

The Institute for Catechesis and Formation

Course Outline for Instructors



ICF 104 – The Sacraments

This course emphasizes the responsibility of the faithful to participate in the sacraments, and also to cooperate in the graces that flow from each of them in order to live the life of Christ.

Texts: Introduction to Catholicism for Adults, Rev. James Socias (ICA)

Supplemental Reading/Additional Resources:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

<http://www.sborromeo.org/ccc.htm>

The Bible: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/>

Week 1: The Sacramental Nature of the Church

ICA Chapter 11

Definition of Sacrament - What are the Sacraments?

- A sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life of grace is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. There are seven Sacraments. (CCC #1131).
- The visible rites by which the Sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each Sacrament.
- Sacraments bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.
- Eastern Churches, (Orthodox and Eastern Catholic) use the word “Mystery” for Sacrament and celebrate them in a similar but not essentially different way.

The Meaning of Sacrament

- Sacraments as efficacious signs of grace – A sign is a physical act that points to a deeper, spiritual reality.
- Instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church as affirmed by Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Baptism (Mt 28:19); Confirmation (Acts 19:6); The Eucharist (Mt 26:26-28); Penance and Reconciliation (Jn 20:23); The Anointing of the Sick (Jas 5:14); Holy Orders (Lk 22:19); Matrimony (Mk 10:9).

MATERIAL SIGNS USED IN THE SACRAMENTS

Baptism	Water
Confirmation	Sacred Chrism (blessed Oil) and the laying on of hands
Eucharist	Wheat bread and grape wine
Penance	Oral confession
Holy Orders	The laying on of hands
Marriage	Exchange of vows and consummation
Anointing of the Sick	Oil and laying on of hands

- By which divine life is dispensed to us – Each of the Sacraments is a personal “encounter” with Christ. The grace that comes to us in the Sacraments is a sharing in the divine life of God. (CCC, 1116)
- Ex Opere Operato – (literally: “by the very fact of the action’s being performed”), i.e., by virtue of the saving work of Christ, accomplished once for all. It follows that “the sacrament is not wrought by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the recipient, but by the power of God” (CCC #1128)

Matter, Form and Minister

The celebration of each of the seven Sacraments includes three elements: the matter, the form and the minister.

- **Matter:** Visible sign of God's grace. It has a material or physical sign, e.g., Water is the Material sign of Baptism.
- **Form:** The prescribed words of the sacramental rite make the physical signs (matter) indicators of something much deeper. These words are called the *form* of the Sacraments. For example, in Baptism, the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". Without the form of the Sacrament, the sign is not present and the matter is not sacramental.
- **Minister:** The person through whom Christ performs the sacramental act. Christ is the true minister of every Sacrament but He works through His Church and the visible actions of the human ministers appointed for this purpose.

Sacramental Grace

What is grace? The word grace is derived from a Latin word meaning gift or favor. Divine grace is the *gift* or *favor* God gives us. It is a gift because it is "free and undeserved help that God gives us" (CCC #1996). It is *free* because we cannot do anything to earn it, and it is *undeserved* because God has no obligation to give it to us.

God dispenses grace to us in two primary forms: sanctifying grace and actual grace.

- **Sanctifying grace** (habitual grace) - Grace we receive in the Sacraments. "A stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by His love." (CCC # 2000)
- **Actual grace** – The grace by which God strengthens us at particular moments when we are tempted to do wrong, to commit an actual sin or conversely, when we want to do something virtuous. (CCC #2024)
- **Proper Disposition** - Desire to receive promised graces and be in a proper spiritual condition – state of grace (free of mortal or grave sin) in order to receive the fullness of the sacramental graces freely given by Christ.

The Sacraments are necessary for our growth in holiness, for our salvation and to draw us closer to God. They unite us to the Christian community.

