

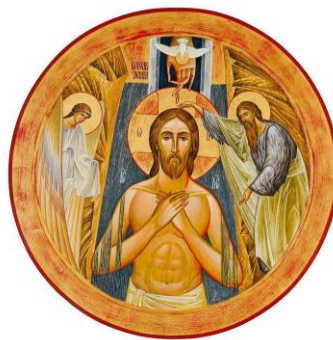


ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
ARCHDIOCESE OF THYATEIRA AND GREAT BRITAIN
THE TWELVE APOSTLES
HERTFORDSHIRE



The Twelve Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

Baptism Guide



www.greekphotographer.co.uk

The Twelve Apostles Church, Kentish Lane, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL9 6BS
t: +44 (0) 1707 650147 f: +44 (0) 1707 647146 e: info@12apostles.co.uk w: www.12apostles.co.uk

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1. Getting Baptised in Our Church

1.1 Why Choose Our Church?

Our church is attractive and tastefully decorated. At the close of the baptism ceremony you will be able to spend some time, if you wish, in the picturesque church gardens and inside the Church to capture memorable photographs of your special day. You may also bring a video camera but you will have to stand on the left side so that you will not be in the way of the priest and Godparent whilst the service is being officiated. If you video and take photographs on the left side, you will be able to get good snapshots of the baptism service.

1.2 Simple Steps to Follow

1. You book the date from our online booking system on our website. See the link below and follow the instructions to book the date: -

www.12apostles.co.uk/booking

Important: If you are booking a venue, please check availability of the venue first before booking the church.

2. The chosen date will be entered as a provisional date in the church diary and will be held for 14 days.
3. In order to confirm your date, follow step 2 onwards via the link below which also includes full payment details: -

www.12apostles.co.uk/church-information/baptism-booking

1.3 Birth Certificate Required

To prove the date of birth and name of the child, please bring the **full** birth certificate, which includes the names of the parents on it. This will also aid us in writing your names in English in the English section of the Baptism Certificate. When naming a child in the Orthodox Church, it is preferable that they have a Biblical, Saint or Ancient Greek name. Please do not give minor variations such as *Andy* for *Andreas*.

1.4 Godparent Orthodox Christian Baptism Certificate

The Godparent must be an Orthodox Christian. If the Godparent is not known by the church of the Twelve Apostles, their Orthodox Christian Baptism Certificate must be provided on the day of the baptism.

1.5 Items Required for a Child Baptism

1. Cross
2. Bottle of olive oil (at least 500ml)
3. One large white baptism candle
4. Myropanni (large linen towel)
5. Bar of soap for the priest
6. Medium size towel for the priest
7. White cap
8. White vest
9. Change of new clothes to wear after the baptism

1.6 Items Required for an Adult Baptism

1. Cross
2. Bottle of olive oil (at least 500ml)
3. One large white baptism candle
4. White long robe with a cross on the back or large white robe
5. White boxer trunks and a white T-Shirt. Also, the women to make sure they have a clean bra and knickers and the men clean underwear.
6. Bar of soap for the priest
7. Medium size towel for the priest
8. Large bath towel
9. Slippers
10. Change of new clothes to wear after the baptism

1.7 Important Notes

1. We have a large number of baptism ceremonies so it is helpful to have as much prior notice as possible so we can accommodate you for the date you require.
2. Father Joseph or Father Demetrianos will usually officiate at the baptism services at our church. However, you must appreciate that we cannot give any guarantee as to which priest will conduct your own baptism service. Circumstances, such as illness or holidays, may even require a priest to be sent by the Archdiocese from another community. Please rest assured that there would always be a priest for your special day.
3. To ensure that parking spaces are available and to facilitate your exclusive use of the church, please ask your guests to arrive at the church not earlier than fifteen minutes before the baptism service. We recommend you put the correct time on your baptism invitations, but certainly no more than a fifteen-minute difference.
4. **Baptism times must be strictly adhered to.** The church will not tolerate people for baptisms and weddings having to wait outside the church building due to the late arrival of a previous baptism party. We do understand that sometimes a few minutes delay is unavoidable. However, baptisms arriving very late must realise that they may miss their turn and will have to wait until all other ceremonies are completed.

