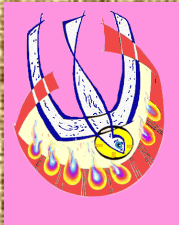


# THE SACRAMENTS: THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN



Baptism



Confirmation



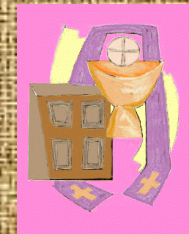
Reconciliation



Eucharist



Anointing



Holy Orders



Matrimony

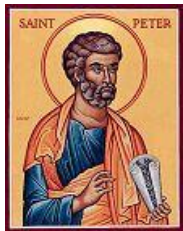
Part Va:  
Sacrament--  
An Introduction

# The Sacraments: Opportunities of Grace

Catholic Christians believe that the grace--the divine life--of Jesus Christ is present in the sacraments because the Bible, the activity of the Apostles, and the constant faith, the *paradosis*--the tradition--of the early church all testify to this belief.

The first and primary sacrament is Jesus Christ himself.

## 1 Peter 2:4



Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God,

## 1 John 1:1-2

(We proclaim to you:)

what was from the beginning,

what we have **heard**,

what we have **seen** with our eyes,

what we **looked upon** and **touched** with our hands

concerns the Word of life--

for the **life was made visible**;

we have seen it and testify to it and

proclaim to you the eternal life that

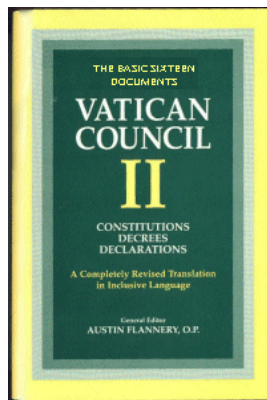
was with the Father and

was made visible to us

The Church of Jesus Christ rightly may be called a sacrament. Vatican Council II best described this reality.

## On the Church, 1

By her relationship with Christ, **the Church is a kind of sacrament**, an intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind, that is, she is a sign and instrument of such union and unity.



## On the Church, 48

Christ ... through his Spirit, has established his body,  
**the Church, as the universal sacrament of salvation.**



Jesus used specific acts and objects as visible signs of the life and blessings he came to give.

Jesus was **baptized with *water*** in the Jordan and the Holy Spirit descended upon him.

### **Mark 1:9-10**

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On **coming up out of the water** he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him.

Jesus' first miracle was to **turn *water* into *wine***.

### **John 2:1-11**

... there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee ... Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." ... the headwaiter tasted **the water that had become wine** ... Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee.

Jesus multiplied *bread and fish* to feed the crowd.

### Mark 6:41-44

Then, taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to (his) disciples to set before the people; he also divided the two fish among them all. **They all ate and were satisfied.** And they picked up twelve wicker baskets full of fragments and what was left of the fish. Those who ate (of the loaves) were five thousand men.

Jesus *touched* people to heal them.

### Mark 1:41

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, **touched him**, and said to him, “I do will it. Be made clean.”

Jesus used his *spit* to cure a blind man.

**Mark 8:23**

Putting **spittle on his eyes** he laid his hands on him and asked, “Do you see anything?”

Jesus *breathed on his apostles* to give them the Holy Spirit.

**John 20:22**

He **breathed on them** and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus gave his apostles **his own body and blood in the form of bread and wine**.

**Mark 14:22-23**

While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it; **this is my body**.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.



The Apostles followed the example of Jesus and carried out his teaching.

The **apostles anointed the sick** for healing.

### **Mark 6:13**

They (the Twelve) drove out many demons, and they **anointed with oil many who were sick** and cured them.

The apostles **laid their hands on people** to receive the Holy Spirit.

### **Acts 8:17**

Then they (Peter and John) **laid hands** on them and they received the holy Spirit.

The apostles **laid their hands** on others to be set apart **for special ministry** or mission in the church.

