

The Seven Catholic Sacraments

What is Sacraments

The Latin word **sacramentum** means "a sign of the sacred." a “covenant “ between Man and God.

The seven sacraments are ceremonies that point to what is sacred, significant and important for Christians. They are special occasions for experiencing God's saving presence.

That's what theologians mean when they say that sacraments are at the same time signs and instruments of God's grace.



1. Baptism

2. Confirmation

3. Eucharist

4. Reconciliation
5. Matrimony/Marriage

6. Holy Orders

7. Anointing of the Sick

Introduction to the Catholic Sacraments:

The Sacraments of Initiation

A. Sacraments of Initiation are the following:

1. Baptism

2. Confirmation

3. Eucharist



They lay the foundations of Christian life. The sharing in the divine nature bears a certain likeness to the natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation; receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life

Definition:

**INITIATION** – to **begin**, to **introduce**, and to **start** as part of the journey or as **entry** into the community. Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist are sacraments of initiation because they bring the Faithful **entry** into the Christian Community and their journey of living the Christian Life **begins**.



1. Baptism

- For Catholics, the Sacrament of Baptism is the first step in a lifelong journey of commitment and discipleship. Whether we are baptized as infants or adults, Baptism is the Church's way of celebrating and enacting the embrace of God. **Baptism** forgives all sins that may have been committed prior to a **baptism** including **original sin and it relieves the punishment for those sins**.

• Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments.

What is this Sacrament Called?

To "**plunge**" or "**immerse**"; the "plunge" into the water symbolizes burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as "a new creature.

This sacrament is also called "the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

The Cross

The cross is a universal symbol of Christianity. Making the sign of the cross over a child during the baptism invokes God's protection and asks for entrance into the body of the Christian church. You will find this symbol in many Christian rituals as well as in Christian churches. The cross is also a symbol of Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus' death was his sacrifice to clear the sins of all mankind. The cross is one of the most familiar of all Christian symbols.

White Clothing

White is the color of purity and wearing a white garment during baptism symbolizes that the person being baptized now has a clean slate in the eyes of God. Christians believe everyone is born with "original sin" which is only washed away through baptism. The white garment symbolizes that the baptized person is now clothed in the mantle of God and will start a clean life in His eyes and in the eyes of the church.

The Oil

Oil is another baptismal symbol of the Holy Spirit. Of course, oil also symbolizes the Holy Spirit during other sacraments and religious gatherings. During a baptism, the baby is anointed with oil, and oil is mentioned several times in the Bible as a symbol of bringing the person and the Holy Spirit together. Holy oils are used during baptism to strengthen the faith of the anointed. They also symbolize the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

## Baptism Water



Water is the Christian symbol of divine life as well as a sign of purity and cleansing from sin. The outward sign of baptism is the actual pouring of the water on the head while reciting the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The cleansing quality of water is considered something that can purify a person from the outside. The holy water signifies that life is given to man by God and is a symbol of His grace. Water also recalls the gospel, John 3: this 1-6, "... unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God..."

## The Baptism Light



Light as a symbol of baptism is represented by the passing of a lighted candle from the celebrant to the godparents. The candle represents moving from death to life in Christ. Light, like water, is essential to the survival of life because, without the light of the sun, nothing would exist on earth. In addition to being a symbol of the genesis and vitality of life, the candle is a symbol of Christ as "the light of the world" and the Christian faith. When this candle is burning, religious faith is present.

## The Dove



In baptism, dove symbolism depicts the Holy Spirit. According to the Bible, when Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened, God spoke and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove. The dove affirmed Jesus as the Chosen One. This miraculous event demonstrates the loving union between the three aspects of the Christian Trinity: God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. The dove symbolizes peace between God and human beings as well. When the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove at Jesus' baptism, this showed that God (through Jesus) would pay the price for the sins of humanity so humanity could ultimately be reconciled.

