

## Faith in Five – Adults The Sacraments



1. For Catholics, the purpose of sacraments is to make us holy; to acknowledge, praise and worship God, and to help build up the Body of Christ, the Church (CCC, 1123). Sacraments help us grow in faith, by nourishing and strengthening us through life. The Baltimore Catechism states that “a **sacrament** is an outward sign, instituted by Christ to give grace”. St. Augustine of Hippo says that a sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible reality.
2. **Sacramentals** are officially defined as *lesser sacraments*, holy objects or acts blessed by the Church. Sacramentals cause grace through the devotion of those using or receiving the sacramental. While proper sacramentals are officially defined by the Roman Curia (CCC 1677), by extension of the principle, any object or act that reminds one of God can, in effect, be a sacramental (CCC 1674-1676).
3. **The Basic Sacraments** have been recognized by many theologians since the Second Vatican Council which took place from 1962 to 1965.
  - a. **Jesus – The Primordial Sacrament.** Jesus is the Great Sacrament of God. “He is the image of the invisible God”; [He] has now reconciled in his fleshly body through his death to present you holy...before him” (Colossians 1:15, 22)
  - b. **The Church – The Basic Sacrament.** The Church as Sacrament of Christ The Church is the Body of Christ (Romans 12:4,5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Colossians 1:24), a continuation of the sacramental nature of Jesus. We experience the sacramentality of Jesus through the Church. The Church conveys Scripture and Tradition, including the Tridentine sacraments to each generation. “By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind”.  
*Lumen gentium, #1, Vatican II*
- Without these basic sacraments, the seven sacraments would only be sacramentals. Without Jesus and the Church giving them meaning, they would only be reminders of God at best.

The entire liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the Sacraments (CCC 1113). The Sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ and were entrusted to the Church. Therefore, they are efficacious signs of grace and through them, the divine life is dispensed to us (CCC 1131). **They are the divinity of God in us.**
4. While it is Christ who acts through various Sacraments showering his grace in various stages and occasions of our life, the Sacraments are not effective unless the one who receives them does so with due faith. If the recipient has no faith in the power of God, then the Sacraments become ineffective (CCC 1128). The sacraments must be received with true faith and devotion in order to be filled with the saving grace and love of Jesus Christ.

5. **The Seven Sacraments, also known as the Tridentine sacraments**, were officially defined at the council of Trent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The seven sacraments cause grace through the rites themselves. It always involves community and action. Each of the sacraments are supported by the Word of God proclaimed. Protestants acknowledge only two sacraments: Baptism and Eucharist.

\*\* Detailed discussion on each sacrament may be found in previous posts on **A Catholic Mom's Life, Faith in Five for Adults**. A link to each is provided below.

#### **Sacraments of Initiation**

**These are the most important events in a Catholic's spiritual life and are necessary to be a full member of the Church**

- a. **Baptism** – cleanses a person of original sin, first step in entry into the church. Gives rise to the other sacraments and brings us to relationship with God. Baptism symbolizes burial into Christ's death and rise to life in Christ. It is the most beautiful and magnificent gift and grace from God. Parents choose a sponsor for this rite. ([Faith in 5 posting](#))
- b. **Confirmation** – given during baptism; strengthens baptism. This sacrament was moved to around same time as holy communion. It is a formal declaration of belief in God. It is given at the age of reason – at age 7, more likely in the West received around age 13. A saint name may be chosen. As with baptism, a sponsor is chosen. ([Faith in 5 posting](#))
- c. **Eucharist** – consecrated bread and wine becomes the Real Presence of Jesus. Given at age of reason, age 7 or 8. We are strengthened through the reception of Jesus through the Holy Eucharist at Mass. Those not in a state of grace are asked not to receive. ([Faith in 5 posting](#))

#### **Sacraments of Healing**

- d. **Reconciliation** (confession/penance). Christ works through the priest. This is an opportunity for renewal, self-reflection and taking responsibility for sin. Baptized Christians may receive reconciliation as needed but at least once a year and if in a state of mortal sin. ([Faith in 5 posting](#))
- e. **Anointing of the sick** - given when there is danger of death. The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick may be received more than once but should not be received frequently. It is reserved for the sick, injured, dying and those risking death. We unite our suffering with His suffering. Extreme unction/Last rites gives strength and comfort to the ill and dying at death. ([Faith in 5 posting](#))

## Sacraments of Vocation/Service

- f. **Matrimony** – man and woman serve each other, God, and the Church. The couple marries themselves, with the priest, deacon or bishop officiating not as a sacramental minister but as an official witness. They are witness to the couple’s act of consent and covenant. It is a formal union blessed by the Church. ([Faith in 5 posting](#))
  
  - g. **Holy orders** – ordination. This sacrament exists in three forms and may only be received sequentially: diaconate (deacon), presbyterate (priest) and episcopate (bishop). Transitional deacons intend to become priests, while permanent deacons do not. Permanent deacons may take their vows while married and be married deacons, but may not marry after holy orders. In the West, they are celibate, and cannot marry. ([Faith in 5 posting](#), also [this posting](#))
6. The Catechism of the Catholic Church 1116 reveals to us that “[s]acraments are “powers that comes 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”. Praise God for these gifts!

### **-For further study**

[The Amazing Effects of Grace of the Seven Sacraments](#) ([www.catholiclink.org](http://www.catholiclink.org))

[The Seven Sacraments, Section Two, Catechism of the Catholic Church](#): 1210 - 1666

**Grace is nothing else but a certain beginning of glory in us. -- St. Thomas Aquinas**

This is a free resource! For more information, visit [www.acatholicmomslife.org](http://www.acatholicmomslife.org)