Acceptance of this condition is binding on all that have their baptism at our church. No exceptions will be made and the church will accept no responsibility for the consequences of such a delay.

5. Orthodox chanting is part of the baptism service. No other singing or playing of music is allowed.
6. Our church broadcasts live on the internet allowing anybody to watch the baptism service. From time to time, circumstances beyond our control, like technical issues or internet provider issues, may mean that our live broadcast is disrupted. Please bear this in mind.
7. **If you don't want the Livestream during the baptism, please inform us in writing.**
8. For any help or additional information please do not hesitate to telephone the church.

2. The Baptism Service



The Baptism of Christ

2.1 Baptism

It has been said that when you smile at your baby it brings him to life: your baby starts to coo and chuckle back at you. God's great smile comes at baptism when Christ adopts a child from the world of evil into the world of redemption.

In baptism, he is 'grafted' onto Christ's 'vine' and the Holy Spirit passes into him with God's life, which is fullness.

We as parents and Godparents bring the baby to be baptised in a church to receive his fullness in life. We pray that he may one day mature and believe as a Christian.

2.2 The Ceremony

The first act of the baptism service begins in the entrance of the church. This is to show that the one being received is not yet a member of the Orthodox Church. The purpose of the baptism is to bring him into the Orthodox Church. The priest calls upon the Godparent to renounce for the child the devil and his works: "Do you renounce Satan and all his works...", this is done facing the west, the direction of darkness and evil. An adult being baptised, replies to the questions the priest asks together with their Godparent.

2.3 Acceptance of Christ

The priest then faces the east where the sun rises and asks the Godparent(s) to accept for the child, Him who is the light of the world. "Do you unite yourself to Christ ..., do you believe in Him as King and do you worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence and undivided?". "Bow down also before Him". The Godparent(s) then recites the Creed, confessing faith in God on behalf of the child. "He who believes and is baptised will be saved". From henceforth it is the Godparent(s) duty to instruct the child in the Faith to which he answered on his behalf. The adult being baptised, will answer the questions asked by the priest with their Godparent including the recitation of the Creed.

2.4 Blessing of the Water of New Life

In preparation for the spiritual cleansing and rebirth, which will occur when the child is being baptised, the priest makes the sign of the cross over the water inside the baptismal font and reads special prayers. "The grace of the Spirit of Christ make the water, a water of redemption of sanctification and cleansing of flesh and spirit, a loosening of bonds, of forgiveness of transgressions, of enlightening of souls, of a bath of regeneration, of a renewal of mind, of gifts being adopted, of a garment of immortality and a source of life".

During the pre-baptismal service, a prayer is also addressed to God that He assigns a special guardian angel to be with the newly baptised. "Attach to his life a radiant angel who will protect him from every plot of the adversary..."

2.5 Holy Baptism - Triple Immersion in Water

The adult or child has their clothes removed; it was the clothes that covered Adam and Eve's original sin. The adult goes into the church office or the toilets in the church hall to undress and put on their T-shirt, boxer shorts, white robe and slippers. The adults (18 years old and above) are baptised in the church hall where the adult baptistry is. Then the priest and Godparent rub the child/person with sacred oil so that he, like a wrestler, may slip through the evil one's grip (fight the powers of evil in the world with Christ's help).

Finally, the person is baptised three times in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The immersion in water symbolises death to sin or burial with Christ in His Tomb. The lifting out of the water symbolises the Resurrection with Christ. Here the person encounters Christ and is "grafted" onto the risen Lord to become an adopted son of God.

2.6 The Gift of the Holy Spirit - Anointing With Oil

Like the ancient soldiers who were anointed to protect them in battle, the person now a soldier in the army of Christ is anointed with special oil. This oil is prepared on Holy Thursday, every Easter by the Patriarch and other Bishops of the Orthodox Church around the world in Constantinople (now known as Istanbul in Turkey). The oil is then applied to various parts of the child's body to dedicate them to the service of Christ.

Anointing	Explanation
Nostrils	For sweet fragrance.
Ears	To hear the words of faith.
Mouth	My mouth shall speak wisdom.
Chest	For healing of soul and body.
Hands	Your right hand, O Lord, is glorified in strength. Your hands have made me and fashioned me, O Lord.
Knees	To walk in your footsteps, O Lord.
Feet	To step over serpents and scorpions and all the power of the enemy.
Back	Whosoever wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself and carry his cross and follow Me.

