

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish
13 North St., Geneseo, NY



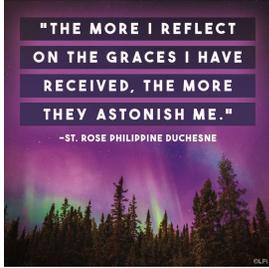
Sacraments: Channels of God's Grace - Introduction

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Sacraments: Channels of God's Grace Introduction

Opening Prayer



Lord, we come in faith, seeking understanding...



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What is a Sacrament?



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What is a Sacrament?

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1131

“The Sacraments are **efficacious signs** of grace, **instituted by Christ** and **entrusted to the Church**, by which divine life is **dispensed** to us.”



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What is a Sacrament? (cont'd)

Baltimore Catechism

"A sacrament is an **outward sign instituted** by Christ to give **grace.**"



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What is a Sacrament? (cont'd)



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What is a Sacrament? (cont'd)

A Sacrament is a **gift** because it is an **encounter** with Christ. In the Sacraments, we receive **Grace.**



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What is a Sacrament? (cont'd)

CCC 1116 "Sacraments are "powers that come forth" from the Body of Christ, which is ever-living and life-giving. They are **actions of the Holy Spirit** at work in his Body, the Church. They are "the masterworks of God" in the new and everlasting covenant."

Luke 5:17
"and the power of the Lord was with him for healing."

Luke 6:19
"Everyone in the crowd sought to **touch** him because power came forth from him and healed them all."



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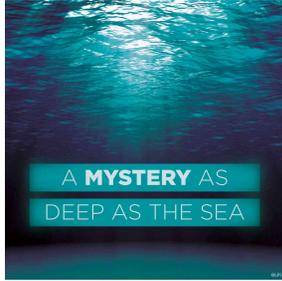
What is a Sacrament? (cont'd)

Jesus very last words in Matthew's Gospel (28:20b)

"And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."



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What is a Sacrament? (cont'd)

Sacraments involve mystery



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What does "mystery" mean to you?



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Sacraments as Mystery

"The word *sacrament* also has its origins in the Greek term for "mystery," *mysterion*. The sense of the term *mystery* is something unfathomable, something so extraordinary and overwhelming that we can never fully comprehend it. Sacraments are often called "sacred mysteries," not in the sense of problems to be solved, but rather in terms of sacred realities to be immersed in and to be experienced again and again." (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 11)



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Sacraments as Mystery (cont'd)

"The celebration of the sacraments contains the church's agreed-upon and time-tested signs, symbols, gestures, words, and the context in which these are enacted, all of which comprise what sacraments are and do. **Words will always fail to describe adequately and fully** what sacraments are and do." (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 2)



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Sacraments as Mystery (cont'd)

Sacraments involve mystery yet can be most meaningful when we **appreciate/understand** what is happening. Yet, there comes a point when we must let the mystery take over. (example – adoration, real presence)

Jesus' exact words seven times
"Your faith has saved you."



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Sacraments as Mystery (cont'd)

From the Age of Enlightenment,

"The result of these ideas was a loss of the sense of the transcendent that has profoundly affected Western Culture ever since. People in earlier times had an understanding of the world as pervaded by mystery, filled with the presence and activity of God. Now the world is regarded as a product of the laws of physics, evolution, and pure chance." (Healy, *Healing*, 74-75)

- Science - Polkinghorne



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A sign of the importance of the Sacraments is seen in the way families gather together for the Baptism of a child and for weddings (Matrimony)





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How many Sacraments are there?



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How Many Sacraments are There?

“it is important to note that for St. Augustine, and for many other authors in this period, the number of things and sacred realities called “sacraments” were in the **hundreds**-for example, the imposition of hands, ordination, religious profession, the Lord's Prayer, feasts, and the word Amen.” (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 53)



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How Many Sacraments are There? (cont'd)

“It was only with Peter Lombard in the **twelfth century** that the Western church decided on the number seven for the sacraments, which was **declared as doctrinally binding at the Council of Trent.**” (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 209)



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So Why Seven?

