

Topic: Sacraments of Initiation

IHM

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and
the Holy Spirit, Amen.

The Father's voice calls us above the waters,
the glory of the Son shines on us,
the love of the Spirit fills us with life.
Amen.

Sacraments

- “Visible signs of invisible grace.”—St. Augustine
 - “Grace” isn’t a thing, but a person—always an encounter with God.
- Incarnational in nature (based on Jesus—God who comes to us in our material existence).
- The Church celebrates 7 in number, though recognizes many other “sacramentals.”



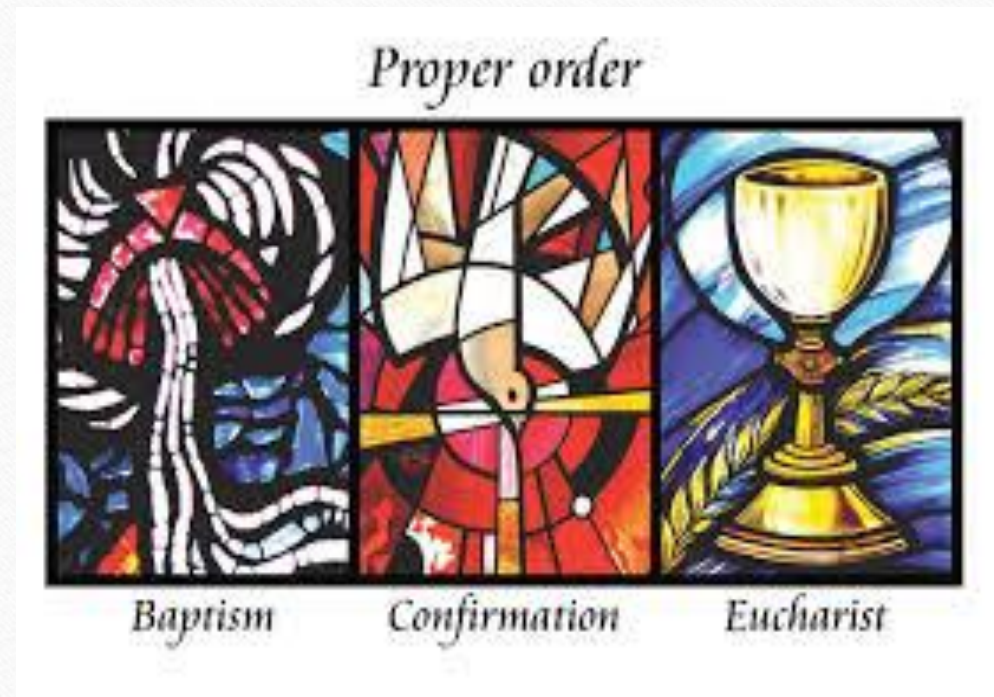
The 7 Sacraments



- Sacraments of initiation
 - Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist
- Sacraments of healing
 - Penance, Anointing of the Sick
- Sacraments of vocation
 - Holy Orders, Marriage

Sacraments of Initiation

- Baptism, Confirmation (anointing), and Eucharist (original order)
- Sacraments of invitation to conversion (metanoia, or turning around); turning from sin, to God
- Baptism & Confirmation—one-time, permanent changes, marking us as God's children.
- Eucharist—the ongoing, repeatable sacrament of initiation and conversion.