2.7 The Gift

Finally, the priest cuts a few pieces of hair in the form of a cross from the head of the person. This is an expression of gratitude from the person, who having received an abundance of blessings through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation and having nothing to give to God in return, offers part of his hair, which is symbolic of strength and dedication. Therefore, they promise to serve to God with all their strength and dedication, all that they have to offer to God.

2.8 Putting on the New Clothes

The newly baptised receives white clothes to remind us that he has put on Christ (grafted onto Christ). It is up to the person to live the life of Christ, clean and pure.

The baptised also receives a cross. In Christ's words "Take up your cross and follow Me". This brands him as belonging to Christ. The priest makes the sign of the cross over the person's body many times during the service. Essentially, the cross is the sign of victory, which put the devil to flight.

2.9 The Procession to the Kingdom

The newly baptised is lead in procession, three times around the baptismal font into the kingdom of God, to remind us that there is no end to our life with God. The priest censes the baptised person, and, if they are a child, the Godparent carries them and the baptismal candle (a constant reminder for the Christian to live and die in the light of Christ).

2.10 Holy Communion

The new life in Christ, given in baptism, is renewed again and again in the Eucharist (Holy Communion). Now as a new member of the Body of Christ, the Orthodox Church, the person has the first Holy Communion.

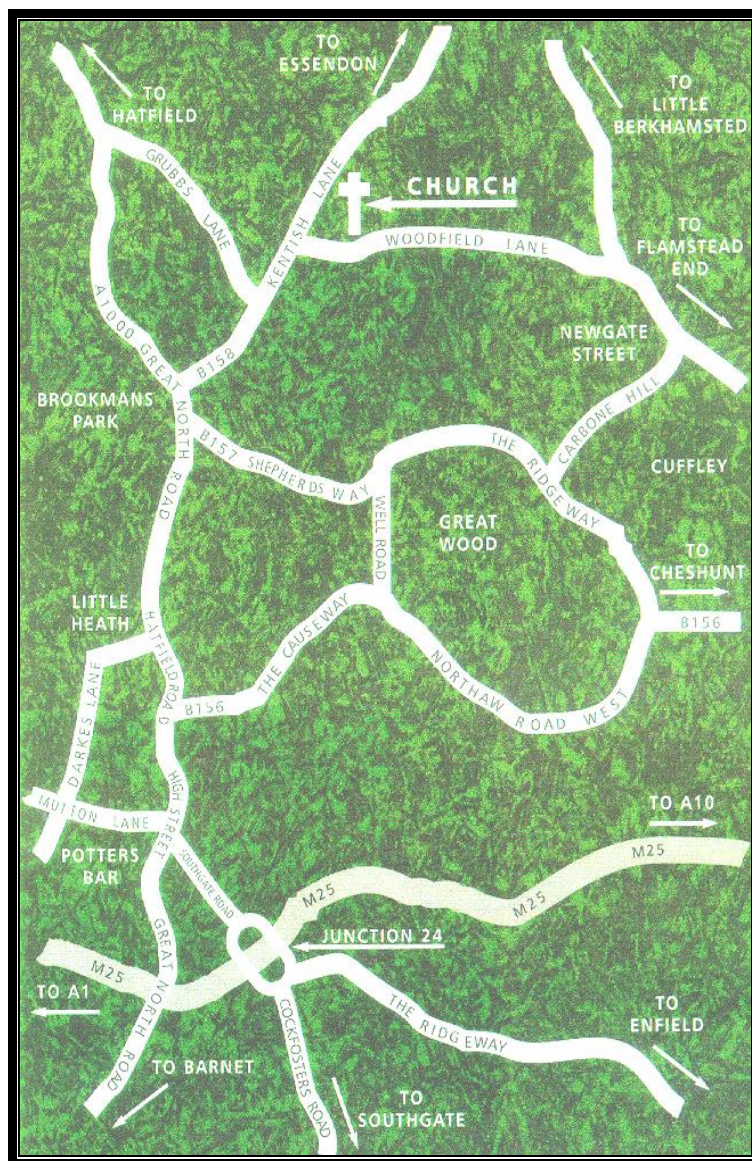
As we leave the church we pin a 'martirika' to show that we witnessed the most important event in the life of the baptised person. The 'bonbonieres' containing sugared almonds are offered for the rejoicing and happiness.

