

# The Sacraments



**AND**

Becoming Catholic



# Opening Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.  
And kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be  
created.

And you will renew the face of the earth.  
Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have  
taught the hearts of your faithful.

In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right  
and always rejoice in your consolation.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

# What is a Sacrament?

- The 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. (CCC 1131)



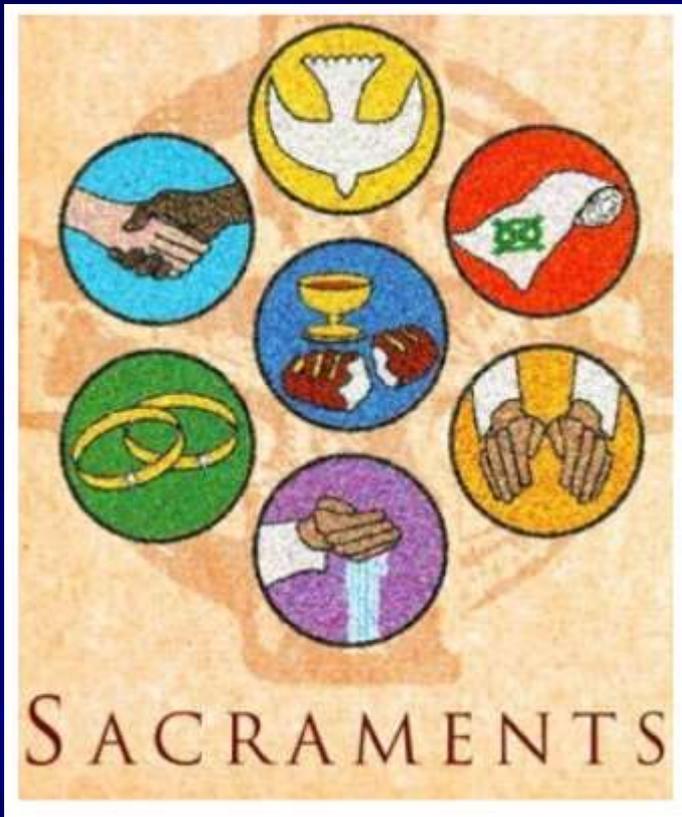
# What is a Sacrament?

- As we come to understand the Sacraments, it is important to recognize that the Sacraments have both a visible and an invisible reality.
- A reality open to all the human senses but grasped only by God's grace with the eyes of faith.
- For example...
  - When parents hug their children, the visible reality we see is the hug.
- The invisible reality the hug conveys is...
  - love.
- We cannot "see" the love the hug expresses, though sometimes we can see its nurturing effect on the child.

# What is a Sacrament?

- The visible reality we see in the Sacraments is their outward expression, the form they take, and the way in which they are administered and received.
- The invisible reality we cannot “see” is God’s grace, his *gracious initiative* in redeeming us through the death and Resurrection of his Son.
- His *initiative* is called *grace* because it is the free and loving gift by which he offers people a share in his life, and shows us his favor and will for our salvation.
- Our response to the grace of God’s initiative is itself a grace or gift from God by which we can imitate Christ in our daily lives.

# Why are the Sacraments important?



- The sacraments sanctify us, to build up the Body of Christ and, to give worship to God.
- The sacraments heal us from sin and nourish or restore the life of grace in us.
- The sacraments make the power of the Paschal mystery of Jesus present to us for the sake of salvation. By these channels of grace, God makes us his adopted children and increases his life of grace within us.
- The Sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life: they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of Faith. There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of the spiritual life.

# Parallel Between the Sacraments and Stages of Natural Growth

## Sacraments

- Baptism
- Eucharist
- Confirmation
- Penance & Anointing of the Sick
- Matrimony & Holy Orders

## Natural/Physical Growth

- Birth
- Physical Nourishment
- Growth/Maturity
- Psychological & Physical Healing
- Community realities of family life and leadership

# What are The Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church?



- ❖ Baptism
- ❖ Holy Eucharist
- ❖ Confirmation
- ❖ Penance (Confession)
- ❖ Anointing of the Sick
- ❖ Holy Matrimony
- ❖ Holy Orders

# The Sacraments can be grouped into three categories:

## ■ Sacraments of Initiation

- Baptism
- Holy Eucharist
- Confirmation

## ■ Sacraments of Healing

- Penance (Confession)
- Anointing of the Sick

## ■ Sacraments of Service

- Holy Matrimony
- Holy Orders



# What are the effects of the Sacraments of Initiation?

## ■ Baptism...

- Cleanses us from sin, reborn as children of God, united with Christ and made members of His Holy, Catholic Church.