## The Baptismal Font



The traditional baptismal font holds the water used for the baptism. It symbolizes the baptismal streams, rivers, or pools of water in centuries past, like the River of Jordan where Christ was baptized by John the Baptist. According to a particular denomination's tradition, the child is either immersed or dipped in the water in the font or water from the font is sprinkled or poured over the baby's head. Baptismal fonts are made of stone, metal, wood, or marble and have usually been present in the church for generations.

## Membership into the Church Community

A baptism represents a rebirth and union with Christ and through this, the child gains entrance into the membership of the church. The church community's members represent the holy body of Christ. The congregation gathered bears witness to the child's baptism and welcomes the baptized into Christ's holy church and the company of God.

## The Godparents

The tradition of godparents is to help the parents raise the godchild in the Christian faith. The godparents are chosen by the parents, and their role in a baptism ceremony varies. In some churches, a godparent will hold the baby during the baptismal rite, but in others, godparents stand with the parents to support them and bear witness to the ceremony. For some cultures, godparents hold an honorary title, while in others, godparents take their roles seriously and involve themselves in many aspects of the child's life.

## 2. Confirmation



Confirmation is a Catholic Sacrament of mature Christian commitment and a deepening of baptismal gifts. It is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation for Catholics. It is most often associated with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The imposition of hands is the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost.

Anointing with perfumed oil (chrism) was added to the laying on of hands-to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit. This anointing highlights the name "Christian," which means "anointed" and derives from that of Christ himself whom God "anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Confirmation is called Chrismation, anointing with chrism, or myron.

### Confirmation has 2 purposes:

- 1. Ratification of Baptism-** thus completing Christian initiation,
- 2. Strengthening of baptismal grace** - both fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

By this anointing the confirm and receives the "mark," the seal of the Holy Spirit and share the mission of Christ.

A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object.

The effect of confirmation is the deepening of baptismal grace.

Cross

With the chrism, the bishop or priest makes the sign of the cross on each individual's forehead during confirmation. The bishop says the words, "be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit," reaffirming the catechumen's devotion to the faith. In Orthodox practices, the priest anoints the oil on various parts of the body while saying, "the seal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit." As a Christian symbol of Christ's sacrifice, the anointing of oil reminds the individual of her commitment to living a Christian life and to defending the faith.

Oil/Sacred Chrism

Oil is the essential element of the ritual. It is a distinctive kind of oil — sacred **chrism**, olive oil lightly perfumed with balsam to give it a sweet-smelling aroma. The oil is blessed by the bishop each year at the chrism Mass. It imparts the gift of the Holy Spirit, seals the recipient in God's grace, and gives a new, indelible character. The minister dips his right thumb into a small bowl of sacred chrism, raises his oiled thumb, places it on the forehead of the candidate, and with a stroke down and a stroke across, anoints the forehead in the shape of a cross with the words, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."



The laying of hands

The laying of hands on the head has represented the conferral of the Holy Spirit from the first generation of the Church. The apostles laid hands on Stephen and six others (Acts 6:6), Peter and John laid hands upon believers in Samaria (Acts 8:17), Ananias laid hands on Paul in Damascus (Acts 9:17), Paul laid hands on disciples in Ephesus (Acts 19:6), and all received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The ritual no longer has a laying on of hands upon each individual confirm and, but rather the bishop, along with any concelebrating priests, extends his hands over all those to be confirmed and offers a blessing prayer to bestow the Holy Spirit.

Dove

A dove is a symbol of the sacrament of confirmation because it represents the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove when he was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist (Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22), and the Holy Spirit descends upon each person who is confirmed.

A flame or a tongue of fire

When the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles on Pentecost, "tongues as of fire parted and came to rest upon each of them" (Acts 2:3). Similarly, tongues as of fire come to rest over the head of every confirmand.

