

The Four Effects of the Sacraments

1. Faith is both expressed and strengthened.
2. Worship is rendered to God.
3. The sanctification of mankind is effected.
4. The unity of church members is both strengthened and manifested to the world.

The Constituents of a Sacrament

Form: The words or “formula” of the sacrament which are spoken and accompany the matter. They “inform” or give meaning to the matter.

Matter: That part of a sacrament which is used to perform the sacramental rite. It includes both the material elements as well as the accompanying gestures.

Subject: The individual who receives the sacrament.

Minister: The individual who administers the sacrament. Three sacraments have “extraordinary” as an “ordinary” minister: Baptism, Confirmation, and (distribution of) the Eucharist.

The Three Levels of Action of a Sacrament

Sign only (*Sacramentum tantum*). The visible rite which is performed and consists of the form and matter.

Reality and Sign (*Res et sacramentum*). The halfway step between the sign and the underlying grace of the sacrament. After receiving the sign, it is the “pathway” through which one receives the grace of the sacrament (assuming that one is disposed to receive it). For three of the sacraments, this is referred to as the “character.”

Reality only (*Res tantum*). The ultimate effect on the soul: sanctification. It is the ultimate reality that was initially signified. Two kinds of grace are given: Sanctifying grace, or the life of God, which makes us holy; and Sacramental grace, which is specifically intended to help the individual accomplish whatever the sacrament is ordered to achieve.

The liturgical assembly, inasmuch as it is church, is for everyone the chief concrete mediation of her of his relationship with the living God revealed in Jesus. The temptation to succumb to the desire for an immediate relation with Christ or a direct illumination from the Holy Spirit is strong. The Christian faith tells us, on the basis of the incarnation of God in Jesus, that the encounter with God goes through the encounter with others. The church, and first as a local assembly, is the concrete expression of this principle. True, to attend Mass on television is a good thing when one cannot do otherwise. However, even if “it’s so much better on TV than at the parish” (no noisy children, no neighbors singing out of tune, no incompetent organist, no homily that seems vacuous or poorly prepared, and so on), the church asks Christians to go to the assembly. For Mass is not meant to favor an intimate relation to God – in that case it might be better to follow Mass on television. It is a church action. It is lived as a church, a church made up of different men, women, and children who are sinners but who dare to acknowledge themselves as the “holy church” of God; a church made up of different members, often divided among themselves but, however, given to the world as “body of Christ”; a church made up of persons reluctant to commit themselves to conversion or mission but which dares to recognize itself in faith as the “temple of the Holy Spirit,” the Spirit that renews all things. “It is great, the mystery of faith!” Before it applies to the Eucharist, this expression applies to the concrete assembly as church. Here there is both mystery and scandal. This is what is not self-explanatory, and for the believing intelligence the scandal of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist risks serving as a mock scandal (that is, merely intellectual) if one ignores this primary scandal, and existential one: the encounter of the living Christ which is possible only through the mediation of a church, indeed holy but composed of sinners, indeed body of Christ but made up of divided members, indeed temple of the Holy Spirit but so parsimoniously missionary. The concrete assembly of every single Sunday confronts Christians with the harsh reality of this mediation that everyone seeks to forget.

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The sacraments serve as a buffer which repels every temptation Christians might have to ignore body, history, society in order to enter without any mediation into communication with God. The sacraments speak in their way, which is a symbolic way, therefore a way that needs only discreet, even banal gestures in order to express realities as full of significance as peace with others or the reception of the pure gift of God in communion, as “just as you did it to one of the least of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). The sacraments state that the word of God wants to enter our bodies, that is, our lives, and that for anyone in-dwelt by the Spirit the road of the God of Jesus Christ necessarily uses the human road.

