## The Sacraments

**The Matter** – the visible, meaning of the sacrament
- Refers to the sensible sign of the sacrament whose meaning is indicated by the words.
- It can be thought of as the stuff of the sacrament.
- It comes in through your senses.
- Matter has two components:
  - Substance
  - Accidents

**The Form** - the prayer, the word (What the Church intends to do with the matter)
- The form includes the prayers or particular words, which both accompany the matter of the sacrament and indicate its meaning.
- The form must accompany the matter.
- Generally speaking, the form is the prayer

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Marriage

Sacrament of Service
Minister – The Couple themselves
Witness – Deacon/Priest/Bishop
Vestment Color – Liturgical Season (depending on season)
Celebration – Takes place in the Church – before Church’s minister
  - Both are Catholic – Usually a Mass will be said – Eucharist is the ultimate form of
    binding the couple together
  - Catholic and non-Catholic – Usually a Liturgy of the Word

Definition of Marriage –
  Marriage in the Catholic Church, also called matrimony, is the "covenant by which a
  man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and
  which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and
  education of offspring", and which "has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a
  sacrament between the baptized." Code of Canon Law

Basically - (Procreation) Creation of children, education of children and the common fidelity of
the spouses. Marriage is the generation of new life, thus it has to be between a man and a
woman.

Form and Matter are the same
Questions
  1. N. and N. have you come here to enter into Marriage without coercion, freely and
     wholeheartedly?
  2. Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honor each other for as
     long as you both shall live?
  3. Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to
     the law of Christ and his Church?

Consent
Groom – I, n. take you, n, to be my wife. I promise to be faithful to you in good times and in
bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.
Bride – I, n. take you, n, to be my husband. I promise to be faithful to you in good times and in
bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.

Minimum Age Requirement:
  The Church states that the Man must be at least 16 years old and the woman must be at
  least 14 years old. Local Law of age requirements must also be fulfilled

Other Questions:

Why get married in the Church?
As Catholics, we long that God will bless the couple and their marriage. Thus, they come to God’s home to have the Church’s minister bless the marriage. The couple minister to one other through their consent and vows, and the minister, acting in the person of Christ bless the marriage. Think of any Disney Wedding, where did they take place? It was in the palace, in the Queens chamber, the Royal Chamber, which is considered to be the most sacred place in the palace and the kingdom. So, the wedding takes place in the most sacred of all places. Yes, God is everywhere, but there is something special about coming to a sacred place.

What about divorce?

In the vows that the couple makes before God, they are considered to be sacred, and taken seriously, till death do us part. Now, there are circumstances that come up, that might warrant a divorce or separation, such as abuse, the person is not who they said they were, the person becomes violent. When one is separated, one is not considered outside the Church, or in sin.

What about remarriage?

Remarriage is permitted if the spouse dies.

Also, remarriage is possible if one gets an annulment or declaration of nullity which states that the marriage never took place as marriage is intended. This process goes through the Church’s Tribunal or Church court for another name. This process helps bringing healing to the one who was previously married and makes sure that they are suitable to enter into marriage.
Anointing of the Sick

**Sacrament of Healing**

**Minister** – Priest/Deacon

**Vestment Color** – Violet – Color of Penance and Healing

**Celebration** – Takes place during Mass after the Homily or if faithful is frail, then at home, hospital or institution

**Definition** - The Anointing of the Sick is one of the seven Catholic sacraments. According to Catholic doctrine, this sacrament serves as a channel for special graces from God that comfort and heal, physically and/or spiritually, people who are seriously ill and in danger of death.

**Who can Receive the Sacrament**

Any Baptized Catholic

1. Before a Serious Surgery
2. Unconscious
3. Serious illness or injury (not a simple common cold)
4. Anytime one becomes more frail or feeble (elderly)
5. Serious Mental Illness
6. A person who is in the process of dying

**Matter** – The Oil of the Infirm - Oil has been recognized from ancient times for its properties of healing and cleansing. A person who has been anointed with oil is set apart for a special purpose. In terms of the sacrament, oil symbolizes healing from illness, cleansing from sin, and consecration (i.e., setting apart as holy) to God.