“This designation of seven sacraments confirms what others had pointed to: **that seven was a significant number for completion, totality, and inclusiveness** (for example, the seven days of creation in Genesis). Seven is appropriate for the number of sacraments because it is the sum of three, for the three persons in one God, and four, a reference to cosmic perfection (the four directions of north, south, east, and west or of the seasons summer, fall, winter, and spring). Adding three for the divine and four for the earthly yields seven, to mean totality, completion, or perfection.” (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 81)



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Can you name all seven sacraments?



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The Seven Sacraments

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Eucharist
4. Reconciliation
5. Anointing of the Sick
6. Matrimony
7. Holy Orders



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Sacramentals

- CCC 1667 “Holy Mother Church has, moreover, instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy.”
- CCC 1670 “Sacramentals do **not** confer the grace of the Holy Spirit 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.”



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Examples of Sacramentals

- Rosary
- Chaplets
- Scapulars
- Crucifix
- Holy Water
- Medals





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Why Do We Use "Things" in the Sacraments?



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The Use of Things - Sacramentality

- "Sacramentality is a worldview, a way of looking at life, a way of thinking and acting in the world that values and reveres the world." (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 210)
- "Sacramentality is based on the belief in the goodness of creation and engagement of humans in the act of honoring God...value of human labor...While on the one hand the act of liturgy takes us out of the everyday world in order to worship God in a ritualized way, on the other hand in the act of worshipping God, we use the things of this world, either directly from creation or from "the work of human hands"" (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 210)



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The Use of Things – Sacramentality cont'd

Laudato Si On Care For Our Common Home

"235. The Sacraments are a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of **mediating** supernatural life. Through our worship of God, we are invited to embrace the world on a different plane."

CCC 1147 "God speaks to man through the visible creation."



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The Use of Things – Sacramentality cont'd

- St. Augustine says sacraments are "visible signs of invisible grace"
- Baltimore Catechism "A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace."
 - "outward sign" = visible
 - "grace" = invisible



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Sacraments are part of what distinguishes us as Catholics from many Protestants

- Protestant denominations can have between one and seven sacraments, if they use the term at all. All have "Baptism".
- Most important is having a relationship with Jesus. Sacraments are an important **tangible expression** of our faith.



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Why Did Christ Institute the Sacraments?

CCC 1123 "The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ and, finally, to give worship to God. Because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it. That is why they are called 'sacraments of faith.'"

(original quote from Vatican II document *Sacrosanctum Concilium*)



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Sacraments Instituted by Christ (cont'd)

CCC 1114 "Adhering to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, to the apostolic traditions, and to the consensus...of the Father," we profess that "the sacraments of the new law were...all instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord."

(original quote from Council of Trent (1547): DS 1600-1601.)



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Sacraments Instituted by Christ (cont'd)

- Remember the *Catechism* definition of sacraments described them as "entrusted to the church"
- CCC 1117 "Thus **the Church has discerned over the centuries** that among liturgical celebrations there are seven that are, in the strict sense of the term, sacraments instituted by the Lord."



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Sacraments Instituted by Christ (cont'd)

"The Church is the **custodian** of the sevenfold sacramental system, but the power of the sacraments is the result of Christ's instituting authority. As such, the sacraments are not static institutions; they are dynamic encounters with the risen Christ." (Nutt, *General Principles of Sacramental Theology*, 183)



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Vatican II on how far changes in the Sacraments can go

"Finally, there must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them, and care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 23)



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Who Effects the Sacraments?

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1128

"This is the meaning of the Church's affirmation that the sacraments act *ex opera operato* (literally: "by the very fact of the action's being performed"), i.e. by virtue of the saving work of Christ, accomplished once for all. It follows that "the sacrament is not wrought by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the recipient, but by the power of God..."