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Sacrament	Biblical Basis	Form	Matter	Subject	Minister
Baptism	<p>Matt 28:19 - Jesus commissions the apostles: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit";</p> <p>John 3:22; 4:1-2 - Jesus' first disciples baptize other disciples;</p> <p>Acts 2:38-41; 10:47-48 - new believers are baptized "in the name of Jesus" by Peter & others; (<i>not just</i> Jesus' own baptism: Mark 1:9-11 & par.)</p>	<p>"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (the "<i>Trinitarian Formula</i>," from Matt 28:19).</p> <p>Note: Some Protestants baptize "in the name of Jesus"; see Acts 2 & 10.</p>	The candidate is immersed in water, or water is poured over the candidate's head.	Any unbaptized person	Bishops, Priests, Deacons; any Christian (in case of urgent need)
Eucharist	<p>Mark 14:22-25; Matt 26:26-30; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Cor 11:23-25 - Jesus' "Last Supper" with his disciples;</p> <p>John 6: 48-58 "eat my flesh; drink my blood";</p> <p>Luke 24:35; Acts 2:42 - Christians gather for the "Breaking of the Bread"</p>	"This is my body... This is my blood..." (the " <i>Words of Institution</i> " from the Last Supper)	The bread and wine	Any baptized person who has reached the age of reason and is in a state of grace	Bishops or Priests
Confirmation	<p>John 20:22 - "(Jesus) breathed on them (the disciples) and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'";</p> <p>Acts 8:17; 19:6 - believers receive the Spirit, esp. through laying on of the apostle's hands</p> <p>Acts 10:44-48 - the coming of the Spirit is closely associated with the Baptism of new believers</p>	"(Name), be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."	Laying on of hands (the bishop lays his hands on the head of the confirmand).	A baptized person who has not been confirmed	Bishops; in some cases also Priests

Sacrament	Biblical Basis	Form	Matter	Subject	Minister
Penance/ Reconciliation	John 20:23 - "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained"; Matt 16:19; 18:18 - more sayings on "binding and loosing"; James 5:16 - "confess your sins to one another"	"I forgive you of all of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (the " <i>Words of Absolution</i> ")	The penitent confesses his sins, expresses contrition, and proposes amendment; the confessor suggests a penance and speaks the words of absolution.	Any baptized person who has reached the age of reason and has committed an actual sin since baptism	Bishops or Priests
Anointing of the Sick	Mark 6:7-13 - Jesus' disciples "anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them"; James 5:14-16 - "call for the elders of the church and have them pray over (the sick), anointing them with oil in the names of the Lord."	"Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."	The minister anointing the sick persons forehead and hands with blessed oil	A baptized person who is extremely old; a baptized person who has already been anointed but whose condition worsens; anyone who is seriously ill;	Bishops or Priests
Matrimony/ Marriage	Gen 2:24 - "a man leaves his parents and clings to his wife and they become one flesh"; Mark 10:2-12; Matt 19:1-9 - Jesus teaches against divorce; "What God has joined together, let no one separate"; Eph 5:22-33; 1Cor 7:10-16 - Paul stresses the unity of husbands and wives; (<i>not simply</i> Jesus' presence at the wedding at Cana, John 2:1-11)	"I, (name), take you, (name), to be my husband/wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life." (<i>or a similar formula</i>)	The husband and wife make these promises to each other publicly. (Rings are exchanged as a visible sign of this verbal commitment).	The couple themselves	The couple themselves (Clergy are just the official witnesses)
Holy Orders (Ordination of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons)	Mark 3:13-19 & par. - Jesus calls & appoints the 12 apostles; Acts 6:6; 1 Tim 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim 1:6 - "laying on of hands" as the "ordaining" or commissioning rite of local Christian leaders.	A long "Prayer of Consecration"	The bishop lays his hands on the ordinand's head; he also anoints his hands and performs several other symbolic gestures.	A baptized male	Bishops only

Sacrament	Sign only	Reality and Sign	Reality only
Baptism	Words spoken while water is poured	Character that makes the person a member of the Church	Grace of being “born again” Removal of all sins, original and personal Removal of all punishment due to sin Infusion of the theological virtues – faith, hope, and love
Eucharist	The Consecration	The Real Presence	Grace of being spiritually nourished by Christ's body and blood; Grace of being united (in “communion”) with Christ and other believers.
Confirmation	Words spoken together with laying on of hands, anointing with chrism	Character that strengthens a person to be a witness for Christ in word and deed	Sanctifying grace that completes gift of supernatural life first given in baptism Sacramental grace that enables subject to perform the duties of a Christian
Penance/ Reconciliation	<u>Penitent:</u> Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction <u>Priest:</u> The words of absolution	Perfect contrition – Sorrow for sin, not out of fear of punishment, but out of love for God	Forgiveness of sins Strength to resist sins
Anointing of the Sick	Words spoken by the priest and the oil applied	Spiritual healing and strengthening that liberates the person from the effects of sin	Grace to endure illness Grace to avoid the sin of despair
Matrimony/ Marriage	The man and woman both offer and consent to the other's offering	The conjugal bond that unites the man and woman until death	Habitual grace to heal and sins that are obstacle to conjugal bond A right to the actual graces needed to live married life daily A strengthening of infused virtues of faith, hope, and love The grace to live a life of virtue
Holy Orders	Consecratory prayer and laying on of hands by bishop	Character that enables the person to function as deacon, priest, or bishop	The grace to fulfill the duties of the office