**Form** – Priest prays silently over the person with his hands on the person’s head

_Priest anoints the person with the Oil of the Infirm on the forehead making a cross and says:_

‘Through this Holy Anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit’

_Priest anoints the person the palms of their hands saying_

‘May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.’

**Why make the cross?**

The priest or bishop often anoints the sick person's forehead and palms with the sign of the cross, which reminds Catholics that their salvation comes through the cross of Jesus Christ, and that they are called to unite their sufferings to those of Jesus

**Why Anoint forehead and palms?**

1. The forehead is one of the most visible places on the human body. Catholics believe that their faith in Christ should be visible through their actions. An anointing on the forehead
also symbolizes the need to know Christ and follow Him.

2. Human **hands** are often associated with human activity. When sick people are anointed on the hands, they are reminded that they must turn all their activity over to Christ. They must place themselves under His will, even if He wills their earthly activity to cease.

**Why the laying on of hands** by the priest or bishop?

It comforts the sick person but also symbolizes the power of God entering the sick person through the mediation of the priest or bishop.

**How often can one receive the Sacrament?**
- As often as needed

**Can you anoint someone who has died?**
- No, the Sacraments are for the living. Since they are for the living, it is important that person try to be responsive and able to participate in the Sacrament, though there times they cannot due to their illness or being unconscious.

**Effects of the Sacrament**

According to Catholic doctrine, the Anointing of the Sick affects the sick person in the following ways:

- It provides courage, strength, and peace in the face of illness.
- It helps the sick person to trust in God no matter what happens.
- It gives the sick person grace to unite his or her suffering to the passion of Christ.
- It provides physical and/or spiritual healing according to God's will.
- It offers necessary graces so that the sick person may prepare for death.
- It pours out consolation and hope.
- It provides an opportunity for the forgiveness of sins even when the sick person is too ill to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Why is only a priest able to do the anointing?**
- In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the priest acts in the person of Christ. The Priest acts in the person of Christ the Sacraments of Healing. Also, part of the Anointing of the Sick is the opportunity to go to Confession, and to be forgiven of their sins. If the person is in the process of dying, the priest will say a special prayer called the apostolic pardon, asking God to pardon their sins and welcome the person into paradise.

**Does the Anointing of the Sick mean the person will be healed?**
- Yes and No. The Sacrament does not mean automatically the person will be restored to physical or even mental state, rather the Sacrament gives one the healing of their soul that they may embrace the physical and mental illness. All healing begins with the soul, which can help one carry and bear their crosses in life.
**Confirmation**

**Sacrament** of Initiation  
**Minister** – Bishop (priest if delegated by the Bishop)  
**Vestment Color** – Red – Represents the Holy Spirit  
**Celebration** – Takes place during Mass after the Homily  
**Frequency** – Receive the Sacrament only once – Leaves a special mark or character on one’s heart

**Age** – Must be the Age of Reason set forth by the local national Conference of Catholic Bishops  
(In the United States the age of Reason is 7 years old) Each Bishop sets the age to which Confirmation is completed. In the Diocese of Manchester the age is Sophomore Year of High School. In some dioceses it is as young as second grade while others it is Senior year of High School. The Average throughout the US is 8th grade.  
- If someone went through the RCIA program, which is for anyone who is seeking to enter the Church who is 7 years or older will be baptized and Confirmed at the same time at the Easter Vigil Mass

**Sponsor** – A sponsor must journey and present the Confirmation student to the Bishop on the day of Confirmation. A Sponsor is someone the candidate should know very well, and is a person who is in good standing with the Church (goes to Mass, practices the faith at home and at work, must be at least 16 years old and not a parent/legal guardian)

**Christian Name** – A Candidate for Confirmation takes on a saints name, someone that is special to their life. This can be a patron saint.

