

The background is a vibrant teal color with a pattern of small, light-colored water droplets. Overlaid on this are several semi-transparent teal shapes: a large, light-colored cross-like shape in the upper half and a solid teal rounded rectangle at the bottom.

**THE CHURCH AND THE
SACRAMENTAL
ECONOMY
OF SALVATION**

ON THE ROAD TO GOD

When Lam Minh Hua came with his family to the United States as a young boy, he carried with him one childhood memory of Vietnam: walking with his family to Mass every Sunday. Lam Minh Hua says today, “I remember clearly; it was far, but we walked together every Sunday, no matter what.”

The family settled in Tacoma, Washington, where Hua lived a normal American life. While in high school, Hua began helping out with the youth program in his parish. As high school was coming to a close, he happened to read a book about the Jesuit missionary Pierre-Jean de Smet. Hua began to feel a call toward mission work. His pastor gave him a copy of *Maryknoll* magazine, and thus began his journey to the priesthood as a Maryknoll missionary.

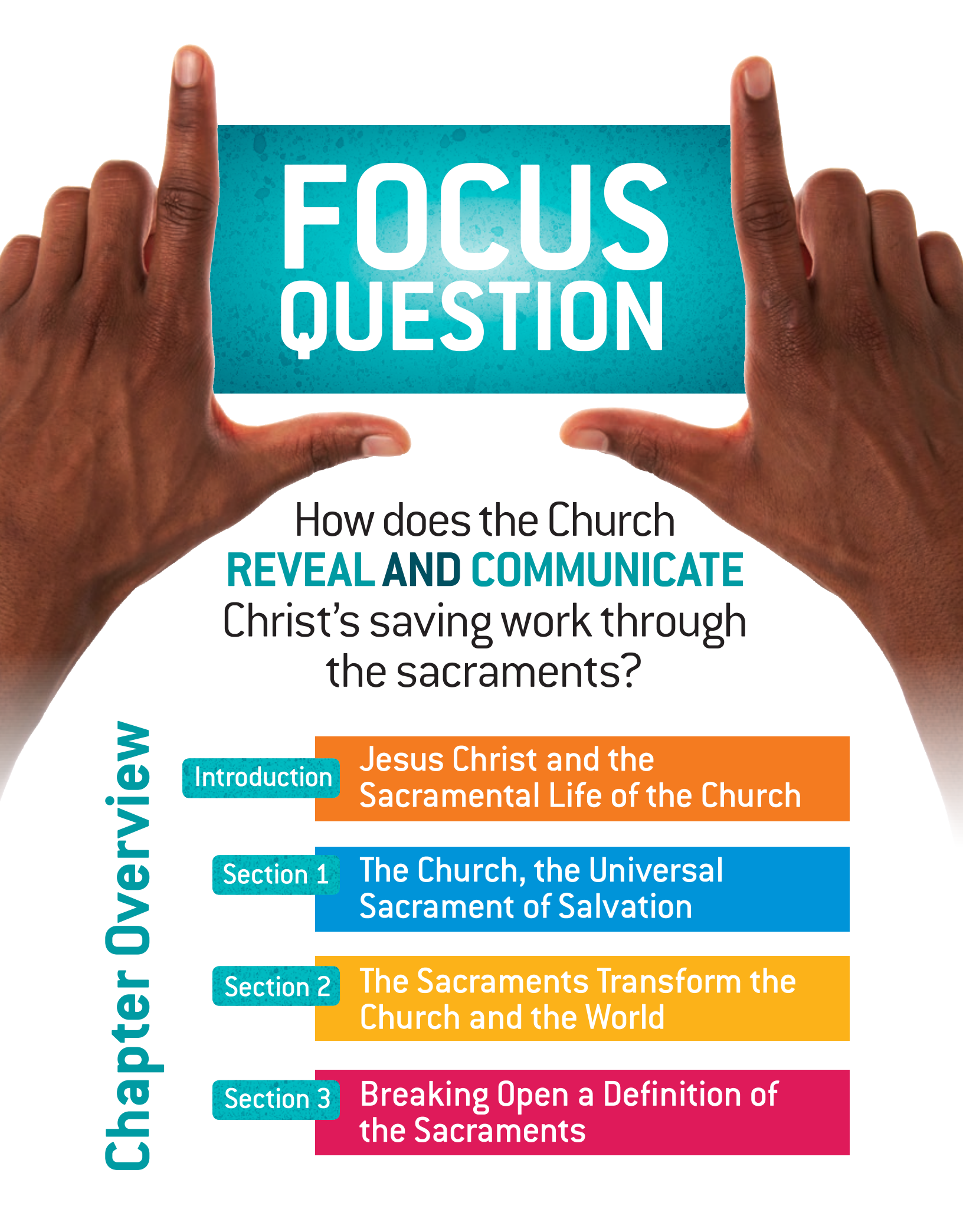
As a seminarian, Hua was sent to Tanzania in Africa, where he noticed that the villagers had to walk more than an hour to get to church, just as he and his family had done in Vietnam. Hua encouraged them to build their own village church so that the priest could come to them. They gathered wood and tarp and set up poles to raise the roof.