## ■ Holy Eucharist...

- The “source and summit” of the Christian life in which we receive the literal Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine to spiritually feed and strengthen us in our life of faith.

## ■ Confirmation...

- The faith given in Baptism is now “confirmed” and made strong. We become “soldiers for Christ.”

# What are the effects of the Sacraments of Healing?

## ■ Penance...

- We receive God's forgiveness of our sins, restore our relationship with Him, and are fortified against future sin. All mortal sins must be confessed in sacramental confession.
- Mortal sins = 1) serious matter, 2) know it is serious matter, 3) do it anyway...full consent of will.

## ■ Anointing of the Sick...

- Prayers for recovery for the sick and infirm, forgiveness of sins, strengthens the soul of the sick person, and prepares one for heaven.

# What are the effects of the Sacraments of Service?

## ■ Holy Matrimony...

- Sanctifies a man and woman to live the married vocation faithfully, fruitfully and permanently...until death to us part.
- Mirrors the love of the Holy Trinity.
- The man & woman are the ministers of this sacrament. The bishop, priest or deacon act as witnesses for the Church.

## ■ Holy Orders...

- The ordination of men to be deacons, priests and bishops, which are the three levels of Holy Orders. Grace to live this sacred calling and vocation to serve the spiritual and corporal needs of the Church.

# How often can we receive the Sacraments?

## ■ Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders...

- Only once in a lifetime. Cannot be repeated since these sacraments seal the persons soul with an indelible spiritual mark or character that cannot be erased.

## ■ Holy Eucharist...

- Daily, if desired.
- Must be practicing Catholic.
- Must be prepared and properly disposed.
- i.e. in a state of grace with no known mortal sin.
- Also...Catholics are not to receive communion at any Protestant or Non-Catholic churches.

# How often can we receive the Sacraments?

## ■ Penance...

- As often as needed, especially for mortal sins. Recommend at least once a month. St. John Paul II and St. Mother Teresa went weekly.

## ■ Anointing of the Sick...

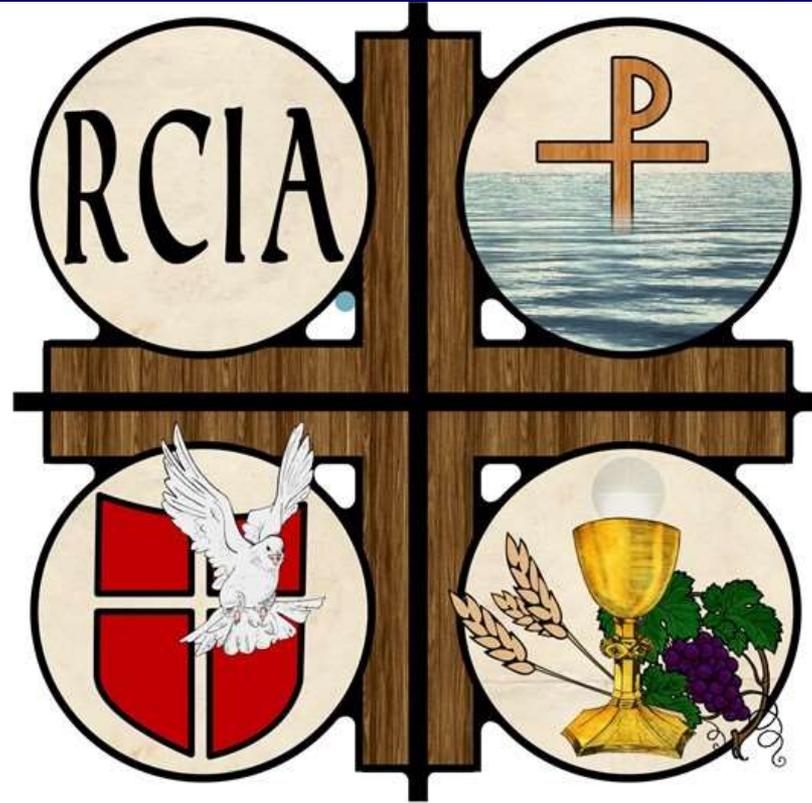
- As often as needed for serious illness, medical procedures and operations, infirm due to old age, etc.

