Holy Baptism we receive Holy Qurbana in which we drink the blood of the new covenant. Here blood is not thrown up on people, we drink the blood.

❖ **The service of self-dedication**

As the children grow up, they must be filled with gratitude towards God and they should repent of their sins. The parents, god-parents, Sunday School teachers, priests, and bishops have to do their part in this. When the children come for the service of self-dedication, they must be prepared to renew their baptismal promise, wholeheartedly. They must be told that we have to thank God for all His blessings, for saving us from all kinds of sufferings and bringing good out of sufferings. Above all we have to thank our Lord for saving us from eternal hell and giving us eternal life. Full of gratitude to God and sorrow for the sins, children must be helped to renounce Satan and all sins. Also they have to declare their faith in and allegiance to our Lord, wholeheartedly.

This service ending in the reception of the Holy Qurbana gives the children, the fullness of the Holy Spirit and our Lord's renewed indwelling. They strengthen the children to lead a dedicated life. This must result in a life of divine love, humility, obedience, and dutifulness. Divine love means not only self-sacrificing love for God, but also for His children. Love of God cannot be separated from the love of His children.

This self-dedication is to be renewed spiritually and daily. Our Lord has said “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up this cross daily and follow me.” (St. Luke. 9:23)

❖ **How to prepare the children for the service of self-dedication?**

The importance of children

1. Children must be helped to know that they are God’s gift and that they are important in the sight of God. “Lo, sons are a heritage from the Lord; the fruit of the body is His reward.” Ps. 127:3. “Every child has the image of God.” Gen. 1:27
2. Say how infant Jesus was offered in the Jerusalem Temple (St. Lk. 2:21-24).
3. Say how Jesus loved children. How he embraced them and blessed them (St. Lk. 1:39-44)
4. Say how those who have child-like qualities will inherit the Kingdom of God (St. Matt. 18: 1-3)
5. Say how John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit when he was in the mother’s womb (St. Lk. 1:39-44)
6. Say about the good example of Rebecca who gave water to the camels also, Samuel, the four children taken to Babylon among the captives, and our Lord’s visit to the Jerusalem temple at the age of 12.
7. Tell the children that they have received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:39), forgiveness of sins (1 Jn. 2:12), entry into the Kingdom of God (St. Jn. 3:5). Membership in the church, which is the body of Christ (Rom. 11:17), the reception of the godly nature of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit through re-birth.

❖ **The meaning of the various symbolic acts in the Holy Baptism?**

1. Entering name of the candidate in the Baptismal register with the prayer that, his or her name may be written in the “Book of life”.
2. Ministry of the word. (Rom. 5:20-6:4, St. Lk. 3:15, 16, St. Jn. 3:3-5).
3. Breathing on the face the candidate to prepare the child for the reception of the Holy Spirit (St. Jn. 20:22).
4. Making the sign of the cross on the forehead in the Holy Trinity and giving a Christian name.
5. Casting out the demons (all evil powers), renunciation of Satan. Declaration of the faith in and allegiance to Jesus Christ, and Recitation of the Nicene Creed.
6. Making the sign of cross with the baptismal oil and setting the candidate apart as God’s own.
7. Washing with the water. Hot and cold water are mixed and Holy Mooron is poured. This it is a baptism in water and spirit. The Satan and his hosts

are put to death and the candidate receives a new life, a godly life. The sins are washed away.

8. Anointing with the Holy Mooron (Acts. 2:39) to have the fullness of the Holy Spirit.
9. Crowning ceremony shows the glory of heaven.
10. Holy Qurbana is given. This is the fruit of the tree of life in Paradise.
11. The crown is taken away later on.

Holy Confession

Holy Confession is to be had on the previous day of the service of self-dedication. All the sins of commission and omission are to be confessed and a decision is to be taken before God, not to repeat them. By taking this decision, we are confirming out baptismal covenant of promise. Any penance given by the father-confessor is to be done as early as possible.

❖ How to prepare for Self-dedication service?

Children should come in white cloths to the church along with the god-parents and parents. The god-parents and parents should stand behind the children at the time of the question and answers and the service of the self-dedication. Copies of the question and answers are to be distributed. Questions and answers and self-dedication can be done before the public celebration of the Holy Qurbana or after Sadiko in the Holy Qurbana.

❖ Questions and Answers:

1. Who is the Holy Trinity?

Holy trinity is the triune of God, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are omnipotent, omnipresent, and full of love.

2. Who is God the Father?

He is the first person in the Holy Trinity. He created the universe and is sustaining it, along with the Son and the Holy Spirit.

3. Who is God the Son?

He is the second person in the Holy Trinity. He is the only-begotten son. He is the same in essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, he became man to save the world, was crucified and was resurrected from the dead. He ascended into heaven and will come again to judge both the living and the dead. He is the Christ.

4. Who is the Holy Spirit?

He is the second person in the Holy Trinity. He proceeds from the Father and takes from the Son. He is the same in essence with the Father and Son. He descended on St. Mary at the time of annunciation. He descended on Jesus Christ at the time of His baptism. He descended on the disciples on the day of Pentecost in the form of tongues of fire. He spoke through the prophets and apostles. He worked miracles and signs through them. He guides the church in all truth.

5. Are you partakers of the salvation achieved through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ?

Yes, we are partakers of His salvation through Holy Baptism and Holy Qurbana.

6. What all things are necessary to grow in the experience of salvation?

We can grow in salvation by worship, sacraments, bible reading, and obedience to God's will.

7. What is the aim of this self-dedication service?

To renew our baptismal dedication and to grow in the image of God in right earnestness.