Hua comments, “The beauty of this experience is that because I said, ‘OK, let’s do it,’ they were able to build that little outpost church. If I hadn’t gone out there, they would have had no one to say yes. That’s all they were waiting for. They were all ready.”

Fr. Lam Minh Hua was ordained a Maryknoll priest on May 31, 2014. Through a convergence of his experience with three cultures—American, Vietnamese, and Tanzanian—he was able to help others to open themselves to God’s sacramental gifts. You will find him “on the road again,” bringing Jesus to all he meets.

(Based on Gabriela Romeri, “The Road to God,” *Maryknoll*, May/June 2014.)





FOCUS QUESTION

How does the Church
REVEAL AND COMMUNICATE
Christ's saving work through
the sacraments?

Chapter Overview

Introduction

Jesus Christ and the
Sacramental Life of the Church

Section 1

The Church, the Universal
Sacrament of Salvation

Section 2

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Breaking Open a Definition of
the Sacraments

INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ and the Sacramental Life of the Church

MAIN IDEA

Jesus himself is the way to God the Father. He is the mystery of salvation and the living, ever-present sacrament of God.



You have, by now, probably learned about at least some of the Seven Sacraments of the Church. Your learning may have begun as far back as second grade, when you were preparing to celebrate First Penance and First Eucharist. In this course, your learning will go deeper into the meaning of the **sacraments**, collectively and individually. In this chapter and the next, you will learn a definition of *sacrament* and examine how Jesus Christ is himself the living, ever-present sacrament of God. In fact, only in understanding the sacramentality of Christ can you come to an understanding of the meaning, signs, and effects of each of the Seven Sacraments.

Jesus Christ, the Sacrament of God

St. Augustine of Hippo described the sacraments as “visible signs of invisible grace.” To understand the sacraments, you must think about making the invisible

sacraments Efficacious and visible signs of God's grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The Seven Sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.



NOTE TAKING

Identifying Main Ideas.

Create a two-column chart like the one here to help you organize the content in this section. Fill in the second column with further details.

MAIN IDEA	SUMMARY
The Son of God was incarnate.	
Christ is the living, ever-present sacrament of God.	
The mysteries of Christ's life are efficacious signs.	



St. Anne, the mother of Mary, offers a blessing to the infant Jesus.

visible. This understanding can be facilitated by first reflecting on the mystery of the **Incarnation**.

For example, consider the story of a young child awoken by the sound of thunder who runs into her mother's room and stands near the edge of her sleepy mom's bed. "Honey, you can go back to your room. You aren't alone. God is with you," the mother gently tells her.

"Mommy, I know God is with me," the little girl says in return. "But I want someone with skin."

The message of this story is that everyone wants to be near to the ones who know us, protect us, and most of all, love us. That is why the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, took on flesh and became a man. At a time in history chosen by God, the Son of the Father became incarnate:

And the Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory as of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth. (Jn 1:14)

Jesus Christ "assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it" (CCC, 461). When Christ assumed a human nature, he did so without losing his divine nature. This union of Christ's human nature and divine nature did not end with Christ's Death or Resurrection; in fact, this union cannot be broken. Christ, now ascended to the Father, has ascended with the union of both natures in his Divine Person.

The desire of the Son of God to be with you remains strong today. Jesus longs to share your life, both the tragedies and joys. The sacraments and **liturgy**—known together as the **sacramental economy**—are the means Christ uses to make himself and his saving graces present on earth. The sacramental economy is the way the fruits of Christ's redemption are given to you in the Church's liturgy through the work of the Blessed Trinity.

Jesus Christ, the Mystery of Salvation

Sacraments are mysteries that are so rich, so deep, and so profound that they cannot be easily captured or expressed in limited human language. Christ is a mystery in this sense, too; human language and speech

Incarnation The act by which the Father sent his Son into the world, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Son came to exist as a man within the womb of Mary. The Son of God assumed human nature and became man in order to accomplish salvation for humanity in that same nature. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, is both true God and true man, not part God and part man.