Week 2: Sacraments of Christian Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist

ICA Chapters 12 and 13

The Sacrament of Baptism:

Baptism is derived from Greek which means “to plunge, to immerse or to dip”. Baptism is the Sacrament of Initiation by which a person enters the Church founded by Christ. It is the foundation of the Christian life and the gateway to the other Sacraments.

Scriptural Basis for Baptism:

- Jewish Rites of Purification at the Time of Christ: Ex. 12:22, Nm 19:18,
- Lv 4:3-6.
- Baptism is prefigured in the Old Testament: Gn 1:2, Gn 6:1, Ex 14:1, Jos 3:1, readings during the Easter Vigil signify the importance of water in salvation history.
- Baptism in the New Testament: Mt 3:11, Mk 16:16, Acts 2:38-39

Celebrating Baptism

Who can be Baptized?

- **Adults (CCC 1247) and Infants (CCC #1250-1251)**
 - Visible Rite – Matter, form and minister
 - Baptism in the ordinary form of the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church
 - Baptism in the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church

- **Effects of Baptism**
 - Removal of Original Sin and of actual sin, if present
 - Imprints an indelible character
 - Incorporates us into Christ’s Mystical Body, the Church (CCC #1277)
 - Confers sanctifying grace (habitual grace) – share in God’s own life
 - Confers actual grace
 - Makes us children of God
 - Makes us temples of the Holy Spirit
 - Initiates us into the common priesthood of the faithful
 - Infuses us with the theological virtues; faith, hope and charity
 - Infuses us with the supernatural moral virtues
 - Makes possible our entry into eternal happiness

- **The Necessity of Baptism (Jn 3:5; CCC #1260)**

Other Types of Baptism

- Baptism of Blood
- Baptism of Desire

The Sacrament of Confirmation:

Confirmation is the second of the Sacraments of Initiation, by which God passes on the grace of Pentecost and perfects the grace received in Baptism. We receive increased gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit which strengthen us to serve the Church and draw others to the friendship of God.

Scriptural Basis for Confirmation:

- **Old Testament roots:** – Is 11:2-3 fulfilled in Mt 3:13-17, Lk 3:21-22.
- **Instituted by Christ:** Acts 1:8, fulfilled at Pentecost Acts 2:3

Celebrating Confirmation:

- Who may receive Confirmation? – every baptized person who has not received this Sacrament and has reached the age determined by the Bishop of the diocese can and should be confirmed in order to complete initiation into the Church (CCC 1319, 1309)
- Matter, form and minister of the Sacrament
- Rite of Confirmation in the ordinary form of the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church

Effects of Confirmation

- Increases and deepens sanctifying grace and actual graces received in Baptism.
- Imprints an indelible seal or character upon the soul
- Roots us more deeply as children of God the Father
- Outpouring of the Holy Spirit unites us more closely to Christ
- Increases the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Increases the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit
- Enables one to be a true witness to Christ and defend the truths of the Church

The Sacrament of the Eucharist:

The Eucharist is the third of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. The word Eucharist is derived from the Greek (*eucharistia*) “to give thanks.”

Scriptural Basis for the Eucharist

Old Testament Roots:

- Passover – Foreshadowed the Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary and what happens on the altar in every Mass. Christ becomes our Paschal Sacrifice and in Holy Communion we receive the Lamb of God who has freed us from slavery to sin.
- Manna – God provided “bread from heaven” as daily nourishment while the Israelites wandered for 40 years in the desert. Ex 16
- Temple sacrifice – Featured a “thank offering” which included bread and wine.
- The prophet Isaiah foretold of a servant of God who would pour out his own blood in sacrifice for the New Covenant. Is 42:1-9, 49:8.