2.11 Conclusion

Baptism is not an act of magic. The great mystery, which the Holy Spirit accomplishes in baptism, becomes part of one's consciousness only through the free cooperation or 'synergy' on the part of the baptised. In order for the baptised individual to truly attain the image of Christ, to become really a Christian, a whole lifetime is needed. During this time, the action of Christ, the Holy Spirit and the free co-operation with the baptised can gradually penetrate into all the nooks and crannies of his heart and soul, his body and spirit.

3. Location of Our Church

Our church is located on Kentish Lane (B158) at the junction with Woodfield Lane as indicated in the map below.



When turning off Great North Road (A1000) into Kentish Lane, you need to continue straight for exactly 1 mile and you will find the church on your right hand side. If you approach the church from Woodfield Lane, we are at the junction of Kentish Lane and Woodfield Lane.

The nearest National Rail stations to us are Potters Bar (Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, EN6 1AJ) and Brookmans Park (Station Road, Hatfield, AL9 7SS). We are approximately 3 miles away from each station but you will need to take a taxi from either station to get to us. Potters Bar offers more options for local taxis, so you are advised to use this station instead of Brookmans Park.

4. Parking

There is ample car parking in the car park on Kentish Lane just after the church. We prefer as far as possible to keep the front car park of the church free. Please **do not park on the roads around the church**. Following these instructions will help us maintain the friendly relationship we have established with our neighbours.

Coaches are welcome to bring and collect guests but they must park in the rear car park and not in the parking area in front of the church (nearest to Woodfield Lane).

Appendix A: Preparing to Serve as a Godparent (based on a booklet by Rev. Fr. William S. Chiganos)

It is a rule of the Orthodox Faith that every person, child or adult, should have a Godparent at Baptism. To serve as a Godparent is both a special honour and imposes responsibilities which last a lifetime.

It is an honour because God is using you to lead a soul into the sphere of redemption. Christ tells us: **“Whosoever believeth and is baptised shall be saved”** (Mark 16:16). Through Baptism we receive a full forgiveness of all sin, whether original or actual; we **“put on Christ”** (Galatians 3:27), becoming members of His Body, the Church. The Godparent, along with the parents and guided by the Church, should assist the newly baptised child through the walk of life. Just as natural parents have serious obligations for the care and nurture of their child, so Godparents have important duties in regard to their Godchild, in particular to see to it that the child receives a Christian upbringing.

Before one says “Yes,” to assuming the role of Godparent, he or she should make certain that the commitment to the baptised child will be honoured. Every Godparent becomes accountable to God as to whether or not he has discharged his duties to the child that he/she has baptised. Mindful of the sacred task of the Godparent, this leaflet has been prepared to provide every Orthodox Christian parent helpful hints in selecting the right person for the new infant and to make the intended Godparent acutely aware of his or her task.

A.1 When it all Began

The use of sponsors (Godparents) in Baptism dates back to the days when Christians were persecuted by the Roman Emperor Nero (64 A.D). Parents were often massacred during these persecutions. Thus sponsors were provided to instruct the children in the Christian faith in the event the parents were martyred. Even today, Jews have Godparents for their baby boys when they are circumcised eight days after birth. Baptism is the equivalent of Circumcision for Christians (see Colossians 2:11-12) so we give baptism to children of Christian parents.

Also, the early Church faced the problem that the majority of those who wanted to become her members came from pagan families and therefore lacked even an elementary Christian education and knowledge of the new faith. To remedy this, the Church undertook the task of educating them before their baptism. The systematic instruction, which was a preparatory stage for baptism was called “catechism”. During catechism one learned the simple elements of the Christian faith and morals and later in the fourth century one was also given an education of the more profound Christian mysteries, as is made clear in the 4th Prebaptismal Catechesis of St Cyril of Jerusalem. The candidate had to be introduced by one of the faithful, called “anadochos”, (the Godparent to be) and be examined by the “doctors” (the Bishops) who were in charge of the catechumens, to ensure that clear spiritual motives led him to enter the Church. Other than in cases of urgency, baptism was not something that was rushed. Not only did the candidate need to understand the teachings of Christ and the Church, but he also had to be living by them.