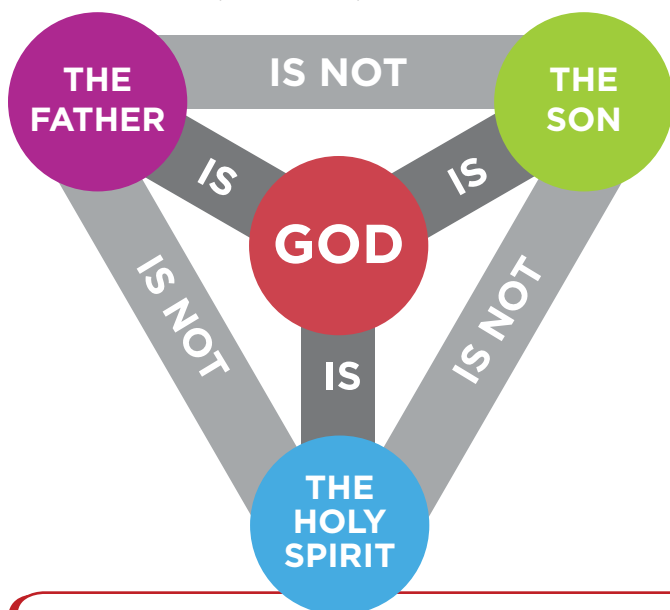
liturgy The official public worship of the Church. The sacraments and the Divine Office constitute the Church's liturgy. Mass is the most important liturgical celebration.

sacramental economy The communication or dispensation of the fruits of Christ's Paschal Mystery through the celebration of the sacramental liturgy.

are incapable of expressing completely the mystery of the Son of God, God’s Word made flesh. Jesus is truly human, like you in all ways, “yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). Jesus is also truly divine, the Second Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity—without beginning or end.

It is impossible to know *how* Jesus can be fully man yet fully divine at the same time. This mystery is known as the **hypostatic union**. This doctrine of faith, first expressed by St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), teaches that in Jesus there are two divine natures—one human and the other divine—in one Divine Person. These natures are united in such a way that Jesus was human like every human, except for the presence of sin. He was born as a baby, grew as a child, experienced adolescence, and finally became an adult. He needed to eat, sleep, drink, breathe, bathe, and learn—just as any person does. He laughed, cried, and felt real pain. And because he had a real human body, he was subject to death.

It is important to always remember that Jesus never ceased to be God when he became man. Being both God and man, Jesus has a human intellect and human will that is always perfectly in tune with his divine



hypostatic union The doctrine of faith that recognizes two natures (one human and one divine) in the one Divine Person of Jesus Christ.

intellect and divine will. His human will “does not resist or oppose but rather submits to his divine and almighty will” (CCC, 475). For example, because of the union of his human and divine natures, in his human nature Jesus is able both to make present his “intimate and immediate knowledge” of God the Father and to know the secret thoughts of humans. Christ “showed the divine penetration he had into the secret thoughts of human hearts” (CCC, 473).

Jesus is the living, ever-present sacrament of God because he is the only Son of the Father, the eternal Word made flesh. As the Son of God, Jesus is one of the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity. He told his disciples the night before his Death, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. . . . I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (Jn 14:9–10). God the Father’s eternal being and love are manifested in the missions of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus not only tells people about God’s love, but he also personally manifests and makes that love present in his very Person. In fact,

his humanity appeared as a “sacrament,” that is, the sign and instrument of his divinity and of the salvation he brings: what was visible in his earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of his divine sonship and redemptive mission. (CCC, 515)

For example, Jesus doesn’t just talk about water or use it as a sign of God’s love; rather, he himself is the source of the living water of eternal life: “Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14).

Jesus doesn’t just multiply bread as visible proof of God’s love. He himself is the living bread come down from heaven: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51).

Likewise, Jesus doesn't merely talk about light in his parables as a way to explain the absence of darkness (see Luke 11:33–36). He himself is God's light to a world darkened by sin: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn 8:12).

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that Christ himself is the mystery of salvation: "For there is no other mystery of God, except Christ" (St. Augustine, quoted in CCC, 774). To put it more simply, Jesus himself is the only way to God the Father; he says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6).

Your Participation in Christ's Mission

These examples of words and actions from Jesus' ministry on earth do not simply "point to" or "reveal" God's love to the world. Jesus' teaching and actions *are* this love and saving grace in the world, personally

present. "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8). In fact, Christ's whole life—beginning with the mystery of the Incarnation and culminating in the saving events of the Paschal Mystery—manifests God's love to the world. These mysteries of Christ's life are efficacious signs of God's love. The word *efficacious* means "capable of producing a desired effect." Sacraments, too, are efficacious but only due to Christ himself acting in and through them.

Christ established the Church on the foundation of the Apostles (through the gift of the Holy Spirit) and instituted the Seven Sacraments so that his Church could administer them and he could be present to her always. "God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange" (CCC, 221).