**Confirmation** is the sacrament by which Catholics receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit gives them the increased ability to practice their Catholic faith in every aspect of their lives and to witness Christ in every situation.  
The effects of Confirmation are as follows:

- An increased portion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, right judgment, understanding, courage, piety, and fear of the Lord
- A deepening and strengthening of the grace received at Baptism, which is considered the presence of God in the soul
- A more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ
- A closer bond with the Catholic Church
- The ability to take an even greater role within the Church's mission of living the Christian faith daily and witnessing to Christ everywhere
- A special mark, or character, on the soul that can never be erased

**Matter** – Bishop anoints the forehead of the Confirmation Candidate with Chrism oil making the sign of the Cross

**Chrism** is made of olive oil and is scented with a sweet perfume, usually balsam. Under normal circumstances, chrism is consecrated by the bishop of the particular church in the
presence of the priests at the Mass of the Chrism, which takes place in the morning of Holy Thursday.

**Why the Cross** – reminds Catholics that their salvation comes through the cross of Jesus Christ, and that they are called to be witnesses to Christ

**Form** – Be Sealed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
**What are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?**
  - Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Knowledge, Fortitude (Courage), Piety, and Fear of the Lord (Wonder and Awe)
Baptism

Sacrament of Initiation

Vestment Color - White (Baptisms usually do not take place during Lent unless it’s an emergency)

Celebration – The primary place for baptisms are at Mass, however they can also be outside of Mass inside of Liturgy of the Word.

Definition – root word of Baptism means to be plunged
- To be plunged/purged of Original Sin, and restored into a deeper relationship with God.

Matter – Water is used

Form – The person being baptized is either fully immersed into the water three times or water is poured over the head of the person three times, and the minister says ‘I baptize you in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.’

Age of Baptisms

Infant Baptism

A. An infant through a child aged 7 can be presented for baptism by their parents or legal guardians. The baptism usually takes place at the family’s Church by either the priest or the deacon.

B. God Parents – Standing with the parents of the child at a baptism is at least one god parent, usually two, a male and a female who are in good standing with the Church (have been baptized and Confirmed in the Catholic Church, practice their faith by participating at Mass and the life of the Church, and are Christian witnesses in their home and world. They also must be at least 16 years old)

C. After the infant/child is baptized, Chrism Oil will be placed on the crown of their head. They are anointed as ‘Priest, Prophet and King.’ They will also receive a candle lit from the Paschal Candle as a sign of keeping the flame of faith alive in their hearts. Typically they also wear white as a sign of purity and new life given them from Our Lord

Emergency Baptism

A. If an infant is in danger of death, baptism can be administer by anyone, even non Catholics. They need Water and will say the Form, ‘I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.’

Children 7 and older and Adult Baptism

A. The Church has always preserved the sacred role of welcoming new members to the Bishop. Thus, the process is a little bit different. The person who is seeking to enter the Church must have a desire to want to enter the faith, and to be baptized.

B. These candidates go through a process called Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. This process is to help form the person into the Christian faith. Many people from the parish help form this person from being a sponsor to them, to teachers, to walking with them. Once the candidate is ready, usually during Lent, they are invited by the bishop to be received into the faith, called the Rite of Election. The Bishop blesses their preparation, and asks the Holy Spirit to continue to watch over them. The Candidate then prepares to receive
the Easter Sacraments at the Easter Vigil. The person will not only be baptized, but will also be Confirmed and receive Holy Communion.

C. Adults are baptized in the same way, but instead of the Chrism oil placed on their heads, they receive it on their forehead. The adults receive all the Sacraments of initiation in the one evening.
What is a Sacrament?

Outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace
- Outward sign – Has to be something perceived
- Instituted by Christ
  - Draw their life from Christ
  - The source and origin are found in Christ
  - They are an expression of his earthly ministry
- Give Grace
  - Something happens when a sacrament occurs
  - Something changes in the person receiving the sacraments
  - This event is called grace
  - It leads to a deeper connection with the life of God

B. What does it mean to say that the sacraments were instituted by Christ?
- Though Christ did not explicitly give the 7 Sacraments, there are explains through his life, where we can see the sacraments came to life (Baptism – Jesus told John to go baptize, Confession – forgive sins, Eucharist – Last Supper, Confirmation – Pentecost)
  - The origin and meaning are founding Christ – who is the sacrament of God
- Instituted by Christ – Church understands that Jesus is the self-revelation of God
  - Christ is the savior and healer of all humanity
- Church recognizes – it was instituted by Christ as sacrament or self-revelation
- Sacraments – part of Christ’s will in order to reveal the Father, and to heal and save all

- As Self-revelation of Christ, the Church practices the sacraments, and even institutes its definitions and rites

C. How do the sacraments work?
- works by the fact the rite is performed – essential components
  - Intention, minister intended to do what the Church intends
- Opportunity that God makes available for his grace for healing and saving, through the institution of Jesus Christ, with the help of the Holy Spirit inside the Church
  - Council of Florence – 7 Sacraments – particular, privileged ways that God comes to one
  - Not the only way to receive God’s grace, but it is a definite moment when grace is known to be available

D. Explain the difference between ex opere operato and ex opera operantis.
- Ex opere operato – through the power of completing the rite, it has worked.
  Thus, it works through the power of God’s Grace, works by the action done.
- Ex opera operantis – the virtue of the minister, the power he has, this subjective.
  ie. It does not matter if the minister is in sin or in grace, it does not effect the rite
E. Is there is difference between magic and religious ritual? How would you explain it?
- Magic ritual assumes that the powers of the rite originate in the power of the person performing the magic
- Religious ritual recognizes that the power of the act is not in the person performing it, but in the word of God made present by God in the ritual act.
  o The minister of religious ritual recognizes that he is merely the instrument of God’s power and grace, not the origin of the effectiveness of the religious rite

What are the six aspects of sacraments?
1. Efficacy – How does it work?
   - It works simply by the fact that the rite is performed with all of its essential components
   - Intention—minister must intend what the church intends
   - A sacrament gives grace
   - The sacraments by being performed give grace
   - In some sacraments there is a change effected, an ontological change, a change at the center of one’s being (such as orders) (i.e. you look different to God)
   - Some sacraments put a permanent seal (such as baptism and confirmation)

2. Institution
   - Instituted by Christ—we mean there is some deliberate link to the person or ministry of Christ
   - So the sacrament of marriage, for example, has some link to who Christ is and to his ministry
   - Institution does not mean Christ wrote them down or told apostles what the seven sacraments were to be
   - It means the seven sacraments are privileged ways of communicating God’s grace and are linked to Christ in his person and/or ministry

3. Number
   - The church says there are seven, and the church has the authority to do so
   - The church as the sacrament of Christ has the authority to say what these sacraments are

4. Necessity
   - Sacraments are not absolutely necessary to salvation
   - But they are “appropriate”
   - Necessary because the sacraments are the avenue to God, the means by which God communicates grace to the world
   - They are the means God has given through the church for salvation
5. Administration – Who can Administer the Sacraments
   - Ordained ministers, except in the case of baptism and matrimony
   - Augustine says that when anyone baptizes it is Christ who baptizes

6. Reception Who can receive the sacraments?
   - Person must have the intention to receive what the church offers
   - Openness to receive the grace that is offered
   - We have to cooperate with the grace—Augustine
More Information about the Sacraments

A. Sacraments of Initiation

1. Baptism.

A.1.1. What is baptism?

Baptism is the “gateway” to all the sacraments that unites us with Christ by joining us to his death on the cross and resurrection to eternal life. Baptism frees us from Original Sin and any personal sin committed before baptism. Through baptism, we are made adopted sons and daughters of God and become a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. Through baptism, we enter into a covenant with God, so we must freely choose it, whether for ourselves (if an adult) or through our parents and family (if an infant or child).

A.1.2. How is baptism administered?

Water is poured three times over the candidate or the candidate is immersed three times in water, and the minister of the sacrament says, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Water symbolizes the cleansing and new life that baptism truly brings.