## ■ Holy Matrimony...

- Can be repeated only if spouse dies.
- A previous marriage must be investigated with the diocesan marriage tribunal and declared “null” by the Church due to some impediment in which a sacramental marriage never took place. AKA an “*annulment*.”

**Any Questions regarding  
the sacraments before we  
review the process of  
becoming a Catholic?**

# How To Become Catholic



**Rite of Christian Initiation  
for Adults**

# R.C.I.A.

- RCIA is an acronym for:
  - *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*
- A process through which adults and children (age 7 or older) become members of the Catholic Church.
- This consists of steps, periods and Rites that make up the model of Christian Initiation as restored in the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

# RCIA

- *“From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion.” – CCC 1229*

*CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church,  
paragraph 1229*

# RCIA

- Many people are searching for a way to meet their spiritual needs and identify with a community of faith.
- Statistics show that most people respond to a personal invitation.
- RCIA is the Catholic Church's way of extending that personal invitation.
- We are here to walk side by side with inquirers on this "Journey of Faith" to help them explore the life, mission, teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Church.

# Who is in the RCIA?

- Inquirers come from a broad range of life experiences and backgrounds.
- A person is either a Catechumen or a Candidate.
- A person who has not been baptized is called a "Catechumen."
  - They may have no religious affiliation or background.
  - They may come from a non-Christian religion.
- A person who has received valid Christian baptism is called a "Candidate."
  - They may have been baptized but never really practiced the Christian faith.
  - They may have been baptized and been very active in a non-Catholic Christian faith tradition.

# Who is in the RCIA?

- The common denominator – Many feel a “tug” at their soul and have chosen to act upon it.
- Both Catechumens and Candidates are on a journey, preparing for joining the Catholic Church.

# Why do Catholics Initiate Others?

- Jesus doesn't want us to follow him into the faith blindly.
- He wants us to make the choice freely and with all the information we need to make a decision.
- In the Gospels, Jesus is personally inviting each of us to...“Come, follow me.”
- We want everyone to experience the joy and peace through the fullest and most authentic understanding of Jesus found in His One, Holy, Catholic Church.

# What Happens in the RCIA?

- We meet on Sunday mornings beginning in mid-August until May.
- The RCIA team known as “catechists” facilitate the subject matter and discussion for each weekly session.
- As the RCIA year progresses, inquirers will go through a series of Church Rites on their journey into the Church.
- Culminating in their reception into the Church at the Easter Vigil Mass.

# How Long Does the RCIA Last?

- It depends!
- People come with their own unique stories and needs.
- Some may need longer to make the commitment and be received into the Church.
- Understanding faith is as important as having faith...and that takes time.

# The Four Periods of the RCIA

- Inquiry
- Catechumenate
- Purification and Enlightenment
- Mystagogy

# Inquiry

- During this period, anyone can “test the waters” and ask questions about the Catholic faith.
- One does not make any commitments or promises.
- This period can last as long as you desire – a few months up to a few years.

# Catechumenate

- This word comes from the ancient Greek language and means “a person receiving instruction.”
- During this period we study and discuss most of the Church’s main beliefs.
- A sponsor will join the inquirer on their journey.
- Sponsors are practicing Catholics who have received all the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation).
- We encourage sponsors to attend classes and have conversations with inquirers outside of RCIA class.

# Purification & Enlightenment

- This period occurs in the weeks before Easter and may include optional rites.
- This time is more prayerful than instructional.
- It is a time of deeper spiritual preparation for the sacraments.
- This period concludes with reception into the Catholic Church on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Sunday) through the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

# Mystagogy

- This final period occurs after Easter and lasts for several weeks.
- It's a time to reflect on the mysteries of the sacraments and to living out ones new faith in practical ways.

# For More Information

- If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about the Catholic faith, please contact Deacon Ed Prisby.
  - [Edward.Prisby@gmail.com](mailto:Edward.Prisby@gmail.com)
  - (904) 607-1774 (cell)

# Questions

# Closing Prayer



**1 Our Father**

**1 Hail Mary**

**1 Glory Be**