

The Seven Sacraments and Sacramentals

What is a Sacrament?

A Sacrament is defined as “a visible outward sign, instituted by Christ, to give inner grace.” There are 3 important statements in this statement.

- ***A visible sign***

An action is performed by a minister (usually a priest). For example, when a baby is baptized in the church the priest pours water over its head and at the same time says the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” That is a visible sign.

- ***Instituted by Christ***

The Lord Jesus Christ instructed His church to offer the seven sacraments to His followers. For example, His directive to His disciples in Matthew’s Gospel (Mt 28:19-20), “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- ***To give grace***

Grace is God’s free gift of Himself as the controlling influence in our life and the decisions we make once we have committed ourselves to Him in faith.

What does the Catechism of the Catholic Church say?

CCC 1131 The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.

CCC 1132 The Church celebrates the sacraments as a priestly community structured by the baptismal priesthood and the priesthood of ordained ministers.

CCC 1133 The Holy Spirit prepares the faithful for the sacraments by the Word of God and the faith which welcomes that word in well-disposed hearts. Thus, the sacraments strengthen faith and express it.

Do Sacraments work automatically, like Magic?

To receive the benefits and graces that God intends through the Sacraments one must come to them with the proper disposition: faith in God and reverence for God’s presence.

Why are Sacraments so important to Christians?

Sacraments are given to us by God as the privileged channels of his grace, his life, and his loving power! Sacraments are necessary because people need God.

CCC 1210 Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation (or Chrismation), the Eucharist, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life:¹ they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian’s life of faith. There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of the spiritual life.

The Seven Sacraments and Sacramentals

Physical Natural Life	Spiritual "Supernatural" Life
1. Birth	1. Baptism
2. Grow to maturity	2. Confirmation
3. Nourish myself	3. Eucharist
4. Heal my wounds	4. Penance or Reconciliation
5. Drive out traces of diseases	5. Anointing of the Sick
6. Propagation of Humanity	6. Matrimony
7. Government	7. Holy Orders

The Sacraments of Initiation

CCC 1212 The sacraments of Christian initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist - lay the *foundations* of every Christian life. "The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity."

1. **Baptism** – Baptism marks the entry of the believer into the Christian Community. Along with Confirmation and Eucharist, we have access to the full sacramental life of the Church. Through Baptism we are freed from sin, joined with the Body of Christ, and share in his divinity destining us for eternal life through grace. Baptism leaves us permanently change, no longer the person we once were, but a new person, dying to death and sin, and rising to new life in Christ. In the words of St. Paul. "Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)
2. **Confirmation** – Jesus promised to send His Spirit as an Advocate to comfort and strengthen the Apostles. This occurred at Pentecost, 40 days after his Resurrection from the dead. The Sacrament of Confirmation is our own Pentecost. We receive the Holy Spirit, through the anointing with oil and laying on of hands by the bishop or priest appointed by him.
3. **Eucharist** – **CCC 1324** The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life."¹³⁶ "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch." The Church teaches that Christ is really present in the bread and wine that have been consecrated by the priest or bishop at Mass. Although the accidents of bread and wine still look and taste like bread and wine, the substance, what is actually there, has changed.

The Sacraments of Healing

CCC 1421 The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health,³ has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

4. **Penance** – Many of us regret things we have done or fail to do, words we have said or thoughts we have harbored, things we are too embarrassed or ashamed to admit. Sometimes

The Seven Sacraments and Sacramentals

these hidden secrets take on much more importance than they deserve, simply because they are bottled up. The Sacrament of Penance gives us the opportunity to express our sorrow or contrition for the wrongs we have done, to heal broken relationships, to forgive ourselves and others, and to open channels of communication between ourselves and God. When we make our confession to a priest in the confidentiality of the confessional, we experience healing and liberation, discovering again how much we are owed by God, and how great is our dignity as His Creation. What the penitent makes known to the priest remains sealed because the confidentiality of confession is absolute.

5. **Anointing of the Sick** – “Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.” (James 5: 14–15) Sacrament offered to those who are seriously ill. Confers grace to face trial, sins are forgiven, helping to prepare one to die, or if God’s will brings physical healing.