Your participation in Christ's mission is intended to bring you into communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Through the Seven Sacraments, the Church continues Christ's work of perfectly worshipping the Father and of making redeeming grace available.



New Life in Christ

Jesus came into the world to bring full, abundant life for all (see John 10:10). St. Irenaeus, a second-century bishop who was killed for his faith, said it brilliantly: "The glory of God is the human person fully alive." Think about it: God rejoices when you live a full, abundant life. God's will is that you should live with him forever. The saving effect of the Paschal Mystery of Christ is a vibrant new life in the Blessed Trinity. You participate in this new life through the sacraments. The sacraments, in turn, empower you to share this new life with others.

ASSIGNMENT

Read the following Scripture passages. Summarize each as it pertains to the new life you receive in the sacraments and how you can share this new life with others.

- similes of salt and light (Matthew 5:13–16)
- parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31–33)
- parable of the weeds among the wheat (Matthew 13:24–30)

SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Use the chart you created to help you answer the following questions.

1. Why did the Son of God assume a human nature?
2. What does it mean to say that Christ is the “living, ever-present sacrament of God”?
3. What does it mean to say that the mysteries of Christ’s life—beginning with the mystery of the Incarnation—are efficacious?



COMPREHENSION

4. Share an example from the Gospels of how Jesus witnessed that “God is love.”



VOCABULARY

5. Define *hypostatic union*.



CRITICAL THINKING

6. How do the sacraments enable the Church to continue Christ’s work of perfectly worshipping the Father and of making redeeming grace available to humanity?

SECTION 1

The Church, the Universal Sacrament of Salvation

MAIN IDEA

The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation. She makes the saving action of Jesus present to you and completes his mission.



The Church's sacraments have meaning only in and through Jesus. All of the events of Jesus' entire life and saving work become the sacrament of salvation, "revealed and active in the Church's sacraments" (CCC, 774). Each sacrament is primarily and fundamentally a personal act of Christ himself acting through his Mystical Body, the Church. Each sacrament is the saving action of Christ in visible form; it is the act of Christ the High Priest who "entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12). In the words of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "it really is Christ who acts in the sacraments through the Holy Spirit for the Church" (CCC, 1120).

Jesus continues to live and work in the Church, especially in the Seven Sacraments. He acts through

the sacraments he instituted to communicate his grace to all. And, as the *Catechism* teaches, the sacraments "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" (CCC, 1127). Understanding this can help you recognize that the Church is the "universal sacrament of salvation" because Christ works through her. Thus she is the visible channel of grace to the whole human race. The late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago once explained, "As Christ is the sacrament of God—the visible and incarnate, efficacious and gratuitous bestowal of divine grace and life, so the Church is the sacrament of Christ in human history." The Church makes Christ present in today's world.

An analogy can be drawn here to the relationship between the moon and the sun. Just as the moon has no light of its own but shines in the night sky because it reflects the light of the sun, the Church is a light to the world because she reflects the light of Christ.



NOTE TAKING

Summarizing the Section. Create an outline like the one below in your notebook. As you read the section, use the outline to help you summarize the material.

- I. The Church meets the definition of *sacrament*
 - A. As mystery:
 - B. As visible sign:
 - C. As efficacious sign:
- II. The Church completes the mission of Christ
 - A. The Church as the Body of Christ
 - B. Implications of this understanding
 1. Communion with Christ:
 2. Communion with the Church:
 3. Communion with people throughout the world:

She makes this light—the grace of salvation and new life—available to all people.

To consider further how the Church is the sacrament of Christ, think about how the Church herself meets the definition of sacrament. First, a sacrament

is a *mystery*. Second, it is a *visible sign* of the unseen (invisible) divine reality. Third, a sacrament is an *efficacious sign*—something that makes real what it signifies. The Church also has these same three dimensions, explained in the following chart.

THE CHURCH AS MYSTERY

St. Paul spoke of the Church as a great mystery—something that cannot be fully explained or understood (see Ephesians 5:32). For this reason, he and the other writers of the New Testament described the Church in symbolic language. They used images that would help people understand the Church as mystery. Some of the images for the Church found in the New Testament include a flock of sheep (see John 21:15–19), a cultivated field or vineyard (see John 15:1–10), the Bride of Christ (see Ephesians 5:25–27), and the New Jerusalem (see Revelation 21:9–27).