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Who Effects the Sacraments? (cont'd)

CCC 1128 cont'd – "Nevertheless, the fruits of the sacraments also depend on the disposition of the one who receives them."

- Being in a state of grace
- Being open to the grace
 - Someone can give us a birthday/Christmas gift without us really **receiving** it.



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Individual's role in the sacrament

"In adults, there can never be a validly received sacrament without a willingness to encounter God (at least a "habitual" intention) and, in all sacraments other than baptism, the previous reception of this initial sacrament." (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 104)



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Fruitful reception of sacraments

- Obstacle of sin
 - ‘ ‘Your sins are forgiven” was surely not what anyone was expecting to hear. But the paralyzed man probably knew exactly why Jesus said it. Jesus was not necessarily implying that sin had *caused* his paralysis. Rather, there was sin in his life, either past or present, that was blocking the healing work of God.” (Healy, *Healing*, 99)
- Obstacle of not believing in the sacrament or it being efficacious



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Active participation

"The twentieth-century liturgical movement was undoubtedly the main stimulus within the church for the contemporary renewal of the sacramental practice and a revised understanding of the dynamism of the sacramental action. The work of liturgical scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was responsible for a reawakening of the importance and centrality of liturgy as public worship that, by its nature, required the active participation of all participants." (Irwin, *The Sacraments*, 130, italics my emphasis).



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Items we will consider in future presentations

- The scriptural roots of the Sacraments in the New Testament as well as Old Testament passages prefiguring the sacraments
 - reformation insisted on scriptural evidence for it to be instituted by Christ
- Every sacrament has its own liturgy, called a rite
 - This is ***not a how-to*** on the sacraments. This is about APPRECIATION of the sacraments
- Patron saints of the sacraments



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Funerals

- Funeral not a sacrament but a powerful moment involving the Sacrament of Eucharist
- The Sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and Reconciliation may be received shortly before death (when to call)




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Funerals cont'd

- CCC 1680 "All the sacraments, and principally those of Christian initiation, have as their goal the last Passover of the child of God which, through death, leads him into the life of the Kingdom. Then what he confessed in faith and hope will be fulfilled: "I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.""
- CCC 1682 "For the Christian the day of death inaugurates, *at the end of his sacramental life*, the fulfillment of his new birth begun at Baptism."



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Funerals cont'd

- CCC 1683 "She offers to the Father, in Christ, the child of his grace, and she commits to the earth, in hope, the seed of body that will rise in glory. This offering is fully celebrated in the Eucharistic sacrifice; the blessings before and after Mass are sacramentals."
- CCC 1684 "The Christian funeral is a liturgical celebration of the Church. The ministry of the Church in this instance aims at expressing efficacious communion with *the deceased*, at the participation in that communion of *the community* gathered for the funeral, and at the proclamation of eternal life to the community.



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"Homework"

- Do you know the dates when you received your Sacraments?
 - Baptism
 - First Penance
 - First Eucharist
 - Confirmation
 - Marriage
 - *Anointing of the Sick*
 - *Holy Orders*
- How did you feel receiving these sacraments?



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Future Schedule

- Series on the Sacraments (Parish Center in Geneseo)
 - Second session on Wednesday, February 5th at 6:30 pm will begin to cover the Sacraments of Initiation
 - Third session on Wednesday, March 4th at 6:30 pm will continue on the Eucharist



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See the treasure given to us in the Sacraments



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Resources

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. USCCB, 2006.

Healy, Mary, *Healing: Bringing the Gift of God's Mercy to the World.* Our Sunday Visitor: Huntington, IN. 2015.



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Resources (cont'd)

Irwin, Rev. Kevin W., *The Sacraments: Historical Foundations and Liturgical Theology.* Paulist Press, New York. 2016.

Nutt, Roger W., *General Principles of Sacramental Theology.* The Catholic University of America Press: Washington, DC. 2017.

St. Joseph Edition of The New American Bible Revised Edition. New Jersey, Catholic Book Publishing Corp. 2010.

USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults.* Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006.