Two Sacraments of Vocation

CCC 1534 Two other sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God.

6. **Matrimony** – All love comes from God, and all love reflects the love God has for His Creation. Matrimony is a sign and symbol of this love. Marriage is a sacrament of the self-giving love which two people offer to each other. The love which a couple has for each other mirrors the love Our Lord has for His Church, his Bride.
7. **Holy Orders** – As people of God, we all share in the priesthood of Christ, and so the Church speaks meaningfully of “the priesthood of all believers.” Each of us should exercise our priesthood by strengthening and serving one another. Within the Church, certain members are set apart through the Sacrament of Holy Orders and become part of the Ministerial priesthood. They have a special relationship to Christ to help lead and serve the Church; They should preach the Gospel in word and deed and administer the Sacraments faithfully to the flock under their spiritual care.

What is the Theology of the Sacraments? – See Handout

1. Each of the seven Sacraments has an outward, visible SIGN or ACTION which effectively conveys the grace and life of God.
2. Each of the seven Sacraments is a proclamation of God’s WORD. The word announces what God is doing in that particular Sacrament.
3. Each of the Sacraments has a proper MINISTER.

Is God Bound by the Sacraments

Though the sacraments are the means of grace instituted by Christ for our salvation are the normative means for Catholics to encounter Christ, God does not restrict his grace to the channels of the sacraments exclusively. Peter Lombard (c. 1160) said that, “God did not bind his power by the Sacraments” and St. Thomas Aquinas said “It belongs to the excellence of Christ power, that He (Christ) could bestow the sacramental effect without conferring the exterior sacrament” (STh, III, Q. 64 Art. 3). God is able to affect the grace of the sacraments in a person’s soul without the

The Seven Sacraments and Sacramentals

exterior sign of the sacrament. This flows from God's goodness and His desire that all men be saved. However, when God does this is a Divine prerogative and cannot be presumed upon. For most of us, the sacraments remain our channels of grace under regular conditions.

Sacramentals

CCC 1677 Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare men to receive the fruit of the sacraments and sanctify different circumstances of life.

CCC 1670 Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it. "For well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which flows from the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. From this source all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power. There is scarcely any proper use of material things which cannot be thus directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God."

Types of Sacramentals – Touchpoints for God

- Medals
- Crosses and Crucifixes
- Relics
- Scapulars
- Cords and Cinctures
- Holy Oils
- Candles
- Palms and Ashes
- Holy Water
- Sacred Images and Sacred Art
- The Rosary and Chaplets
- Sacred Places and Pilgrimage Sites
- Sacred Times (liturgical seasons)
- The Bible and Prayer Books
- Posture and Body Language
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Genuflection
 - Bows
 - Prostrations

<https://worldofsacramentals.com/list-of-sacramentals/>

Sacrament	Minister	Scripture	Required State	Frequency	Effect	Form	Matter
Baptism CCC 1213-1284	Ordinary: a Bishop, priest or deacon; Extraordinary: any person if necessary (CCC 1256)	Mt 28:19-20; Jn 3:5; 4:1-2; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom 6:3-4; Mk 16:16; Titus 3:5; Eph 5:26; 1 Peter 3:21	Unbaptized pagan, convert to the Christian Faith, newborn infant (CCC 1246-1255)	Only applied once (Eph 4:5; CCC 1272)	Removes Original and Actual sin (CCC 1263); causes New Birth ("born again") (CCC 1265); incorporates into Christ (CCC 1267); is the doorway into the Church (CCC 846, 1213)	"I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Mt 28:18-19; CCC 1240)	Water (Immersion, Infusion, or Sprinkling) (CCC 1278)
Confirmation CCC 1285-1321	Ordinary: the Bishop; Extraordinary: a Priest (CCC 1313, 1318)	Acts 8:14-17; 9:17- 19; 19:6; Heb 6:1-6	Baptized but unconfirmed; needed Completion of Baptismal grace (CCC 1285); Baptized Christians from other traditions incorporated into the fullness of the Catholic Church	Only applied once (CCC 1304)	Sign of consecration (CCC 1294); spiritual seal (CCC 1293); completion of baptismal grace (CCC 1285); full outpouring of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1302-1303)	"Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1300)	Holy Chrism (Blessed Oil) and the Laying on of hands by the Bishop or a delegated priest (CCC 1288, 1294, 1300)
Eucharist CCC 1322-1421	The Priest (CCC 1411)	Jn 6:1-71; Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:7-20; 24:13-53; Acts 2:42-47; 20:7; 1 Cor 10:16-21	All Catholics are encouraged to participate (CCC 1417); Baptized believers in Communion with the Catholic Church (CCC 1396-1401) and devoid of Mortal Sin (CCC 1415)	Minimum of once a year, as frequently as daily (CCC 1389, 1417)	Intimate union with Christ (CCC 1391); Receiving Christ; nourish spiritual life; medicine of immortality, separating us from sin, removal of venial sin, spiritual strength, unites the Body into One (CCC 1391-1401)	"Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body which will be given up for you... Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me." (CCC 1412; 1 Cor 11:24-25)	Bread and Wine (CCC 1333)