THE CHURCH AS VISIBLE SIGN

The Church is the visible sign of Jesus Christ, whom we can no longer see in human form and who is the perfect sign of the Father’s saving love. In more detail:

The church is both human and divine, visible but endowed with invisible realities, zealous in action and dedicated to contemplation, present in the world, yet a migrant, so constituted that in it the human is directed toward and subordinated to the divine, the visible to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, the object of our quest (see Hebrews 13:14). (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2)

THE CHURCH AS EFFICACIOUS SIGN

The power of the Church to effect what she signifies was given by Christ to Peter and the Apostles when he told them, “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 16:19) and “Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt 18:18). He further promised them, “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:20) and

“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it.” (Jn 14:12–14)

Because of the power Jesus gave her, “The Church, then, both contains and communicates the invisible grace she signifies” (CCC, 774). As *Lumen Gentium* (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*) explains, “The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.” This was the reason the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council called the Church “the universal sacrament of salvation” (*Lumen Gentium*, 48).



As part of Christ's Body, you need to spend time with other members to worship God and grow together in your faith.

The Church Completes the Mission of Christ

The Church, the universal sacrament of salvation, completes the mission of Christ. This mission is to bring Catholics into communion with the Three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is Christ who pours out his Spirit among the members of his Church. “Through the Church’s sacraments, Christ communicates his Holy and sanctifying Spirit to the members of his Body” (CCC, 739).

When you respond in faith to God’s Word and become a member of Christ’s Body, you become intimately united with him. You are also united to other members of the Body of Christ and to people throughout the world. Through all the sacraments, you are “united in a hidden and real way to Christ in his Passion and glorification” (CCC, 790). In Baptism, in

particular, you are united to Christ’s Death and Resurrection. In the Eucharist, you share in the Body and Blood of the Lord, strengthening the bond of charity between you and Christ while reinforcing the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. Your participation in the sacraments helps you to live morally.

When you are united to Christ, you are first and foremost united to other members of the Body of Christ, the Church. This communion encompasses all members of the Church, both living and dead—the **Communion of Saints**. In addition, because you are united to Christ, you are also in communion with all other people throughout the world.

Communion of Saints The unity in Christ of all those he has redeemed: the Church on earth, in heaven, and in Purgatory.

Your Communion with Christ

Through your participation in the Church—and particularly due to the graces of the sacraments—you are in communion with Christ. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes the intimacy of this communion:

The comparison of the Church with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his Church. Not only is she gathered *around him*; she is united in *him*, in his body. (CCC, 789)

[The Church] draws her life from the word and the Body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ's Body. (CCC, 752)

The Church . . . is the visible sign of the communion in Christ between God and men. (CCC, 1071).

In his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (*Redeemer of Man*), Pope John Paul II (canonized by Pope Francis in 2014) wrote that communion with Christ is the Church's main purpose for existing—so that “each person may be able to find Christ, in order that Christ may walk with each person the path of life” (*Redemptor Hominis*, 13). That is why the Church is “the sacrament of unity” (CCC, 1140).

You also encounter Christ and delve more deeply into a relationship with the Blessed Trinity *whenever* you come together as Church. This means that when you celebrate the liturgy and when you do the things Christ did and in his name—minister to the sick, care for the needy, and show compassion to the stranger—you grow even more deeply in communion with Christ.

Your Communion with the Church

The Communion of Saints is defined as the “unity of all the redeemed, those on earth and those who have died” (CCC, Glossary). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* also teaches that “the Communion of Saints is

the Church” (CCC, 946). This statement has two meanings that help to explain how your membership in the Church brings you into union with all who belong to the Body of Christ.

First, everyone in the Church shares a communion in spiritual goods. Among these goods are the following:

- **COMMUNION IN THE FAITH.** The faith you share with other Catholics today is the same faith inherited from the Apostles.

- **COMMUNION OF THE SACRAMENTS.**

The sacraments of the Church unite you to the Communion of Saints because they unite you to God in Christ. The term *communion* is applicable to all of the sacraments, but it “is better suited to the Eucharist than to any other, because it is primarily the Eucharist that brings this communion about” (CCC, 950).

- **COMMUNION OF CHARISMS.**

A *charism* is a special gift, talent, or ability given to each Church member by the Holy Spirit. Charisms are intended to help build up the Church; they are for the good of all. The Church collectively shares the charisms her members have received individually.

- **COMMUNION OF GOODS.**

The early Christians held everything in common. So, too, “all Christians should be ready and eager to come to the help of the needy” (CCC, 952).

- **COMMUNION IN CHARITY.**

Every act of charity performed by Catholics benefits the entire Body of Christ. Every sin harms this communion.

Second, there is a communion of all holy people—in the Church in heaven, the Church in Purgatory, and the Church on earth. The saints in heaven intercede for those who are living and for the dead who are still being purified. The living can receive strength and aid

from the saints in heaven, and living members of the Church can pray for those who have died. “Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective” (CCC, 958).

Your membership and participation in the Church highlights the diversity of gifts and talents given for the welfare of the Church, with love as the foremost gift. The unity of the Mystical Body of Christ is able to succeed over any human divisions.