A.1.3. Who can be baptized, and what is required of a candidate?

Anyone who is not yet baptized can be baptized. The only requirement is faith, which is publicly professed at the baptism either by the candidate (if an adult) or by their parents and sponsors (if an infant or child).

A.1.4. Why does the Church adhere to the practice of infant Baptism?

Infant baptism is an ancient tradition of the Church and one of the main reasons for this practice is because God chooses us before we choose Him. Baptism is a gift from God, a grace, which He freely gives for no other reason than love. Parents who have faith also want their child to receive this grace and to be freed from original sin and the power of death. This presupposes that the parents will raise their baptized child in the faith; in fact, this is one of the greatest responsibilities of parents. To fail to do so is a serious offense against God and their child.

A.1.5. Who can administer Baptism?

The ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop, priest, or deacon. In an emergency, however, anyone can baptize so long as they pour water over the head of the recipient and use the formula, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Even a non-Christian can do this in an emergency, if they intend to do what the Church does when she baptizes.
A.1.6. Is Baptism in fact the only way to salvation?

Baptism is necessary for salvation. Christ died for and offers salvation to every human person, however, so someone who has no opportunity to learn about Christ and the faith but still seeks God sincerely and lives according to their conscience can also find salvation through the “baptism of desire.” Still, if anyone is saved, it is only through Christ. God has chosen to make salvation dependent on the sacraments and the Church is tasked with tirelessly offering them to everyone. God Himself is not bound by His sacraments, however, and CAN offer salvation to these other people, but we do not know how. We do know with certainty that the sacraments are effective, though, because God has given them to us through the Church.

A.1.7. What happens in Baptism?

Through baptism, we become members of the Body of Christ, brothers and sisters of Jesus, and children of God. Through baptism we are freed from sin, saved from death, and offered eternal life. Through baptism, an indelible, or permanent, mark is made on the soul that can never be repeated or undone.

A.1.8. What is the significance of receiving a name in Baptism?

When we are baptized by a name it shows that God knows each of us individually and intimately, by name, and accepts each of us as His sons and daughters.

A.1.9. Why should Christians choose the names of saints at Baptism?

Saints are the best examples of how to live the Christian life and, because they are before God right now in heaven, are our best helpers. By taking a saint’s name, we are making a friend who is with God.

2. Confirmation

A.2.1. What is Confirmation?

Confirmation completes baptism and bestows the gift of the Holy Spirit on the recipient. The sacrament is given under the signs of the imposition of hands and anointing with sacred chrism.

A.2.2. What does Sacred Scripture say about the sacrament of Confirmation?

Throughout the Old Testament, the people of Israel waited for the outpouring of God’s spirit on the promised Messiah (word meaning the “anointed one”). Jesus, the promised Messiah, promised to send the Holy Spirit upon his disciples and did so at Pentecost. It is this same Holy Spirit, third person of the Blessed Trinity, who descends upon everyone who receives confirmation.

A.2.3. What happens in Confirmation?
In confirmation, the soul of the recipient is imprinted with an indelible mark that can be received only once and which remains forever. The gift of the Holy Spirit empowers the confirmed individual to put the grace initially received at baptism into full practice.

A.2.4. Who can be confirmed, and what is required of a candidate for Confirmation?

Any Catholic who has already received baptism and is in the “state of grace” can be admitted to confirmation. To be in the “state of grace” means to not have any unconfessed mortal sin on one’s conscience. Mortal sin kills the life of charity and separates the individual from God. If you are not in a “state of grace,” you should run to the sacrament of confession, through which mortal (and venial) sins are wiped away. In fact, we should be in a state of grace whenever we receive a sacrament. God pours out His graces, His very life, each and every time a sacrament is celebrated; we must be open to those graces, however, to receive them fruitfully, and the best way to be open to them is to be in a state of grace.

A.2.5. Who may confirm?

Confirmation is normally administered by a bishop. For serious reasons and when necessary, the bishop can delegate a priest to administer confirmation. In danger of death, any priest can do so.