The “anadochos”, which means one who receives (the person out of the font), was responsible for the candidate and played a very important role during the process of his Catechesis and even after

the candidate had been baptised. This obviously took place primarily with adult candidates or young people. However, as the faith spread and as entire families were coming into the Body of Christ, infant baptism became more the norm rather than the exception. With the emergence and common practice of infant baptism, the “anadochos” was called upon to be the spokesperson for the infant at their baptism.

A.2 Godparent During Baptism

The Godparent is the representative of the infant who is being admitted into the Church of Christ. He speaks for the infant and vows that he will do all he can to assure that the child will be a true soldier of Christ and a devoted member of His Church. He accepts the sacred responsibility of guiding the child into the understanding and practice of the teachings of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is none other than the Orthodox Christian Church.

The Godparent makes a public profession of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (4th century A.D.) during the Baptism. Likewise, his/her renunciation of the devil is made on behalf of the candidate for Baptism. The Godparent implicitly pledges himself to aid his/her Godchild in whatever necessities that may arise, but most especially in the giving of a good Orthodox Christian example to the Godchild.

A.3 Choosing the Godparent

1. Parents must exercise the greatest care in the selection of Godparents for their children. Certainly they will never select atheists, agnostics, persons who have left the Orthodox Church and joined other churches, or persons who are lukewarm toward the Church. This would obviously defeat the purpose of having a Godparent in terms of their role as parents representing God or parents on God’s behalf. Jesus loved to have children come to Him. The Gospels tell of one such incident: **“Some people brought their babies to have Jesus place His hands on them. The disciples saw them and scolded them for doing so. Jesus called the children to Him and said, ‘Let the children come to me! Do not forbid them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these’”** (Matthew 19:13-14).
2. Parents should not choose Godparents because they feel obligated, or because they think that if they don’t ask a certain person or couple that they will be offended. Many, if not most situations, where people who have chosen someone to be a Godparent out of guilt or obligation, end up being disastrous.
3. The faith of the Godparent and their involvement within the sacramental life of the Church is crucial. The person who confesses Jesus Christ as His Lord cannot ignore and violate in word and deed this faith. How can he promise God that he will make certain that the child will grow to be a true follower of Christ, when he himself lives a life of unbelief and disobedience? This also includes people who decide to not marry in the Orthodox Church and just have a registry or no wedding, for whatever reason including marrying/living with non-Christians or Christians who are not baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity with water. Even someone who marries in the Orthodox Church and decides to not baptise their children or baptise them in a church that is not Orthodox Christian, would not be a suitable candidate for Godparent since they are also not considered to be in good standing with the Orthodox Church. When you marry in the

Orthodox Church, you make a promise to baptise your children in that Faith. This shows that the Orthodox Christian, who does these things opposed to the Orthodox Christian Faith, does not see his/her faith as important enough. Therefore, what will they teach your child about the faith of Christ? They have to be reminded what Christ said, **“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven”** (Matthew 10:32-33) and **“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me”** (Matthew 10:37). What Christ is saying is that if we prioritise others over God, then they become an idol. Orthodox Christians in this situation must rethink if they really care about Christ and their faith and if they are going to be a good influence to the person they are baptising. We pray that they will have a change of heart and rectify their relationship with Christ and the Orthodox Church by marrying in the Orthodox Church and baptising their children in the Orthodox Church.