Your Communion with People throughout the World

The Church is the universal sacrament of salvation. The Church has a missionary mandate to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples and to baptize in Christ’s name. “The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love” (CCC, 850). Such unity can be understood by understanding *catholicity*, a mark of the Church. This mark has several implications for a Catholic’s participation in the

world and communion with others that apply to the relationship of Catholics with other members of the Church, with others who believe in Christ, and finally with all of humankind who are called by God’s grace to salvation.

The Church is joined, albeit imperfectly, to those who are baptized Christians but do not profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not remained united under the pope. With Orthodox churches, the communion is profound and, in the words of Pope Paul VI, “lacks little to attain the fullness that would permit a common celebration of the Lord’s Eucharist” (quoted in CCC, 838).

Non-Christians, too, are related to the Church in different ways. Jewish people hold a special place of honor because Jews first received God’s covenant. Because of a shared belief in one God, Muslims also are related to the Church.

The task to make all people disciples of Christ and sharers in the communion of love of the Blessed Trinity is a missionary mandate directed by the Holy Spirit. God wills the salvation of all people through the knowledge of the truth. The task requires that missionaries and all who witness the Gospel live lives of penance, accept the Cross, and abide in a deep respect for those who do not yet accept the Gospel.

Catholics must see all people as interconnected and part of the human family. Because God is the Father of all people, we must care about everyone as we care about the members of our own families. If people in another part of the world are suffering from famine, a natural disaster, or oppression, you and your community suffer with them and try to help them. This type of concern for others is called *human solidarity*.



BUILDING the Body of Christ

Read what St. Paul wrote about the Church as a body with many parts (1 Cor 12:14–26) and the Church as a community (Rom 12:9–18). Then research information from Catholic Relief Services for ideas on how you can practically be a witness to the faith by serving others both in and out of the Catholic Church. Write a proposal for your plan of service in this area. Incorporate a reference to some of St. Paul’s words into your plan. Make sure your plan can be started and well on the way to completion during the course of this semester. Put the plan into action.



Remembering the Communion of Saints

Make a prayer card as a reminder of the Communion of Saints. Cut an equilateral triangle out of construction paper or card stock. On the front at one corner, list one or more names of living people who are pilgrims with you in the journey of faith. In the second corner, list one or more names of people of faith who have died but are not canonized saints. In the third corner, list one or more names of saints in heaven to whom you have a particular attachment. Finally, put your own name in the center of the triangle. On the back, write your own prayer of communion with these people. Pray for their spiritual well-being, and also ask them to help you be a better Catholic.

SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Use the outline you created to help you answer the following questions.

1. How does the Church meet the definition of mystery as the term is applied to the sacraments?
2. In what ways is the Church a visible sign of the Father's love?
3. How does the Church complete the mission of Christ?



COMPREHENSION

4. Explain how the Church shares a communion in charity.



VOCABULARY

5. Define *Communion of Saints*.



APPLICATION

6. Reflect on a special gift, or charism, the Holy Spirit has given you. Explain how you can use this charism in a way that benefits others and builds up the Church.

SECTION 2

The Sacraments Transform the Church and the World

MAIN IDEA

The Church is the instrument of God's grace. Members of the Church are called to participate in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king.



As sacrament, the Church is the instrument Christ uses for the salvation of all people. As the universal sacrament of salvation, the Church makes the mystery of God's love present to all.

The Church “is the visible plan of God's love for humanity” because God desires “that the whole human race may become one People of God, form one Body of Christ, and be built up into one temple of the Holy Spirit.” (CCC, 776, quoting Pope Paul VI)

The Church, as the sacrament of Christ, has the power to transform the world. While the transformation has already begun, the Church is also a sign and an instrument of the unity that has yet to be realized.