3. Eucharist.

A.3.1. What is Holy Eucharist?

Holy Eucharist is the sacrament in which Jesus gives his very self – his Body and Blood – for us, so that we in return might give our total selves to him in love and be united with him and his Church in Holy Communion and become the Body of Christ. The word “Eucharist” comes from a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving” and we truly give thanks because in the Eucharist the one sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross at Calvary is made present during the words of consecration in a hidden, un-bloody way. The Mass, or the celebration of the Eucharist, is truly “the source and summit of the Christian life” because in it we receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus and unite ourselves to his suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus gave the Eucharist to the Church at the Last Supper on the night before he died, anticipating his redemptive death on the Cross. He gave himself to the Apostles under the signs of bread and wine and commanded them to forever “do this in remembrance of me” in celebrating the Eucharist. The word “Mass” comes from the final dismissal in Latin, “Ite, missa est,” meaning the people, having received Christ in the Eucharist, are sent out into the world to transform it and spread the Good News through their very lives.

A.3.2. How important is the Eucharist for the Church?

The celebration of the Eucharist is the central focus of the Christian community; through it and in it we become the Church. We are the Church not because we get
along well (though, that certainly is to be desired!) but rather because, as a community, we receive the Body of Christ in the Eucharist and are being transformed into the Body of Christ.

A.3.3. What elements are essential to a Holy Mass?

Every celebration of the Eucharist unfolds in two parts, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. “Liturgy” is a word that literally means “the work of the people” and it is the public manner the community worships God. In the Liturgy of the Word, we hear how God has made himself known to his people through listening to the Scriptures, both the Old Testament and New Testament, with a special emphasis on the Gospel. After the Scripture readings, the priest or deacon will preach a homily applying the readings for the day and our faith to our current life. The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the intercessory prayers, where we pray to God on behalf of specific groups and individuals. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, bread and wine are offered by the people and consecrated by the priest to become the Body and Blood of Jesus. The Blessed Sacrament and Precious Blood are then distributed to the people at Communion.

A.3.4. Who leads the celebration of the Eucharist?

Christ himself acts every time the Eucharist is celebrated. The bishop or priest represents him. The bishop of priest acts “in the person of Christ, the Head,” meaning that when they celebrate Mass, Christ acts through them on the basis of their ordination. When the priest says “This is my Body . . . this is my Blood” during the consecration, it is truly Christ himself speaking through the ordained priest.

A.3.5. What is the right way to honor the Lord present in the consecrated bread and wine?

Since God is truly present in the consecrated bread and wine, they must be treated with the greatest reverence and worship possible. If there are consecrated hosts left over after Communion at Mass, they are kept in sacred vessels and stored in the tabernacle. Since Christ is present in the Eucharist in the tabernacle, we should always be aware of this and genuflect toward his presence in the tabernacle whenever we enter or leave a church. It is especially important to try to spend some time, however long or however brief, before the tabernacle in adoration of Jesus present in the Eucharist.

A.3.6. How often must a Catholic Christian participate in the celebration of the Eucharist?

A Catholic Christian is to attend and participate in Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation. Anyone desiring friendship with Jesus will respond as often as possible to his invitation to the Eucharistic feast. It is not possible for a person to have a living relationship with Christ without going to where he is, and he is most truly and substantially present in the Eucharist at Mass.
A.3.7. What sort of preparation do I need in order to be able to receive Holy Eucharist?

To receive Holy Communion, a person must be Catholic. He or she should be in a state of grace, meaning not having an un-confessed mortal sin on his or her conscience. If this is not the case, the person should receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving Communion. A person should fast from all food and drink except water and medication, so far as good health allows, prior to receiving Communion.

A.3.8. In what way is the Holy Eucharist an anticipation of eternal life?

Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist, and when we receive and adore the Blessed Sacrament, we receive and adore the King of Kings. In heaven, we will be face-to-face with God, but even on earth we are offered his grace, love, and friendship and truly encounter him through the sacraments of his Church.