4. It goes without saying that the Godparent must be an Orthodox Christian. How could someone who is not an Orthodox Christian provide the proper religious education, example and inspiration to his/her Godchild? It should also be noted that an Orthodox Christian who has not had his or her marriage blessed in the Orthodox Church is excluded from exercising the privilege of serving as a Godparent, because they are not considered to be in good standing with the Church. Also, those who have left the Orthodox Christian Church and joined other groups like Pentecostals, Baptists, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Evangelicals cannot baptise someone who is to become an Orthodox Christian. This includes people who find the excuse that they don’t understand the service of the Orthodox Church and go to churches who are English speaking like the Church of England, Pentecostals, Evangelicals etc. The reason for this is that they have broken away from communion with the Orthodox Church by going to churches that believe and practice differently from us. This is something that Christ and His Apostles taught about those who divide themselves from the Church or cause divisions in the Church, which is the Body of Christ (see Matthew 18:15-17, John 1:10; John 10:16; John 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, Hebrews 13:17, Titus 3:10-11; 2 John 1:10; Romans 12:4-5; Romans 16:17-18; Acts 20:28-30; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; Galatians 1:8-9; Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Timothy 6:3-5). It is advised that such persons should seek to return to the Orthodox Christian Church, by being instructed in the Orthodox Christian Faith, professing the Orthodox Christian Faith, and being administered the sacrament of Chrismation.
5. Parents may not be sponsors of their own children; on the contrary, should this occur, the very matrimonial bond of the parents should be dissolved in accordance with Canon 53 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (691 A.D.), since sponsorship creates a spiritual relationship considered by the Church in this canon to be more important than **“the union according to the flesh.”** Also, some spiritual relations may prohibit you from becoming a Godparent to a person, like a Godfather (or his biological son) may not marry his Goddaughter - see the link below: -

http://orthodoxinfo.com/praxis/relationship_due_to_baptism.aspx

6. The Church also cautions us to select a person who has reached the age of reason and moral responsibility (at least 12 to 15 years of age with another adult as Godparent and ideally 16 and over). It is also good to look for Godparents outside of the family. In this way, the family grows and special bonds are created.

A.4 Choosing a Name

Nowadays one of the commonest ways of naming a child is just to give the child a name you happen to like. More often than not it is the name of some actor or actress. The Church Fathers encouraged parents to give names of the saints or Biblical names, as for example, St John Chrysostom says to name our children **“rather after the righteous – martyrs, bishops, and apostles.”** Also, we give Ancient Greek names because of our Greek origin and many of these are saint’s names too.

It is St John Chrysostom’s idea that the child should be given a great name; that he should be repeatedly told the story of the great bearer of the name; and that thus he should be motivated to make himself like the great owner of the name which he bears. This is why we include an icon and a biography of the saint(s) that your child’s name(s) bear together with your Baptism Certificate and other information about the Sacrament of Baptism.

A.5 What is Expected of the Godparent

1. It is a gross misunderstanding to think that the only duty of the Godparent is to buy a new outfit and a cross for the infant. Certainly this is a beautiful tradition, but the emphasis must not be on the material but rather the spiritual. Many times people are so concerned with the clothing, the cross, the “martyrika”, (witness pins) and the luncheon afterwards, that they forget the magnitude and the awesomeness of the great mystery and the great gift of Holy Baptism. Both the parents and the Godparents should be careful not to fall into this trap, but instead to keep their minds focused on the most important aspect and that is the baptism itself.
2. The Sponsor should be ready to recite the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed either in Greek or English. Please make sure you give them a copy of the Creed.
3. The Godparent should make a faithful commitment to join the struggle with the parents, guided by the Church, to bring the infant carefully and prayerfully along the difficult road to Heaven.
4. After the baptismal service is finished, the priest takes the child from the Godparent and delivers the child into the arms of the mother in front of the congregation. As she receives the child, now baptised, sealed and illuminated, she kisses the hand of the priest and the Godparent as a token of the spiritual relationship that is established between the Godparent and the family. This is a Christian expression of gratitude and respect.
5. Godparent gives child bath on 3rd day after baptism (no bath prior to this), e.g. If the baptism was on Sunday then the bathing takes place on Tuesday. The water in the baby bath (the child and the clothes were washed in) are poured in a corner of the garden that is not trodden on since the Holy Chrismation oils are washed off from the child and clothing.
6. If the Godparent lives in the same city, it is customary for the Godparent to bring the infant (or accompany the newly illumined adult) to Holy Communion with the lit baptismal candle for the next three Sundays. After three Sunday’s the candle is no longer used, but it is good for the

Godparent to take the child to communion each week ideally or once a month or every other month.