Instituted by Christ:

- Christ instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper when He consecrated bread and wine, said they were His Body and Blood, directed His Apostles to eat and drink, and commanded them to “do this in memory of me.” Lk 22:19, Jn 6:48-58, Mt 26:26,28

The Real Presence

The true, real, and substantial presence of Christ - Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity under the appearance of the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist. (CCC 1412, 1376) *Transubstantiation* is the term used to describe this change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Celebrating the Eucharist

- Who may receive the Eucharist – A baptized Catholic who has been initiated into the Sacrament of the Eucharist, referred to as First Holy Communion.
- One must be in a state of grace, free of mortal sin or the awareness of such sin. One should also believe what the Church teaches about this Sacrament.
- Fast from all food and drink except water or medicine for one hour prior to receiving Communion, except for grave reasons. This is an act of a small sacrifice we make as a form of penance that has the effect of strengthening and healing us. It helps to remind us of how we are to hunger and thirst for the Body of Christ. It is only in the Eucharist that we can be spiritually satisfied.
- Matter, form and Minister of the Eucharist
- Latin Rite of the Catholic Church – extraordinary minister of Holy Communion
- Receiving Holy Communion in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church
- Receiving Holy Communion in the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church

Other Christian Faiths

- Protestant Communities (CCC #1400)
- Orthodox Christians (CCC #1399)

Effects of the Eucharist

Holy Communion unites us more intimately with God, with one another, and with the Communion of Saints.

- The Eucharist strengthens...
- The Eucharist reinforces the unity...
- The Eucharist increases graces...
- The Eucharist pardons venial sins...
- The Eucharist helps preserve us from sin... (CCC #1395)
- The Eucharist decreases the temporal punishment

Week 3: The Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Reconciliation/Anointing of the Sick

ICA Chapter 14

The Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation

- Jesus Christ himself through the action of a priest forgives personal sins committed after Baptism. This is the means established by Christ to restore our communion with God and the Church when we have broken or weakened it by sin. (CCC 1422)
- Concupiscence – It's a tendency toward sin that we experience due to the effects of Original Sin.

The Nature of Sin

Sin is an offense against God (CCC 1850). Sin vary both in seriousness and culpability

- **Mortal Sin** – A grave sin against God that breaks or destroys a person's relationship with Him. It alienates us from the Eucharist which we may not receive until we have obtained absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It diminishes our natural desire to do good.
 - Three conditions must be met: Grave matter, full knowledge that the act is serious, freely choose
- **Venial Sin** - Damages our relationship with God but does not sever or destroy it. The Sacrament gives us actual grace to help us resist temptation and avoid sin strengthening our union with Christ.

Sins of Commission and Omission

- **Commission** - When we sin by committing an act in violation of God's Law. This can be in thought, word or deed.
- **Omission** – Failing to perform an act required by God's Law

Scriptural Basis for Reconciliation

- **Old Testament Roots:** God established a covenant with His chosen people through Moses and provided ritual sacrifice as a means to atone for sin. He gave the 10 Commandments by which they were to live. Jn 1:29
- **Institution by Christ:** Jn 20:22-23, Mt 16:19; CCC #1445

Celebrating Penance or Reconciliation

- Who may receive, where and how
- The Eastern Rite
- Matter, form and minister
- Contrition – True sorrow for having sinned described as either *perfect* or *imperfect*.
- Confession – The disclosure of sins to the priest within the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation. (CCC #1456)

- Examination of Conscience
- Satisfaction – Fulfillment of the penance given.
- Seal of Confession
- Indulgences (CCC #1471)

Effects of the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation

When received with proper contrition and a commitment to conversion, the Sacrament is the means by which God forgives our sins, reconciles us with Himself and the Church, and strengthens us against future temptation.

- Forgives our mortal sins
- Forgives our venial sins
- Reconciles us to God and to the Church
- Strengthens us by conferring actual graces to help us avoid sin in the future

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

The Anointing of the Sick is the Sacrament of Healing that gives health to the soul and sometimes to the body through prayer and an anointing with oil. (CCC #1499)

Scriptural Basis for the Anointing of the Sick

- **Old Testament Roots:** Is 33:24, CCC 1502.
- **Institution by Christ:** The Gospels record many instances of Christ curing people. Lk 4:40, Mk 6:7, 12-13, Jas 5:14-16; CCC #1503, 1506.