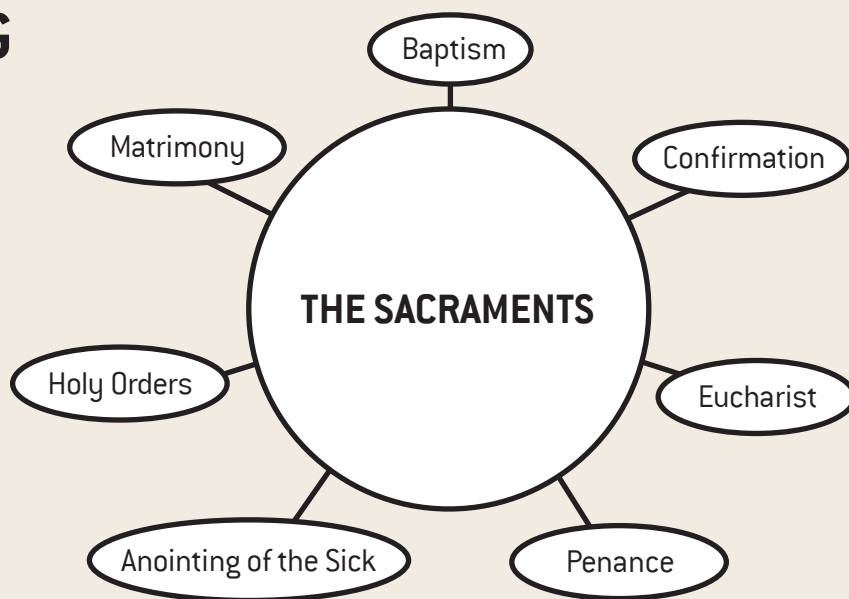
How does Christ use the Church as his instrument of salvation for all? At Baptism, you are incorporated into the Church and become a member of the Body of Christ. “The baptized have become ‘living stones’ to be ‘built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood’” (CCC, 1268, quoting 1 Pt 2:5). By becoming a member of the Church through Baptism, you receive the rights of a Christian, including the right to receive the other



NOTE TAKING

Using a Concept Diagram.

Create a diagram like the one to the right describing how Catholics are transformed through the grace of each of the sacraments. Then summarize how the Seven Sacraments shape a Catholic's mission to be priest, prophet, and king.



sacraments. You also are charged with the responsibility to profess the faith and share it with others as part of the Church's missionary mandate.

The Second Vatican Council summarized how Catholics deepen their participation in the Church through their participation in the sacraments. Here is an overview of the Council's statements on the sacraments and how they impact you:

- *Baptism.* Your faith and participation in this sacrament make you a member of the Church and the People of God. You are “reborn” as a son or daughter of God (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).
- *Confirmation.* Your identity as a Catholic is strengthened. “The Holy Spirit endows you with special strength” so that you may act as a true witnesses of Christ, spreading and defending the faith (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).
- *Eucharist.* “Strengthened in Holy Communion by the body of Christ, [you] manifest in a concrete way that unity of the people of God which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about” by this sacrament (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).
- *Penance and Reconciliation.* Every sin is not only an offense against God; it is also an offense against the Church. Sin separates you from the Church. This sacrament forgives sin and restores your unity with God and with the Church (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 11).
- *Anointing of the Sick.* This sacrament strengthens the sick and suffering members of the Church to “contribute to the welfare of the whole people of God by associating themselves freely with the passion and death of Christ” (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).
- *Holy Orders.* This sacrament enables bishops, priests, and deacons to “feed the Church in Christ's name with the word and the grace of God” (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).
- *Matrimony.* As a sign of oneness between Christ and the Church, this sacrament strengthens married couples to help one another attain holiness in their lives together and to build up the Church by

“the rearing and education of their children” in the faith (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).

As a member of the Church, you join in carrying out the mission of Christ in today's world. Just as Jesus had a threefold mission as priest, prophet, and king, so “the whole People of God participates in these three offices of Christ and bears the responsibilities for mission and service that flow from them” (CCC, 783).

Now consider how participating in the Church helps you to participate in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king.



PRIEST

- All the baptized share in the priesthood of Christ.
- You participate in Christ's priestly mission when you provide spiritual support, such as through your prayers, to another person.



PROPHET

- A prophet witnesses to the Catholic faith and proclaims God's truth.
- Being a prophet sometimes means you have to go against the tide of public opinion.



KING

- Jesus fulfilled his kingly mission by dying for the sins of all.
- You can participate in Christ's kingly mission when you put the needs of others before your own needs.

Your Mission as Priest

On the basis of your Baptism, you are to act as Christ. You are to offer yourself to God in worship, become holy, and help others grow in holiness. Baptism makes you a member of a holy priesthood. This *common priesthood* differs from the hierarchical or *ministerial priesthood* of bishops and priests (see page 46). Duties of the common priesthood include:

- *Spiritual sacrifices to God.* You have a responsibility and duty to worship God at all times and in all places by your holy actions. “All [the laity’s] works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed, even the hardships of life if patiently born—all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (CCC, 901).
- *Personal holiness.* Through the Church, God sanctifies your life, transforming you with his presence and grace through the Holy Spirit. Grace is not a particular thing or a quantifiable amount. Rather, grace is a sharing in the actual life and love of the Trinity. You become holy because you are united with God in grace. Each sacrament enables you to share God’s life in a particular way. In other words, each sacrament gives a special grace. For example, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick brings you the healing dimension of God’s life and love. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation offers you the forgiving dimension of God’s life and love. All sacraments also dispense *sanctifying grace*

theological virtues Three important virtues, first infused at Baptism, that enable Catholics to know God and lead them to union with him; they are faith [belief in, and personal knowledge of, God], hope [trust in God’s salvation and his bestowal of graces needed to attain it], and charity [love of God and love of neighbor]. Catholics can also receive an increase in the theological virtues through reception of the other sacraments and through the application of the theological virtues in their lives.