Mitre and staff

The mitre is the liturgical headwear worn by a bishop. It is round and tall with a pointed top on the front and back, as well as two tassels on the back called tappets. The staff is also called a pastoral staff, shepherd's staff, crosier or crozier. It is the walking stick used by a shepherd, and the bishop is the chief shepherd of the diocese (see Jn 20:15, 16, 17). The symbols of bishop double as the symbols of confirmation because the bishop is the usual minister.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WISDOM

To value the things of God

UNDERSTANDING

To grasp faith's mysteries

COUNSEL

To make wise decisions

FORTITUDE

To strengthen your will

KNOWLEDGE

To enlighten your mind

PIETY

To love and serve God

FEAR OF THE LORD

To respect God's majesty

### 3. Holy Eucharist



The Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation.  
The Eucharist – Source and Summit of Ecclesial life. Eucharist is a sacrament of initiation that Christians celebrate to commemorate what happened at the last supper. Bread and Wine are consumed, for which symbolizes the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Catholics believe the Eucharist, or Communion, is both a sacrifice and a meal. We believe in the real presence of Jesus, who died for our sins. As we receive Christ's Body and Blood, we also are nourished spiritually and brought closer to God.

Different Names of the Eucharist are **Thanksgiving**, **Memorial**, **Sacrifice**, and **Presence**.

1. **Thanksgiving:** Eucharist is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words eucharistein recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim God's works: creation, redemption, and sanctification.
2. **Sacrifice:** The Eucharist is a sacrifice because it makes present the sacrifice of the cross. The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice.
3. **Presence:** Christ is present Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity in the blessed Eucharist.
4. **The Paschal Banquet:**  
The Lord's Supper; The Breaking of Bread.  
Jesus used this rite, part of a Jewish meal when as master of the table he blessed and distributed the bread. “For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God “(Lk. 22:16).
5. **Holy Mass (Missa)**, the liturgy concludes with the sending forth (missio) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God's will in their daily lives
6. **The Liturgical Celebration of the Eucharist:**

#### Two parts of the Mass:

1. **The liturgy of the Word-** the gathering, the liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily and general intercessions.
2. **The liturgy of the Eucharist:** the presentation of the bread and wine, the consecratory thanksgiving, and communion.

Together they form "one single act of worship"; the Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord  
(The Eucharist).

#### Symbols of the Eucharist

##### Bread



Bread is a symbol of the Eucharist because it represents life. It is also a symbol because the breaking of the bread was performed by Jesus so now we accept the bread as the body of Jesus.

##### Wine



Wine is a symbol of Eucharist because just like the bread it was shared at the passover meal between Jesus and his Disciples. The wine is given to us as the blood of Jesus, wine also symbolizes joy.

##### Cross



The rite is the memorial of the original sacrifice of Christ. It is an effective commemoration of his death that also makes present the sacrifice on the cross

#### Rituals of the Eucharist

- Bringing gifts to the altar** - Bringing gifts to the altar means bringing the bread, wine and water to the altar to be blessed.
- Presenting the bread** - Presenting the bread means when the Priest holds the bread up for all of us to see.
- Breaking the bread** - Breaking the bread means when the bread is broken, for everyone to have.
- Participation** - Participation is when everyone receives the bread and wine.



# What are the items used at Mass?

Practical guide of the objects used at the altar  CatholicLink

## Chalice



A large cup used to hold the wine which becomes the Blood of Christ.

## Purificator



A white cloth that the priest uses to cleanse the chalice.

## Giborium



It is used to hold the Hosts which will be used for communion.

## Corporal



A linen cloth on which the vessels (with bread and wine) are placed.

## Pall



It is a stiff, square, white cover that is placed over the chalice.

## Host and paten



The host is placed in the paten (a saucer-like disk).

## Lavabo and manuterge



They are used by the priest to wash his hands during Mass.

## Cruets



Small vessels that hold the water and wine.

## Roman Missal



It contains the prayers, chants and instructions for the Mass.

## Candles and crucifix



It reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ, Light of the World.