

The Seven Sacraments: Catholic News Agency

"The [seven] sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions."^[17]

Baptism^[18]

By which we are born into the new life in Christ

The fruits of this sacrament are:

- Remission of original sin.
- Birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.
- Incorporation into the Church, the body of Christ, and participation in the priesthood of Christ.
- The imprinting, on the soul, of an indelible spiritual sign, the character, which consecrates the baptized person for Christian worship. Because of this character, Baptism cannot be repeated.

Confirmation^[19]

By which we are more perfectly bound to the Church and enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit

The fruits of this sacrament are:

- An increase and deepening of baptismal grace.
- A deepening of one's roots in the divine filiation, which makes one cry, "Abba, Father!"
- A firming of one's unity with Christ.
- An increase of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- A strengthening of one's bond with the Church and closer association with her mission.
- Special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as a true witnesses of Christ, to

confess the name of Christ boldly, and to never be ashamed of the cross.

- The imprinting, as in Baptism, of a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian's soul. Because of this character, one can receive this sacrament only once in one's life.

The Holy Eucharist^[20]

By which Christ associates his Church and all her members with the sacrifice of the cross

The fruits of this sacrament are:

- An increase in the communicant's union with Christ.
- Forgiveness of venial sins.
- Preservation from grave sins.
- A strengthening of the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ.
- A strengthening of the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

Reconciliation or Penance^[21]

By which sins after Baptism are forgiven

The fruits of this sacrament are:

- Reconciliation with God: the penitent recovers sanctifying grace.
- Reconciliation with the Church.
- Remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins.
- Remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin.
- Peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation.
- An increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.

Anointing of the Sick^[22]

By which a special grace is conferred during grave illness or old age

The fruits of this sacrament are:

- Unity with the passion of Christ, for the sick person's own good and that of the whole Church.
- Strength, peace, and courage to endure as a Christian the sufferings of illness or old age.
- Forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance.
- Restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of the soul.
- Preparation for entering eternal life.

Holy Orders^[23]

By which the task of serving in the name and in the person of Christ is conferred

The fruits of this sacrament are:

- The mission and faculty ("the sacred power") to act in persona Christi.
- Configuration to Christ as Priest, Teacher, and Pastor.
- The imprinting, as in Baptism, of an indelible character that cannot be repeated or conferred temporarily.

Matrimony^[24]

By which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love

The fruits of this sacrament for the spouses are:

- The grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church.
- A perfecting of their human love.
- A strengthening of their indissoluble unity.
- Sanctification on their way to heaven.
- The grace to "help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children."

- An integration into God's covenant with man: Authentic married love is caught up into divine love.

Source: From the Handbook of Prayers, edited by Fr. Jim Socias. Printed with permission from eCatholicHub.

[17] CCC, 1131.

[18] Cf. CCC, 1277-1279.

[19] Cf. CCC, 1303-1316.

[20] Cf. CCC, 1407, 1413, 1416. The holy Eucharist is really, truly, and substantially the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine. The holy Eucharist is not only a sacrament; it is also a sacrifice—the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

[21] Cf. CCC, 1486, 1497. Individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church.

[22] Cf. CCC, 1527, 1532.

[23] Cf. CCC, 1536, 1591, 1598. It is bishops who confer the sacrament of Holy Orders in the three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate. In the Latin Church, the sacrament of Holy Orders for the presbyterate is normally conferred on only those candidates who are ready to embrace celibacy freely and who publicly manifest their intention of staying celibate for the love of God's kingdom and the service of others.

[24] Cf. CCC, 1638, 1639, 1641, 1660, 1664. The marriage bond has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved.

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