

# Lesson 16

## Sacraments

The sacraments “are instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church by which divine life is dispensed to us: they are signs and means which express and strengthen the faith, render worship to God, and effect the sanctification of humanity” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*). Sacraments are visible (*physical*) signs of an invisible (*spiritual*) reality. They are efficacious signs (*the sign has the power to accomplish what it symbolizes*) instituted (*given to us*) by Christ to give grace (*the gift of God’s goodness and life*). In other words, Jesus touches our lives when we receive the sacraments. Each sacrament is associated with signs: objects, words, and actions. Each sign brings God’s grace and blessings in a special way.

There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders. They are divided into three categories: Sacraments of Initiation, Sacraments of Healing; and Sacraments of Service. The following chart illustrates which sacraments fall into each category:

### Sacraments of Initiation

Baptism  
Eucharist  
Confirmation

### Sacraments of Healing

Reconciliation  
Sacrament of the Sick

### Sacraments of Service

Matrimony  
Holy Orders

The Sacraments of Initiation are those that make us a part of the Catholic Church. In order to be a full member of the Catholic Church, an individual must receive all three of the sacraments of initiation. These sacraments lay the foundation for our Christian life.

The Sacraments of Healing bring healing to the soul. They also may provide physical healing. These two sacraments allow us to experience God’s mercy and forgiveness.

The Sacraments of Service provide direction for our spiritual mission. They also give us the strength needed to serve the people of God.

In order for a sacrament to be valid, it must comprise of both matter and form. Matter (*material or tangible element*) is the substance through which the sacramental act takes place, while form (*formula, words or prayers*) conveys the meaning. These two elements establish the validity – that is, the legal ownership – of a sacrament.

The following chart lists each of the seven sacraments and presents their form and matter:

Baptism	<p><b>Form:</b> "I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."</p> <p><b>Matter:</b> Water (Immersion, Infusion, or Sprinkling)</p>
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Confirmation	<p><b>Form:</b> Bishop or designated Priest: Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit</p> <p><b>Matter:</b> Holy Chrism (Blessed Oil) and the Laying on of hands by the Bishop or a delegated priest</p>
Eucharist	<p><b>Form:</b> Priest: "This My Body which will be given up for you. Do this in memory of Me. . . . Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my Blood, the Blood of the New and Everlasting Covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me."</p> <p><b>Matter:</b> Unleavened Bread and Grape Wine</p>
Confession	<p><b>Form:</b> Acts of the Priest saying: God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and <i>I absolve you</i> from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."</p> <p><b>Matter:</b> Acts of the Penitent: Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction for sins.</p>
Marriage	<p><b>Form:</b> The couple, <i>meaning one man and one woman</i>: The <i>I do's</i>, by which both spouses indicate their mutual consent to the marriage covenant.</p> <p><b>Matter:</b> Mutual Consent and Covenant to live together as husband and wife after the consummation of the Marriage</p>
Holy Orders	<p><b>Form:</b> The Bishop's "specific consecratory prayer asking God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and his gifts proper to the ministry to which the candidate is being ordained"</p> <p><b>Matter:</b> Laying on of the Bishop's hands with the consecratory prayer</p>

Anointing of the Sick	<p><b>Form:</b> Prayer of the Priest over the sick person for the grace of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins</p> <p><b>Matter:</b> Anointing with Holy Oil and Imposition of Hands</p>
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The sacraments work by their own power, regardless of the spiritual state of the person administering them. This principle is called “*ex opere operato*” (which literally means: “by the very fact of the action’s being performed”). Simply put, it does not matter what the state of holiness is for the priest administering the sacrament, the sacrament always produces its effects.