Sacrament	Minister	Scripture	Required State	Frequency	Effect	Form	Matter
Confession, Penance or Reconciliation CCC 1422-1498	The Priest (CCC 1461)	Jn 20:23; Mt 16:18-19; 18:15-18; James 5:14-15	In mortal sin; desiring the Grace of Confession; in need of spiritual guidance (CCC 1446)	Minimum of once a year; or as frequently as necessary (CCC 1457-1458)	Forgiveness of mortal and venial sins, reunification with the Church, cleansing and formation of conscience, restores grace (CCC 1468-1470)	Priest's words: "God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1449)	Contrition (sorrow), confession of sins; satisfaction (penance) (CCC 1480)
Matrimony CCC 1601-1666	The Spouses, with the priest or deacon as witness (CCC 1623)	Gen 1:27-28; 2:18-25; Mt 19:3-12; Jn 2:1-11; Eph 5:25-32;	Each spouse must be a baptized man and woman with no impediment to marriage (CCC 1625)	Once and to one spouse as long as the spouse is living; again only if the spouse dies (CCC 2382)	The two become one flesh (Eph 5:31; perpetual and exclusive covenant partners (CCC 1638-1640)	The "I do", by which both spouses indicate their mutual consent to the marriage covenant (CCC 1626-1628)	Mutual Consent and Covenant to live together as husband and wife (CCC 1626); and the consummation of the Marriage (CCC 1640)
Holy Orders CCC 1596-1600	The Bishop (CCC 1576)	Acts 6:5-6; 13:3; 14:23; 20:28; Jn 20:21-23; 1 Tim 3:1; 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; Titus 1:5; Phil 1:1	A Baptized man who has been called for ordination by God; in the Western rite, with the exception of permanent deacons, the ordained must be celibate (CCC 1577-1580)	Only once; separate ordination for Deacon, Priest, and Bishop (CCC 1582)	A special relationship to Christ to lead and serve the Church; indelible spiritual character imprinted on the soul (CCC 1581; 1594)	The Bishop's "specific consecratory prayer asking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts proper to the ministry to which the candidate is being ordained" (CCC 1573)	Laying on of the Bishop's hands with the consecratory prayer (CCC 1538)
Anointing of the Sick, Extreme Unction, and Last Rites CCC 1499-1535	Only a Bishop or Priest (CCC 1516)	Mk 6:13; Jn 20:23; Mt 16:18-19; 18:15-18; James 5:14-15	Seriously ill; at the point of death or before a serious operation or for the elderly whose frailty becomes more pronounced (CCC 1541f.)	Repeatable; at the point of grave illnesses or before a serious operation (CCC 1514f.)	Sins forgiven; grace to face trial; spiritual preparation to die; and if God's will, physical healing (CCC 1520-1523)	Prayer of the Priest over the sick person for the grace of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins (CCC 1513, 1519)	Anointing with Holy Oil and Imposition of Hands (CCC 1513, 1519)