B. Sacraments of Healing

1. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation (Confession).

   B.1.1. We have Baptism, which reconciles us with God; why then do we need a special sacrament of Reconciliation?

   Baptism certainly does make us children of God and bring us new life in Christ by snatching us from the power of sin and death, but it does not do away with the effects of original sin such as human weakness and the tendency to sin (called “concupiscence”). If we sin again (and again and again) after baptism, how and where do we find forgiveness and reconciliation? The answer is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Through this sacrament, the person’s confessed sins are wiped away and he or she is showered in the mercy and love of God, strengthened in God’s grace to continue living the Christian life to the fullest.

   B.1.2. Who can forgive sins?

   God alone can forgive sins. Jesus, the Son of God made-man, forgives sins through the ministry of his ordained priests to whom he has given this authority. We, as humans, are both body and soul. When we are sorry for something we desire to know we are forgiven, to hear the words. There is something in our nature that longs for this. Through Reconciliation, we are given that opportunity, that gift. When the penitent (person going to Confession) hears the priest say “I absolve you of your sins,” we are in reality hearing God’s forgiveness.

   B.1.3. What prepares a person for repentance?

   If we reflect on ourselves and experience guilt about something we did or failed to do, we are often inspired with a desire to be better. This is called contrition. When we are contrite, we become aware of the contradiction between God’s love for us and our sins. That spurs us to feel sorrow for our sins, which prompts a personal resolution to change our life and
place all our hope in God’s grace and assistant. “The closer we come to God, who is all light, the clearer our dark side comes to light also. Yet God is not a light that burns but, rather, a light that heals. That is why repentance impels us to go into the Light in which we will be completely healed” (YouCat 229).

B.1.4. What is penance?

Penance is making restitution or “making things right” for a wrong that has been done. Penance must not only take place in the head, in the world of ideas and thoughts; penance must be expressed in acts of charity and solidarity with others. One can also do penance by praying, fasting, and helping the poor. Penance is not overly-dwelling on how terrible a person I am, but rather encourages us to begin again anew.

B.1.4. What are the two basic elements required for the forgiveness of a Christian’s sins to occur in the sacrament of penance?

First, the person receiving the sacrament must undergo a conversion and turn away from sin and back toward God and, second, the priest grants absolution from these sins in God’s name.

B.1.5. What must I bring to a confession?

The essential parts of any confession are as follows: an examination of conscience to be aware of sins I might have committed; contrition, or being sorry for my sins; a purpose of amendment, resolving not to commit that sin again in the future; confession, by actually naming and saying the sin to the priest; and penance, doing what the priest acts you to do to show your sorrow and to try to make things right.

B.1.6. What sins must be confessed?

Under normal circumstances, all serious sins a person remembers after doing a thorough examination of conscience that have yet to be brought to the sacrament of penance can be forgiven only in individual sacramental confession.

B.1.7. When is a Catholic obliged to confess his serious sins? How often should one go to confession?

A Catholic is obliged to confess his or her serious sins at least once a year upon reaching the “age of reason,” usually around 7 years old. An individual with a serious sin on their conscience must go to confession before receiving Holy Communion.

B.1.8. Why are priests the only ones who can forgive sins?

No one can forgive sins unless he has been granted that authority from God and been given the power to do so. Bishops and ordained priests have this authority to forgive sins in the name of Jesus, therefore we must go to them to receive this sacrament.
B.1.9. *Are there any sins God will not forgive?*

No, not if we come to him with sorrow for our sins and faith that He can forgive them. God’s mercy is always there waiting for us, all we have to do is seek it out. The only way we can be denied God’s mercy is if we fail to ask for it.

B.1.10. *May a priest later repeat something he has learned in confession?*

A priest may never reveal something he has learned in confession, under any circumstances. There is an absolute secrecy in the confessional. This is called the “seal” of confession. When you think about it, this makes sense: in confession, the conversation is between the repentant sinner and God, with the priest standing in the place of God as His mediator. The “seal” of confession is one of the most important and serious responsibilities to a priest and to the Church.