### **Acts 6:6**

They presented these men (the seven deacons) to the apostles who prayed and **laid hands** on them.

The apostles **baptized**.

**Matthew 28:19**

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,  
**baptizing them** in the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the holy Spirit,

The apostles **forgave sins**.

**Matthew 18:18**

Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be  
bound in heaven, and whatever you **loose on earth** shall  
be **loosed in heaven**.

The apostles **understood marriage as a mystery** (Greek:  
*mysterion*; Latin: sacramentum).

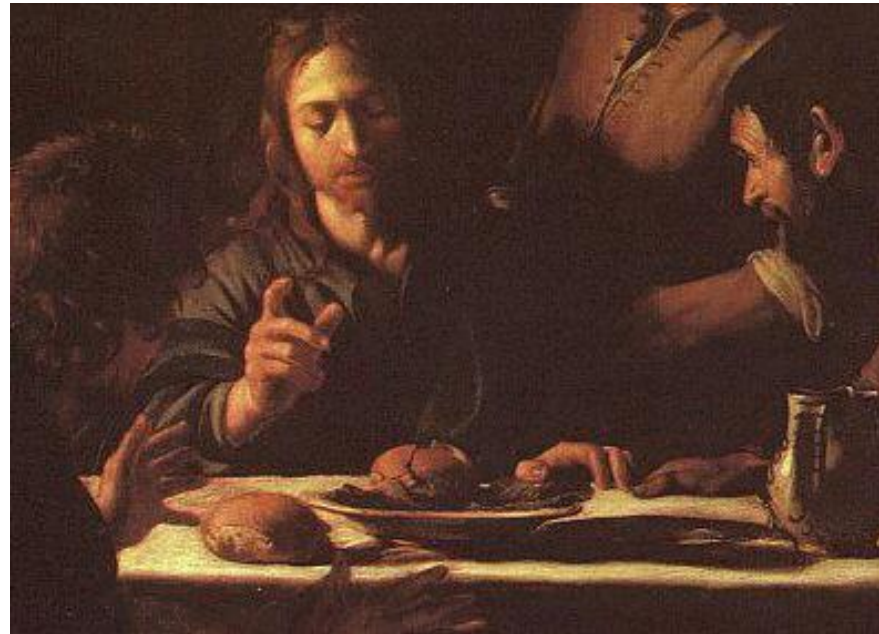
**Ephesians 5:32**

This (marriage) is **a great mystery** (*mysterion*), but  
I speak in reference to Christ and the church.

The apostles **offered bread and wine** in thanksgiving (*eucharist*) for Jesus' death.

**Luke 22:19**

Do this **in memory of me.**



**Vatican Council II** expressed the purpose of the sacraments and the relationship between Christ acting and the reception of the sacraments.

### **Constitution On the Sacred Liturgy, 59**

“The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify, to build up the Body of Christ and, finally, to worship God. Because they are signs, they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it.”

### **Constitution On the Sacred Liturgy, 7**

“He (Jesus) is present in the sacraments by his power, in such a way that when someone baptizes, Jesus himself baptizes.”

The constant faith of the Church has been consistent in the teaching about the sacraments.

## 1st - 6th century

Church Fathers (from Christian antiquity until Clement of Alexandria (Athens, 150 - 215 AD) and Origen (Alexandria, 185 - 254 AD)) used the words *sacramentum* and *mysterion* to describe these hidden and holy things in the life of the church.

