

# The Seven Catholic Sacraments

The Latin word *sacramentum* means "a sign of the sacred." 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.

## 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.

## Eucharist (Communion)



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.

## Reconciliation



The Catholic Sacrament of Reconciliation (also known as Penance, or Penance and Reconciliation) has three elements: conversion, confession and celebration. In it we find God's unconditional forgiveness; as a result we are called to forgive others.

## 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.

## Marriage



For Catholics, the Sacrament of Marriage, or Holy Matrimony, is a public sign that one gives oneself totally to this other person. It is also a public statement about God: the loving union of husband and wife speaks of family values and also God's values.

## Holy Orders



In the Sacrament of Holy Orders, or Ordination, the priest being ordained vows to lead other Catholics by bringing them the sacraments (especially the Eucharist) by proclaiming the Gospel, and by providing other means to holiness.

## Anointing of the Sick



The Catholic Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, formerly known as Last Rites or Extreme Unction, is a ritual of healing appropriate not only for physical but also for mental and spiritual sickness.