Sacrament of Baptism

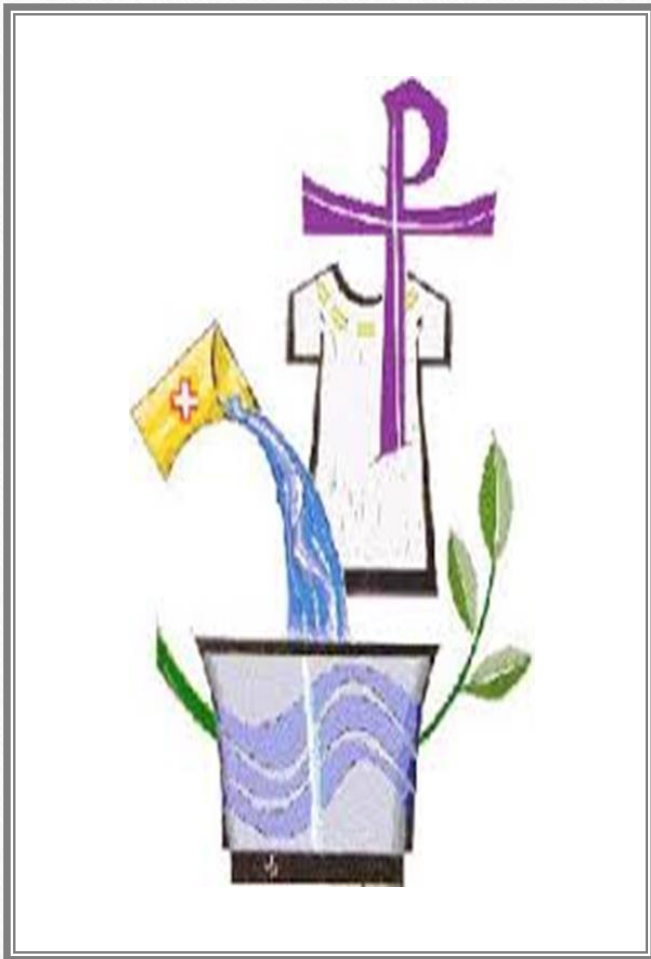


- Through Baptism we accept and access God's grace, cleansing us of "original sin" and allowing us to more freely choose God. (The Sacraments continue to offer grace to help us along this journey.)
- Through Baptism, we are granted "sanctifying grace," a supernatural gift of God by which our sins are forgiven, we are made holy, and our friendship with God is restored.
- Grace is always a free gift of God (undeserved/not earned) and is what allows us to respond to God's love

Scriptural Views of Baptism

- Through Baptism, we are all now brothers and sisters in Christ (complete equality & kinship). (St. Paul)
- Baptism transforms us into a “new creature,” (restoring us to our nature before the fall). (St. Paul)
- Baptism transforms us from a “slave to sin” into a “co-heir with Christ,” and “temple of the Holy Spirit.” (St. Paul)





Liturgical Signs & Symbols of Baptism

- Water: Immersion in water as “dying with Christ,” then rising to “new life in the Spirit;” also a “washing” away of sin and “cleansing” with grace; a “rebirth.”
- Oil: Anointing with Sacred Chrism (perfumed oil) symbolizes being anointed/missioned as a “priest, prophet & king” for Christ & his Kingdom.
- Light: Lighting the baptismal candle from the Paschal (Easter) candle symbolizes that, like Christ, we are to be a “light to the world.”
- White Garment: Symbolizes putting on a new identity as a Christian, clothed in Christ & purified from sin.

Sacrament of Confirmation

- “Washing up” (Baptism) & “Drying up” (Confirmation)=both go hand in hand.
- Sealed and gifted with God’s Spirit, like at the Feast of Pentecost.
- Like at Jesus’ Baptism—Spirit descends, affirms us as God’s beloved, and sends us on mission!



7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit



- Comes from the Prophet Isaiah—these would be the characteristics of God’s Messiah.
- Ultimately, we believe Jesus to be the Christ (Messiah), and through our Baptism and Confirmation, we are anointed with these “gifts” to be God’s presence in our world!
- Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgment, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence, Wonder & Awe.

Sacrament of the Eucharist

- Eucharist means “thanksgiving.”
- Every Eucharist is our thanksgiving to God for all of these gifts (including the gifts of our lives and salvation)!
- Every Eucharist is a reminder that we are God’s beloved, that we are called, forgiven, and sent!



Effects of the Eucharist



- Not just bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, but our lives are placed on the altar and transformed as well!
- “Be what you see; and receive what you are!”—St. Augustine
- Every Eucharist, we receive Christ again, not only into our mouths, but our hearts and whole beings! For Catholics, accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior is not just a one-time event (like Baptism & Confirmation), but a life-long process of conversion; a continual “yes,” or “Amen!” to receiving Jesus at every Mass.

Discussion Questions

- Please share:

- What questions did this topic and readings raise in your heart or mind?
- If sacraments are tangible encounters of God's grace and love, what are some sacramental encounters you have already experienced in your life?
- What are you hoping to experience in receiving the sacraments of initiation this Easter?
- What does Baptism mean to you? Confirmation? Eucharist?

Closing Prayer: (Adapted from the Rite of Baptism)

By God's gift,
through water and the Holy Spirit,
we are reborn to everlasting life.

In his goodness,
may he continue to pour out his blessings
upon us as sons and daughters of his.

May he make us always,
wherever we may be,
faithful members of his holy people.

May he send his peace upon all who are
gathered here,
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.