7. Pray for your Godchild and his or her parents, and the parents should encourage their child to pray for the Godparents. By doing this you are encouraging a relationship and giving it the spiritual basis on which to mature. From the moment of Baptism, your Godchild deserves a very special place in your prayers, for on the Day of Judgment you will be asked about your Godchild's soul.
8. A faithful Godparent will make the effort to maintain close contact with their Godchild, building up their relationship. The main focus, however, is the progress of the child in the knowledge and practice of the Christian life. He should at all times model a Christ-like example. For this reason it is important that the Godparent stay on top of their own spiritual life. The Godparent should pray, fast, read from Holy Scripture, and participate in the sacramental life of the Church. As they grow and mature in the faith, they will in turn be able to offer more and more to their Godchild who has been entrusted to them. To neglect their own spiritual life is ultimately to neglect the spiritual life of their Godchild. The relationship between the Godparent and the baptised is so important and so close that the Church forbids marriage between the Godparent and Godchild, even the parents of the child with Godparent and God siblings and the Godchild. The Church sees this as spiritual incest.
9. Appropriate gift-giving honouring the occasion of the Godchild's nameday, birthday or baptism day, could include such things as icons, a Bible, and religious books that will be helpful in building up the spiritual life of the child. These are the most important, but it is not wrong to give other things as well that the child would enjoy and make use of. Celebrate with a special visit and dinner if you're nearby, and give a "spiritually oriented" gift to celebrate, like an age-appropriate book of his patron saint's life, a new icon, etc.
10. Emphasise the spiritual aspects of holidays. Make it a tradition to read the stories of the Nativity (Birth of Christ) and Pascha (Easter) morning with your Godchild, and help his or her parents downplay the material and commercial aspects (Santa, the Easter Bunny, loads of loot in pretty wrapping).
11. Most of all, the greatest duty of the Godparent is to pray fervently for their Godchild that God will always watch over them and guide them throughout his/her life. The Akathist to the Mother of God the Nurturer of Children could be read by the Godparent and they could simply replace the word "child" with "Godchild".
12. Invite your Godchild to go with you to Great Vespers, Matins, or weekday services for the feasts if you live close by. Encourage your whole "God-family" to come to Church for services other than the Sunday/Resurrectional Divine Liturgy, if they don't do so regularly.
13. Ask what your Godchild is learning in Church Sunday school. Discuss the lesson of the week, and offer to help with Church Sunday school homework. Buy your Godchild's first Bible, and update it regularly as his or her reading level increases. Encourage him or her to study the gospel!
14. Help your Godchild serve God. Choose a service project to work at regularly together, like visiting parishioners in the hospital. Help him or her discover new ways to use God-given

talents to help others - the artistic might design posters or programs for retreats, the musical might become a member of the Church choir, etc. Encourage your Godsons to serve in the altar as altar boys, when they are old enough, and “cheer them on” each week. When much older they can help inside the Sanctuary, join the Church Committee or even become a priest. The girls can be encouraged to help make prosphora (bread for Holy Communion), become Sunday School Teachers or help the Church Ladies Committee with various Church and Charity events.

15. If you live in close proximity to your Godchild make yourself available to spend time with him or her. Find out when school activities and sports events are scheduled and try to go to a few. Plan a special time, whether for lunch or a trip to the zoo, to be with your Godchild. These times together will only help to make your relationship closer.

The role and responsibility of the Godparent can be summed up in the Divine Commandment that is read from the Holy Gospel at the service of Baptism. **“Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”** (Matthew 28:20). It is truly an honour to be called upon to be a Godparent. May we all live a life close to the Church, seeking help from Christ, that we may fulfil our sacred duty as Godparents in a way pleasing to God.

A.6 Working Together - Godparent and Parent

It is important for the Godparent to work with your Godchild’s parents. Talk with your Godchild’s parents often about his or her life, spiritual and otherwise, and ask how you can help. Parents can often use another perspective -- and another willing hand -- as they guide their children to adulthood. Parents choose Godparents who will reinforce them, people to whom our children can turn when the parents are not cool enough to listen to them, and when they need to hear difficult truths from someone who loves them.

Parents may be unsure whether they are too strict or too lenient, Godparents are a good sounding board for discussing this when it pertains to the Godchild. Parents may wish to make the Godparents the child’s emergency contact person after the parents so the secular world relies appropriately on the Godparent when crisis hits.

Parents should light candles and pray for their children’s Godparents every time they enter a church, say their family and personal prayers. Likewise the Godparents should pray not only for their Godchild but the Godchild’s parents as well.