B.1.11. *What are the positive effects of confession?*

The repentant sinner is reconciled with God and the Church, and is given the strength to continue to live the universal call to be a saint.

2. **The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.**

B.2.1. *For whom is the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick intended?*

This sacrament can be received by any Catholic whose health is in a critical state. It can be received as many times as necessary. Situations when it would be appropriate to receive the sacrament are when facing a serious illness, surgery, or old age.

B.2.2. *How is the Anointing of the Sick administered?*

The essential elements of this sacrament are the anointing of the forehead and hands with holy oil with the accompanying prayers.

B.2.3. *How does this Anointing of the Sick work?*

This sacrament brings consolation, peace, and strength and unites the sick person and their suffering with Christ in a meaningful way. Although sometimes the Anointing of the Sick does bring about physical healing, it always provides spiritual strength and comfort to the suffering recipient of it so they are prepared for the physical and spiritual battles of their final journey through death to eternal life. This sacrament also has the effect of forgiving sins.

B.2.4. *Who can administer the Anointing of the Sick?*
Only bishops and priests are able to provide Anointing of the Sick, which makes sense because of its close association with the Sacrament of Penance. In both sacraments, Christ acts in a special way through His ordained priest.

B.2.5. What is meant by “Viaticum”?

Coming from a Latin phrase meaning “with you on the way,” Viaticum is the final Holy Communion a person receives before dying. This is sometimes done in conjunction with the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

C. Sacraments of Communion and Mission

1. The Sacrament of Holy Orders.

C.1.1. What happens in Holy Orders?

A man who is ordained receives a gift of the Holy Spirit that gives him a special authority from Christ through the bishop. The ordained receives a power and special mission to help others live out their baptismal call to be saints.

C.1.2. How does the Church understand the sacrament of Holy Orders?

In the Old Testament, the duty of priests was to mediate between God and humans, usually by offering repeated sacrifices. With the coming of Christ in the flesh, Jesus is the one, perfect mediator between God and humans, because He is both fully God and fully human. Jesus, the perfect mediator, offers the one, perfect, and unique sacrifice in atonement for our sins, Himself, on the Cross at Calvary. Jesus fulfills, perfects, and ends the Old Testament priesthood. Christ is the one High Priest of the new and eternal covenant. After Jesus, there can be an ordained priesthood only in Christ, through a calling from Christ through the Church. When a Catholic priest administers the sacraments, he does not do so on his own authority or because he is holier than anyone else, but rather because he acts in the very “person of Christ, Head of the Church.” Through His ordination, the priest is configured to Christ in a special way that enables Him to act as Christ in celebrating the sacraments. So, for example, when the priest says “I absolve you from your sins,” it is truly Christ saying those words through the priest. A priest is given this power to serve others by bringing them God’s grace, mercy, and love, especially in the sacraments.

C.1.3. What are the degrees of the sacrament of Holy Orders?

There are three degrees of holy order: bishop (episcopate), priest (presbyterate), and deacon (diaconate). Every bishop was a priest first, and every priest was a deacon first. A man ordained a deacon who is not preparing to be ordained a priest is called a “permanent” deacon. A man ordained a deacon as part of his preparation for priesthood is called a “transitional” deacon.

C.1.4. What happens in episcopal ordination?
In episcopal ordination, a priest receives the fullness of Holy Orders and becomes a successor of the Apostles and member of the college of bishops. In union with the other bishops and the pope, a bishop is responsible for the entire Church. He is called to the offices of teaching, sanctifying, and governing. A bishop is ordained in the presence of three other bishops.

C.1.5. What happens in priestly ordination?

In priestly ordination, the ordaining bishop calls down God’s power on the man being ordained a priest. At his ordination, the priest receives an indelible mark on his soul that can never be undone, similar to the indelible mark received at baptism and confirmation. The actual ordination takes place through the bishop’s imposition of hands and his prayer. The priest is a collaborator with the diocesan bishop especially by proclaiming the Word of God and administering the sacraments.