

The Seven Sacraments

Adam and Eve lost the gift of grace for all mankind by their disobedience to God's commands so, God sent his only Son to bring grace back to the world by dying on the Cross as a sacrifice for our sins.

Jesus gave us The Seven Sacraments which are a means to receive the grace of God.

What is a Sacrament?

The Seven Sacraments are visible signs, or ceremonies, that were instituted (given) by Christ to give us grace. They are sacred ceremonies in which we are truly called by Jesus, to accept his love and forgiveness, to grow in our relationship with him and with the whole Church, with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Signs of the Sacraments - Each of the sacraments has special words or actions that bear a message for us. For example, the sign of Baptism tells us that someone is being freed from original sin and being made a child of God. The sign of the Holy Eucharist tells us that bread and wine are being changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus. Once we learn what the signs are, it is quite easy to remember what each of the sacraments does for our souls.

Unlike ordinary human signs, the sacraments received power from Jesus to do what they tell us. The sacraments are **mysteries of faith**, like the Blessed Trinity or the Incarnation. We accept and firmly believe in them because God has revealed them to us. One of the most ancient titles for the sacraments (still used in the prayers at Mass) is sacred mysteries.

The sacraments received power from Jesus to do what they tell us. For example, when the priest says, "This is my Body. . . This is the cup of my Blood. . ." over the bread and wine at Mass, they really do become the Body and Blood of the Lord, ***because Jesus gave him the power to do this.***

Below is the matter and form of the sacraments.

BAPTISM: The pouring of water while saying: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

PENANCE (RECONCILIATION): The verbal confession of sins to a priest, after which he says: "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

HOLY EUCHARIST: The gifts of bread and wine over which the priest says: "This is my Body. . . This is the cup of my Blood. . ."

CONFIRMATION: The bishop's imposing his hand on the person and anointing him with chrism (blessed oil) while these words are said: "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

HOLY ORDERS: The bishop's laying on of hands followed by his saying: "We ask you, all-powerful Father, give these servants of yours the dignity of the presbyterate. Renew the Spirit of holiness within them. By your divine gift may they attain the second order in the hierarchy and exemplify right conduct in their lives."

MATRIMONY: The exchange of wedding vows between a Christian man and a Christian woman.

ANOINTING: Anointing with oil of the sick while saying: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen. May the Lord, who frees you from sin, save you and raise you up. Amen"

The Gift of Sacramental Grace

Besides giving us sanctifying grace the sacraments give us a special grace for our journey to Heaven called **sacramental grace**.

BAPTISM: Gives us the grace to live a holy life.

PENANCE (RECONCILIATION): Gives us the grace to overcome our sinful desires and actions

HOLY EUCHARIST: Gives us the grace to love Jesus with all our hearts and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

CONFIRMATION: Gives us the grace to be strong in faith and loyal to Jesus as we journey to Heaven.

HOLY ORDERS: Gives priests the grace to live good lives dedicated to preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments.

MATRIMONY: Gives a husband and a wife the grace of loving each other until death and of being good parents.

ANOINTING: Gives us the grace to accept our sicknesses, and to die a good death.

Words to know: sacrament; sacred mysteries; sign; sacramental grace

Meaning – presbyterate

1. (in the early Christian church) an office bearer who exercised teaching, priestly, and administrative functions.
2. (in hierarchical churches) a priest.
3. an elder in a Presbyterian church.