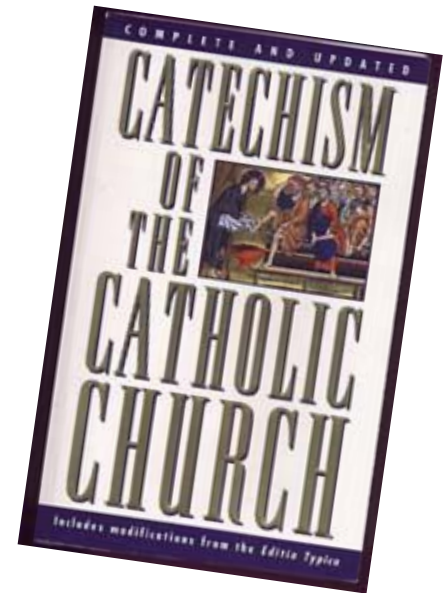
## 16th century

The Council of Trent (1545 - 1563) defined sacraments as symbols of holy and invisible graces in visible form. This definition is found in the works of Augustine (Numidia, now Algeria, 354 - 430 AD).

In the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Sacraments are described as follows.

### **Catechism Section 1084**

“Seated at the right hand of the Father” and pouring out the Holy Spirit on his Body which is the Church, Christ now acts through the sacraments he instituted to communicate his grace. The sacraments are perceptible signs (words and actions) accessible to our human nature. By the actions of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit they make present efficaciously the grace that they signify.

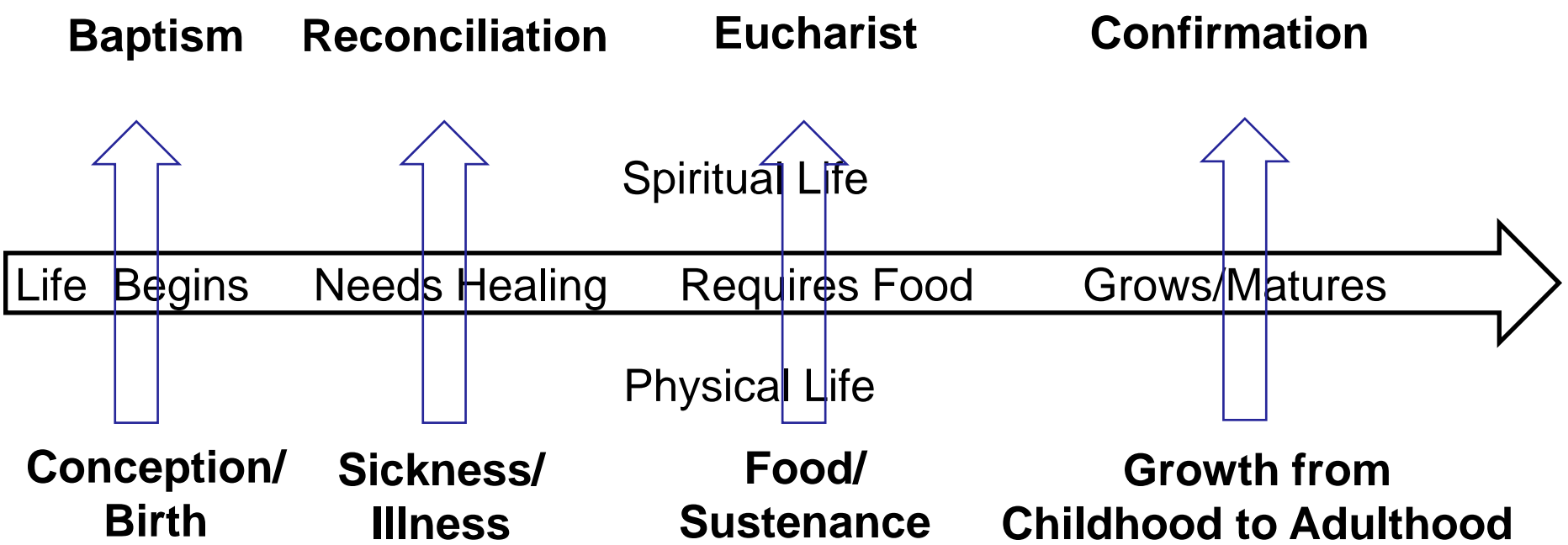


## Catechism Section 1127

“Celebrated worthily in faith, the sacraments confer the grace that they signify. They are efficacious because in them Christ himself is at work: it is he who baptizes, he who acts in his sacraments in order to communicate the grace that each sacrament signifies.”