A.7 What Must I Consider?

If you hope to be a Godparent some day, it would be well to consider carefully the chief conditions that the Church prescribes in the way of preparation: -

1. When you are approached and asked to baptise a child, do not answer immediately. Reflect and ask yourself if you could be true to the Baptismal vow.

2. The Godparent must be an Orthodox Christian, of good moral character, regular and faithful in attendance at Liturgy and the reception of the Sacraments, and with a sound knowledge of the basic teachings of the Orthodox Church.
3. Study the Creed and be prepared to recite it when the Priest calls upon you. The custom of having the Chanter recite it is incorrect. Knowledge of the Creed and familiarity with it constitutes the basic prerequisite for becoming a Godparent.
4. A Godparent should be neither excessively young (under 12 years old), nor advanced in years, nor in poor health. There must be at least a fair possibility that the Godparent will live long enough to carry out the obligations assumed.
5. The Church recommends one Godparent.
6. The Church expects the parents to be married in the Orthodox Church before the baptism of the child. If they are not married, then the Orthodox Church will baptise your child for the sake of its salvation but you have to realise it is a sin for the priest to baptise the child if the parents are not married in the Orthodox Church. We pray that you will rectify the situation with marriage as soon as possible for the sake of your salvation too. Please note that a Civil Marriage is not blessed by God so in the eyes of God and the Church you are not married.

A.8 The Responsibility of the Godchild

Godparent and Godchild should develop a close and loving relationship. As with any relationship, this spiritual one needs to be fostered and cared for in order for it to develop. The best way for this relationship to grow is through prayer. Pray for your Godparent and his/her family. By doing this you are encouraging a relationship and giving it the spiritual basis on which to mature.

When greeting one's Godparent, you should feel the love and familiarity that you have with your own parents. It is not inappropriate to hug or kiss your Godparents, including kissing their right hand, as you would your own parents.

A Godchild should light candles and pray for their Godparents every time they enter a church, say their family prayers, and say their personal prayers. The Godchild should observe the Godparent's name day. Celebrate it with a special visit and dinner if you're nearby, and give a "spiritually oriented" gift to celebrate, like a spiritual book of the Godparent's patron saint's life, a new icon, etc.

Keep in touch by phone, e-mail, or postcard if your Godparent lives out of the city you live in or across the globe. Prayer and love in Christ knows no distance!

There will come a time in which your Godparents have aged and are less able to be fully present with you due to illness or perhaps due to being placed in a nursing home. Remember to continue to pray for them and visit or write to them often to maintain your relationship. Ask for their advice even though you have grown up.

Finally, there will come a day in which your Godparents will repose in the Lord, maintain your image of your Godparents in your mind to help bring peace and memories of love and wisdom.

Pray for your Godparents and offer memorial services in their memory, do good works and offer alms (charity) in their name. And pray for them as they will continue to do so for you in heaven.

Appendix B: Our Church Funding and How You Can Help

This section explains how our church is funded and how you can help sustain its long term future.

B.1 Where Does Our Church Funding Come From?

The sole source of our church funding comes from the people who attend our services, whether they are our regular church goers or people who choose our church to hold their wedding, baptism or funeral.

From time to time we raise money by holding various events such as lunches, dinners, bazaars, raffles and competitions.

Our church does not belong to the priests or the committee members. The church belongs to the whole community.

Although our church is located in what maybe classed by many as an affluent area, it is frequented by people from all walks of life, independent of their financial standing.

B.2 How the Church Money is Spent

Listed below are just some of the ways our church money is spent: -

- General running costs e.g. insurance, heating, electricity, water, telephone, internet, IT equipment, office supplies, etc.
- Staff salaries for priests, chanters, caretaker, cleaners
- Church building maintenance costs
- Parking (the church does not own the freehold to the parking)

Church committee members do not get paid, they are simply volunteers.

B.3 How You Can Help Sustain the Future of Our Church

In order to sustain the long term future of our church we require your help. Please consider a regular donation, be it weekly, monthly or yearly. This can be made either in person, by Standing Order or via our website.

For full details please visit our dedicated website page below: -

www.12apostles.co.uk/make-a-donation