8. Do you dedicate yourselves for the Glory of Holy Trinity and to an active church-life?

Yes, we dedicate ourselves who-heartedly, depending on God's grace.

9. Will you go to church on all obligatory days and receive Holy Qurbana as frequently as possible?

Yes, I will do.

10. Will you try to observe the Lents and Fast especially in the Great Lent?

Yes, I will.

11. Will you try to read the Holy Bible and pray daily with kneeling down at the proper times?

Yes, I will do my best.

The Service to Help Self-Dedication

Priest: Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Response: And upon us weak and sinful servants, may His mercy and compassion be showered, in both worlds, forever and ever Amen.

Priest: O God, the Lord of the hosts on high, look upon these children who have become your children and lambs of flock through the Holy Baptism. Enlighten their inner eyes to understand the folly of this world. Strengthen them to observe the promises of their baptism. Renouncing all moral sins, may they glorify you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and always, and forever and ever, Amen.

Bring unto the Lord, children. Hallelujah
Bring unto the Lord, glory and honor
How can a young man keep his way pure. Hallelujah
By guarding it according to thy word.
Barekmore.

Priest: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

R: From the beginning and forever and ever Amen.
Shower thy grace O Lord
On these children in thy mercy
Casting away spiritual blindness
Grant them thy light.

Deacon: Stoumen kalos

R: Kurielaison

Priest: Let us all pray and beseech the Lord, for grace and mercy.

R: Merciful Lord, have mercy upon us.

Priest: Glory and thanksgiving, praise and adoration and exaltation unceasing, truly at all times and at all hours, may we ascribe unto thee. O Lord.

Glory be to the Lord Jesus Christ, the true light who has instituted the Holy Baptism, in His glorious and divine wisdom, has made us worthy to dedicate ourselves and to grow in spiritual life. To Him be glory honor and worship, in this time when His children are dedicating their lives, and in all times and seasons and hours, and all the days of lives, Amen.

SEDRA

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has turned us from sinful thoughts, and invited us to the obedience of Your commandments, bless these children who have come before You, to dedicate themselves. Bring them up as glorious lambs in Your flock. Make them dedicate themselves and make them lead a spirit-filled and responsible Christian life. Reflect on them Your glorious countenance. Grant that they may not defile the glorious garment they have received in Holy Baptism. Protect them from the fiery arrows of the enemy. Make them grow zealously in spiritual life. Help them to be obedient to their parents, loving to the brothers and sisters, respectful to the teachers and elderly people, compassionate to the suffering and the destitute, and zealous in doing good.

O Lord, help them to get away from the deceitful attraction of sins, protect them from falling a victim to evil habits, and save them from idle life. O Lord Jesus Christ, give them a sense of responsibility in life, earnestness in godly things and a hard working attitude in their studies. Grant that we may offer praise and thanks to You, Your Father and Holy Spirit, now and always, and for ever and ever, Amen.

May we receive from God, remission of debts and forgiveness of sins, in both worlds, forever and ever, Amen.

HYMN

May the holy one who came down upon Mount Sinai and purified it, come upon these children and sanctify them.

Barekmore
Glory be to the father...
From the beginning...

May the Holy Spirit who purified the child Samuel, come and abide with these children and grant them holiness.

Lord have mercy upon us and help us.

ETHRO

O Lord, we offer this incense on behalf of these children who have come for self-dedication. May this dedication be sweet smelling to You like this incense. May these children who are sealed unto eternal life, obey Your commandments and fulfill Your will, throughout their lives. Grant that we may offer up praise and thanks to You, Your Father and Your Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever, Amen.

I heard the blessed Paul say....
Eph. 5:1-10, 6:1-2

Hallelujah- Hallelujah How can a young man keep his way pure. By guarding it according to thy word. Hallelujah St. Lk. 2:40 – 52

Each one says one after the other:

I...who has been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, renounce all sins and dedicate myself to lead a virtuous life, pleasing to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit now and always and forever and ever, Amen.

NICENE CREED

Priest: We believe in one true God.

R: Father Almighty/maker of heaven and earth/and all things visible and invisible/and in one Lord Jesus Christ/ the only-begotten Son of God/begotten of the Father/ before all the words/ Light of Light/ very God of very God/Begotten not made/ being of the same substance with the Father/ and by whom all things were made/

Who for us men and for our salvation/ came down from heaven/ and was incarnate of the Holy Virgin Mary/ mother of God/ by the Holy Spirit/ and became man/ and was crucified for us/ in the days of Pontius Pilate/ and suffered and died/ and was buried/ and the third day rose again/ according to His will/

And ascended into heaven/ and sat on the right hand of His Father/ and shall come again in His great glory/ to judge both the living and the dead/ whose kingdom shall have no end/

And in the one living Holy Spirit/ the life-giving Lord of all/ who proceeds from the Father/ and who with the Father and the Son/ is worshipped and glorified/ who spoke by the prophets and the apostles

And in the one, holy catholic and apostolic church/ and we acknowledge one baptism/ for the remission of sins/ and look for the resurrection of the dead/ and the new life in the world to come/ Amen.

HYMN

O Lord, grant that I may give myself as an offering, and help me to offer myself as sweet fragrance. Let me enlighten my body mind and soul before you, as glorious lamps. O' Father, Son and Holy Spirit, receive in your mercy, this offering of the body, mind and soul.

BENEDICTION

May God the Father be with you. May the adorable Son preserve you. May the Holy Spirit perfect you, protect you from all suffering and sins, and enable you to do His will.