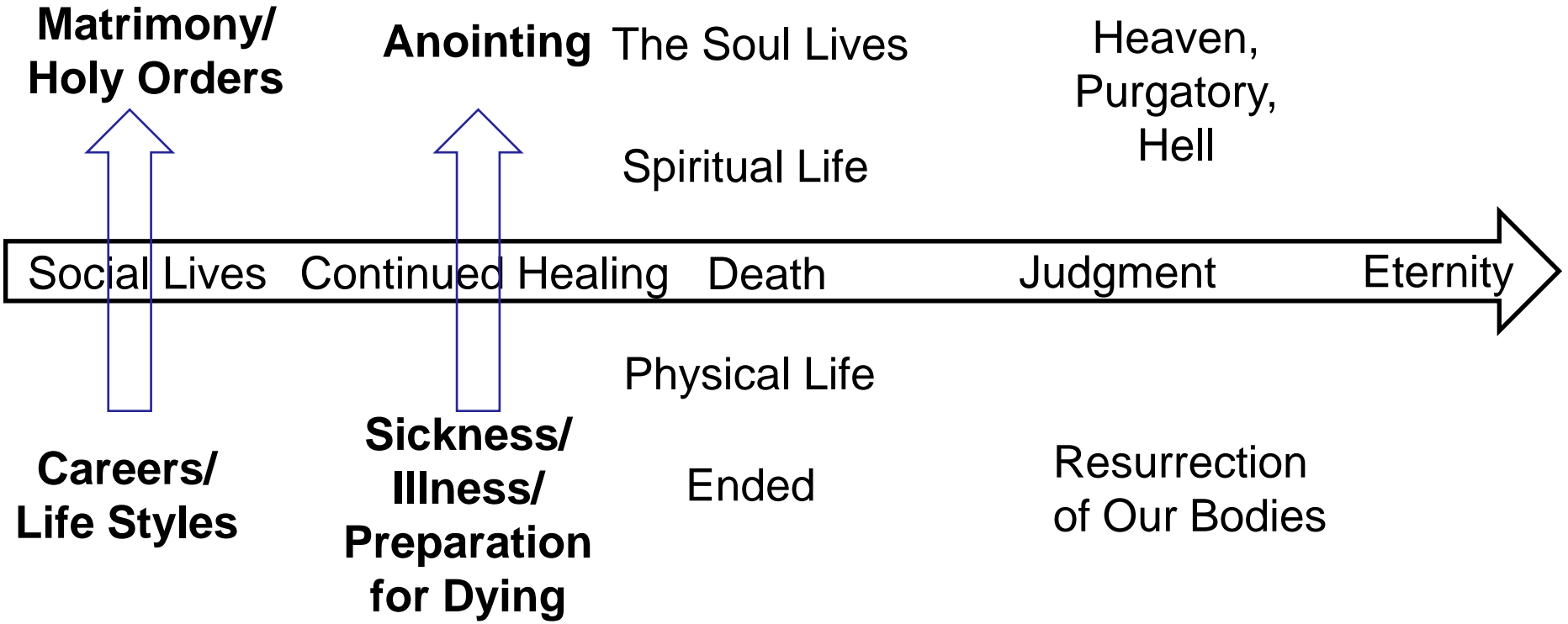


The Catechism states that “they confer what they signify.” This is in keeping with what the study of human communication affirms. A *symbol* signifies only what people create for it; a *sign*, on the other hand, signifies naturally, not by human convention. It really means what it conveys, e.g., water for water, food for food, oil for oil, etc.



***THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN***





***THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN***

End of  
**Sacraments, Life of the Christian,  
An Introduction, Part Va**

Go to  
**The Sacrament of New Life, Baptism,  
Part Vb**