Celebration of the Anointing of the Sick

- Who may receive the Anointing of the Sick?
- Matter, form and minister
- Rite of the Anointing of the Sick in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church
- Viaticum – “food for the journey”

Effects of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

- Unites the recipient to the Passion of Christ
- Provides strength, peace and courage
- Forgives sins
- Restores sanctifying grace
- Can restore health
- Spiritually prepares the recipient for death

Week 4: Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Holy Orders and Matrimony

ICA Chapter 15 and 16

These two Sacraments are mainly directed to the salvation of others and are so called Sacraments at the Service of Communion. (CCC 1535)

The Sacrament of Holy Orders:

Christ instituted Holy Orders and entrusted to His Church in order to pass on the ministries of deacon, priest and bishop until the end of time. (CCC 1547, 1552)

- Common Priesthood
- Ministerial Priesthood
- Three degrees of Holy Orders: Episcopacy (bishops), presbyterate (priests), and the diaconate (deacons).

Scriptural Basis for Holy Orders

Old Testament Roots: Aaron, the Levites, the seventy elders, Melchizedek, Nm 11:16-17, Gn 14:18-20, CCC 1548, Ps 110:1-4, Heb 7:11-28.

Instituted by Christ: Christ established the Sacrament of Holy Orders at the Last Supper, CCC 1548, 874, Lk 22:19.

Celebrating Holy Orders

- Who may receive Holy Orders?
- Matter, form, minister
- The Rite of Holy Orders
- The tradition in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church
- The tradition in the Eastern Rite of the Catholic Church

The Three orders

Indicates that a man has received an ordination, from the Latin meaning “to put in order” or “to rank” to a hierarchical role in the Church and has been consecrated by the Holy Spirit into sacred service to God, the Church and all people. (CCC 1592)

Effects of Holy Orders

- Configures the recipient to Christ so that he may serve the Church...
- Confers the office of bishop, priest or deacon
- Leaves an indelible character upon the soul
- Grants a particular grace proper to the exercise of the recipient’s ministry

Symbols of the Ordained: Bishop, Priest, Deacon

Clerical Celibacy

- The model is Jesus Christ himself as complete gift of self – a divine gift, (Mt 19:11-12)

- Eastern Rite vs. Latin Rite

Male Priesthood

- Jesus Christ called only men to be his Apostles and Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition have always observed and upheld that only men are called to Holy Orders.
- See Bl. John Paul II's Apostolic Letter [Ordinatio Sacerdotalis](#)

The Sacrament of Matrimony:

Christ raises natural marriage to the level of the supernatural, (CCC 1535)

- Exclusive, freely chosen, lifelong, loving, complementary, union of a man and a woman ordered toward procreation and education of children.

Scriptural Basis for Marriage

Old Testament Roots: Designed by God at the very beginning of Creation, Gn 2:18, Gn 2:23-24, Gn 1:28, Tb 8:4-9, Hos 3:1-3, CCC 1604, 1607, 1610.

Instituted by Christ: Christ elevated marriage to the Sacrament of Matrimony providing special graces to married couples that enable them to carry out the purpose of their sacred vocation, Mk 10:6-9, Eph 5:25-26, 31-32, CCC 1608.

Celebrating Matrimony

- Who can receive the Sacrament of Matrimony?
- Preparation for marriage
- Impediments to marriage
- Matter, form, minister
- The tradition in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church
- The tradition in the Eastern Rite of the Catholic Church
- Marriage as a path to holiness (GS 48)
- Marriage between a Catholic and Non-Catholic (CCC 1635)
 - Mixed Marriage
 - Disparity of Cult

Effects of Matrimony

- Joins the spouses in a perpetual and exclusive bond (CCC 1640, GS 48)
- Gives couples the grace to strengthen their indissoluble unity
- Gives a new significance to human sexuality (CCC 1643, GS 50, FC 36)

Divorce and reception of the Sacraments

A Declaration of Nullity – Annulment