## Baptism

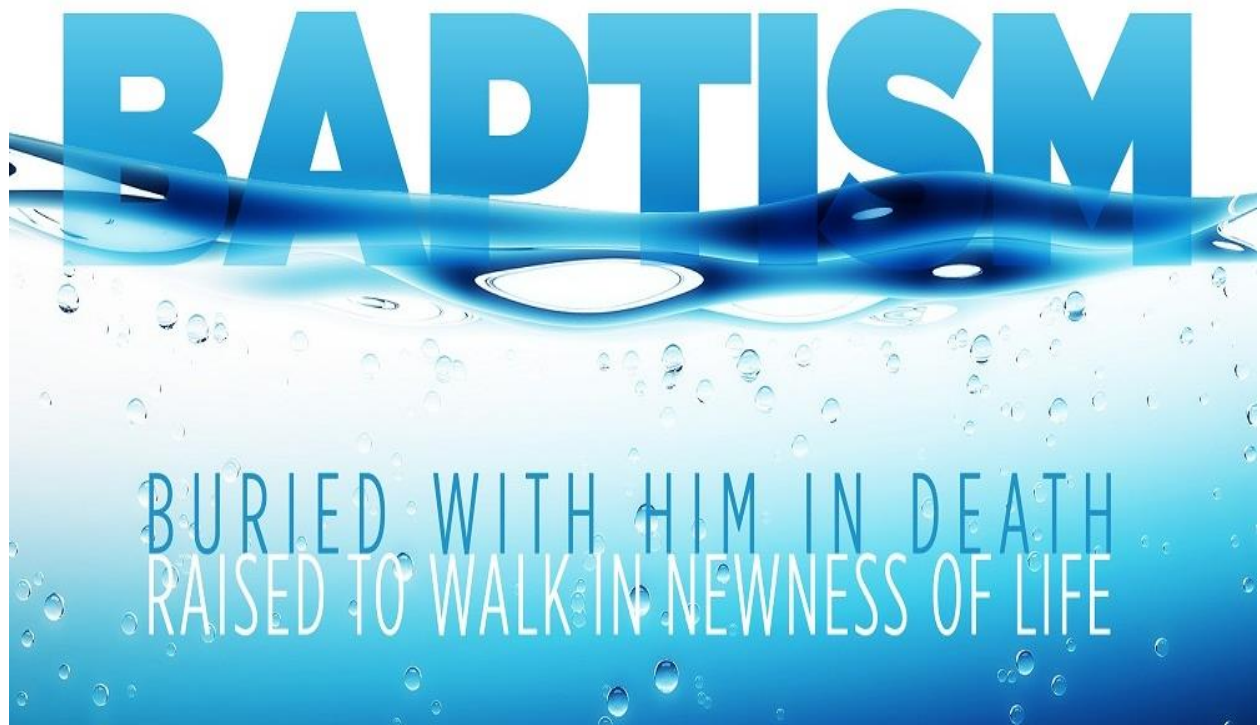
Baptism is the first sacrament that an individual receives. In Baptism, we receive new life in Christ. Baptism takes away all sin, including Original Sin (*the sin passed down from Adam and Eve*), and gives us a new birth in the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is the first Sacrament of Initiation and the gateway to all the others; therefore, Baptism is like our Membership Card to the Catholic Church. Only one who is baptized is eligible to receive the remaining sacraments.

When we are baptized, we are baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ; hence we are baptized into the Paschal Mystery (*the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord*). Through Baptism, we become a new creation in Christ. We become a true Child of God. The Sacrament of Baptism can only be received once because it imparts an “Indelible Mark” on one’s soul. An indelible mark is a permanent, spiritual mark on the soul given by God. In Baptism, God claims us as His children with the indelible mark.

The Sacrament of Baptism produces the following effects:

1. Forgives (*washes away*) original sin and all other sin
2. Infuses sanctifying grace into the soul; hence we receive a share in God’s Own Life
3. Makes us children of God
4. Makes our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit
5. Makes us members of the Church
6. Makes us part of the Body of Christ
7. Imparts an indelible mark



The [Symbols of Baptism](#) are the following:

**1. Water**

Water symbolizes the cleansing of sin and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and God's grace.

**2. White Garment**

The white garment symbolizes the pristine state of the newly baptized soul.

**3. Oil of Catechumens**

A catechumen is a beginner in the faith. This oil which is placed on the infant's chest reminds us that our faith is a life-long journey.

**4. Oil of Sacred Chrism**

This is the Christ Oil because it makes us like Jesus, who is Priest, Prophet, and King.

**5. Paschal Candle**

This is the Easter Candle which represents Jesus Christ who is the Light of the World.

**6. Candle**

This candle represents the newly baptized who is called to live a life that reflects the Light of the World, Jesus Christ.



For the Sacrament of Baptism to be valid, the minister of the sacrament must use the “Trinitarian Formula” while baptizing the child with water. The “[Trinitarian Formula](#)” is as follows:

“*(Name of the Child)*, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Baptism makes us like Christ and thus we are called to fulfill the same roles as he did in his earthly ministry. These three roles are meant to be lived out in our lives on a daily basis. The roles are as follows:

**1. Priest**

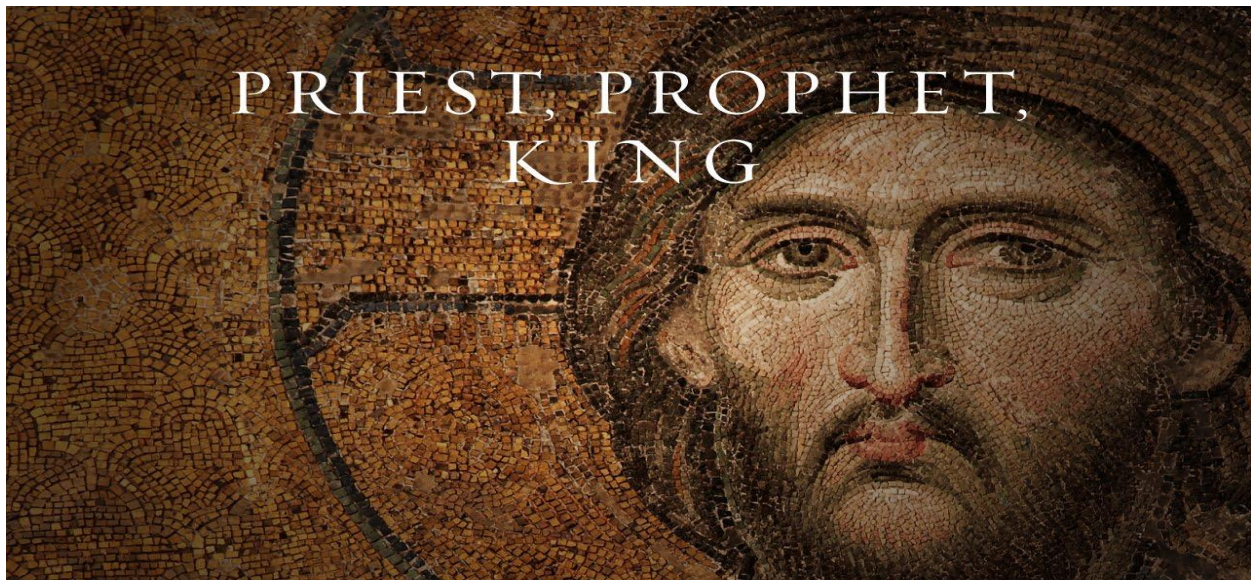
Like a priest, we are called to live a life of prayer, worship, and sacrifice. This priesthood is not the sacramental priesthood of Holy Orders, but is referred to as the “Common Priesthood of the Laity.”

**2. Prophet**

Like the Old Testament Prophets, we are called to proclaim the Word of God in both word and deed.

**3. King**

Through Baptism, we are called to perform the task of an Old Testament king, which is to display God’s justice to all. This means we are called to defend the poor, the widow, the orphan, the alien, and the outcast. In other words, we must care for the poor and needy of the world.



Since the Catholic Church allows infants to be baptized, it is important to review the role of the child’s parents. At infant baptisms, parents accept the faith for the child and the responsibilities that go along with it. These responsibilities included: educating the child in the Catholic faith, making sure the child is raised in the faith (*meaning that they are preparing themselves for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation*), and bringing the child to Sunday Mass. The two greatest gifts that parents can give to their children are: the gift of unconditional love and the gift of the faith.

The child's parents are responsible for selecting Godparents (*sometimes referred to as "sponsors"*). The Godparents are witnesses to the child's baptism who assume the responsibility of helping the baptized person as they journey the road of Christian life. In other words, the Godparents are called to be living witnesses of the Catholic faith for the baptized person. To be eligible to be a Godparent, the person must meet the following requirements:

1. The person must be 16 years of age or older.
2. The person must be fully initiated in the Catholic faith. In other words, they must have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
3. The person cannot be the parent of the one to be baptized.
4. The person must be actively practicing the Catholic faith and be in good standing with the Church. This means that the person must be regularly attending Sunday Mass. If they are married, then the marriage must be recognized by the Catholic Church.



## THE FIVE EFFECTS OF BAPTISM

-  **We are granted justification or sanctifying grace**  
When we're baptised, our original sin is forgiven and, in the case of adults, personal sins.
-  **We receive the three theological virtues**  
Faith, hope and charity, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the other virtues are received.
-  **We receive the sacramental grace**  
It offers the necessary help to live a Christian life. It makes us capable of believing in God, of waiting on Him and loving Him.
-  **A sacramental character is imprinted in us**  
It is an indelible spiritual mark that is imprinted during Baptism. It makes us part of the Church, Body of Christ.
-  **It makes us part of the common priesthood of the faithful**  
Participation is in two forms: active, through evangelization and sanctifying all temporal realities and passive, by receiving the other sacraments.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS  **CatholicLink** SOURCE: CATHOLIC.NET