

7. The Sacraments



Confession heals, confession justifies, confession grants pardon of sin. All hope consists in confession. In confession there is a chance for mercy. Believe it firmly. Do not doubt, do not hesitate, never despair of the mercy of God. Hope and have confidence in confession. --St. Isidore of Seville

The sacraments extend Jesus' redemptive act into the present, enabling us to cooperate in that act and also making it effective for our justification and sanctification. As extensions of Jesus' act, the sacraments not only reveal and communicate the divine life which they signify but also respond to God's redeeming love with human worship. Having planned from the beginning for us to be his co-workers in redemption, Jesus instituted the sacraments to make this possible in a way wholly suited to our needs and capacities.

Although correctly defined as signs of a sort, insofar as they are principles of Christian life sacraments ought mainly to be considered as acts. Indeed, they are cooperative actions, involving the Spirit, Jesus, the Church by her minister, and the recipient, joined to accomplish the salvation of human persons. They permit us to become participants not only in the benefits of Jesus' redemptive act but in the act itself. And they are moral principles because they organize a Christian life, which begins with baptism and is structured by the other sacraments.

While defining the sacraments as signs emphasizes their symbolic dimension, they are more than just signs of faith, for they contain and confer the grace they signify. All the same, their bodily, symbolic dimension is an essential part of their redeeming and sanctifying power. As created reality, represented by the humanity of Jesus, cooperates in its own redemption by the Incarnation, so the outward, symbolic dimension of the sacraments enables us to do something suited to our condition in order to collaborate with Jesus in our own reconciliation and perfection.

At the same time, everything else in the sacraments, even the other actors, is a divine gift which is part of God's work. As a human act, even as the human act of Jesus, a sacrament is effective only insofar as it is a mode of cooperation with God's action, which alone re-creates and divinizes. Furthermore, God's role in the sacraments not only makes them effective but reveals this effectiveness; in this sense they are revelatory signs.

The sacraments are also actions of Jesus. We have seen that, as a human act, Jesus' redemptive act still exists, since acts which determine a person last. Every Mass is really a performance of this same, enduring redemptive act. The divine person, the Lord Jesus, continues to act humanly in the sacraments, which make the actions of the Word himself visibly present. Thus, one's meeting with Jesus in the sacraments is not a symbolic or purely spiritual encounter, but a real meeting with the Incarnate Word, and so also with the Father and the Spirit.

The sacraments are actions of the Church as well--the supreme part of her activity, in which she offers worship to God and confers his love on us. Moreover, the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and orders not only are acts of the Church but inaugurate the recipients into her offices, making certain of their actions official actions of the Church. Through them one shares, in distinct ways, in the priesthood of Jesus.

Finally, the sacraments are actions of the recipient, designed precisely to allow God's children to have a personal share in the renewal and sanctification he effects in them. The sacraments also nourish Christian life. The acts by which we receive the sacraments enable us to bring everything else in ourselves into perfect integration with charity. – The Way of the Lord Jesus: Christian Moral Principles, 1982

Baptism – the Gateway Sacrament

[The Council] relies on sacred Scripture and Tradition in teaching that this pilgrim Church is necessary for salvation. Christ alone is the mediator of salvation and the way of salvation. He presents himself to us in his Body, which is the Church. When he insisted expressly on the necessity for faith and baptism, he asserted at the same time the necessity for the Church which men would enter by the gateway of baptism. This means that it would be impossible for men to be saved if they refused to enter or to remain in the Catholic Church, unless they were unaware that her foundation by God through Jesus Christ made it a necessity.

Full incorporation in the society of the Church belongs to those who are in possession of the Holy Spirit, accept its order in its entirety with all its established means of salvation, and are united to Christ, who rules it by the agency of the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops, within its visible framework. The bonds of their union are the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government and fellowship. Despite incorporation in the Church, that man is not saved who fails to persevere in charity, and remains in the bosom of the Church "with his body" but not "with his heart." All the Church's children

must be sure to ascribe their distinguished rank to Christ's special grace and not to their own deserts. If they fail to correspond with that grace in thought, word and deed, so far from being saved, their judgment will be the more severe. - Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium* II, 14.



In your own words, how would you interpret the last 3 sentences of Lumen Gentium about incorporation into the Church, Charity, and actions?

Before Sunday – Read – See Scriptural Evidence of the Sacraments (end of document)



📖 John 3: 5

📖 Mark 16: 16

📖 Matt 9: 2-8

📖 Gen 2: 24

📖 Eph 5: 23 – 33

📖 James 5: 14-15

📖 Acts 1: 7 – 8

📖 Hebrews 5: 1 - 10

📖 Eph 4: 10 - 16



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Psalm 23 -The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff - they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

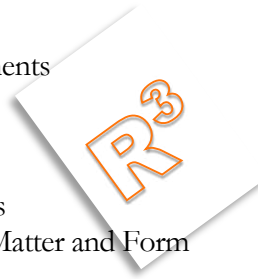


In Class Overview: Session Eight

10:45 – Session Begins with Prayer

10:50 – Discussion: Intro to the Sacraments

1. What is a Sacrament?
2. Seven Sacraments
3. Three Categories of Sacraments
4. Seven Sacraments in terms of Matter and Form
5. Reception of the Sacraments



11:15 – Small group discussion

11:50 - Dismissal

Small Group Discussion

1. What is your Confirmation Saint name?
2. In what ways can we work to make our homes more like a “domestic church”, the place where the seeds of faith, given at Baptism have a good opportunity to grow?
3. The lines are long for communion and short for confession. Why do you think this is so?
4. What do you think are the greatest struggles facing the marriages you see today? How might this be best resolved?
5. How might we better support and encourage vocations to Holy Orders?
6. What is the connection between Chapter 6 of WIN IT ALL and the Sacraments?



An Overview of the Seven Sacraments

	A Sacrament is	An Outward Sign	Instituted by Christ	To Give Grace
The Initiation Sacraments	BAPTISM	Water	John 3:5 Mt. 28:19	New Life Incorporation
	EUCCHARIST	Bread and Wine	Luke 22:19 I Cor. 11:17-34	Union Communion
	CONFIRMATION	Oil and Laying on of Hands	John 16:7 Acts 1:8 Acts 19:6 1 Cor. 2:4-11	Recognizing Gifts of Strength and Mission
The Healing Sacraments	RECONCILIATION	Voice Confessing Sins (Compunction) of the heart	Luke 15 John 20:21-23	Forgiveness Restoration
	ANNOINTING OF THE SICK	Oil and Laying on of Hands	Mark 1:32-34 Mark 6:13 James 5:13	Physical & Emotional Health Strength
The Vocation Sacraments	MARRIAGE	Vows and Rings	Mark 10 Eph. 5:21-33	Fidelity Witness
	HOLY ORDERS	Vows and Imposition of Hands	2 Tim. 1:6-11 Titus 1:5-9	Fidelity Service



POWER: INVITATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture evidence of the Sacraments (very minimal list):

John 3:5 – “Truly I say to you unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

Mark 16:6 – “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

Matt 9: 2 – 8: Healing of the paralytic begins with the forgiveness of sins. Jesus knowing their thoughts...

Gen 2: 24 – Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Eph 5:21 – 33: A man will love his wife like Christ loved the Church – mutual subordination.

James 5: 14 – 15: Is any among you sick? The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

Acts 1:8 – “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samar’ia and to the end of this earth.”

Hebrews 5: 1 – 10 – The Priesthood

Eph 4: 10 – 16: Unity of the body of Christ



POWER: INVITATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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