(a grace that heals your human nature, wounded by sin, and gives you a share in the divine life) and *actual grace* (divine help to perform some good action you would not ordinarily be able to do on your own, such as forgiving an enemy, avoiding a habitual sin, or remaining faithful to Jesus through torture or death). Grace is never something you “earn.” Your holiness is God’s wonderful and generous gift to you.

- *Helping others grow in holiness.* In making you holy, the sacraments help to infuse the three **theological virtues** into your life. They also help you form a community of faith, hope, and charity with others.

Your Mission as Prophet

While prophets can foretell and have foretold the future, a prophet does more than just that. A prophet speaks God’s Word to others, witnesses to the truth about Jesus Christ, and reminds people to persevere in the true faith. As part of his threefold office of priest, prophet, and king, Jesus called people to repent of their sins and turn back to God’s covenant of love. As a member of the Church, you share in the prophetic mission of Christ whenever you give witness to him through your words, actions, or example. You also act as prophet whenever you encourage others in the Church to persevere in faith despite times of discouragement, disillusionment, and confusion.

Among the graces of the Church’s sacraments are those that inspire Catholics to greater discipleship, including enabling some to become *evangelists*—people who spread the message of Christ throughout the world. In effect, you become “God’s co-worker,” “God’s field,” and “God’s building” (1 Cor 3:9). You help proclaim the faith to others *in* the Church through discussions, religious education classes, Bible study groups, and the use of social media. Furthermore, you help proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to those outside the Church by your every word and action.



As a member of the universal church (see page 323), you are able to join with people from around the world in prayer and worship.

While ordained bishops and priests work as prophets mainly within the Church, the **laity** carry out their prophetic mission primarily *outside* the Church, in the secular world—in neighborhoods, workplaces, shopping malls, schools, hospitals, and so forth. The Second Vatican Council clarified that laypeople have “the special vocation” to help build God’s Kingdom “by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. . . . They are called by God to work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven” (*Lumen Gentium*, 31).

Think about it: Everywhere you go, you can bring Christ’s presence and love to others. In everything you

laity All the unordained members of the Church who have been initiated into the Church through Baptism.

do—whether it is working in a grocery store, expressing yourself on a social networking site, counseling a friend, competing in sports against a rival school, or talking with your parents—you can be Christ to others. As St. Augustine once said, “Let us rejoice then and give thanks that we have become not only Christians, but Christ himself.”

Your Royal Mission

Many people equate royalty with worldly power and riches. However, the true role of those in power is to serve the people they are charged to protect and provide for. True royalty—as Jesus represented by his life—does not seek to be served but rather seeks to serve others, especially the poor and the suffering. Just as Jesus came “to bring glad tidings to the poor” (Lk 4:18) and “to seek and to save what was lost” (Lk

19:10), so you participate in his royal mission whenever you work for justice and peace and serve others in charity.

You can participate in Christ's mission as king by serving others individually, such as by showing care and compassion for a classmate or neighbor in need, or as part of a Church ministry, such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a food pantry, or a ministry that serves the elderly in your community. When you serve others and seek to treat them as Christ would—with love,

patience, understanding, and genuine caring—you are living your royal mission.

As sacrament, the Church brings the healing, forgiving, and comforting love of God to all those in need. When you involve yourself in the Church's priestly, prophetic, and royal mission, you become—as the Church—a sign and an instrument of Christ's presence in every part of today's world.

SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Use the diagram you created to help you answer the following questions.

1. How is a person transformed through the graces of the Sacrament of Baptism?
2. How is a Catholic transformed through the Sacrament of Penance?
3. How can the sacraments help you live your mission as prophet?



COMPREHENSION

4. Why is the mission to serve others known as a royal mission?
5. Describe the prophetic mission.



REFLECTION

6. Choose either the prophetic mission or the royal mission, and write a paragraph explaining how you can more fully commit to living out that mission. Make your answer practical and specific.

SECTION 3

Breaking Open a Definition of the Sacraments

MAIN IDEA

In the sacraments, God freely dispenses his grace to you and makes you a sharer in the divine life.



In the remaining chapters of this text, you will explore the meaning, signs, and effects of each of the Seven Sacraments.

This primary definition of *sacraments* is taken from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

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)

This definition contains some complex and important ideas. The next sections break open the ideas.

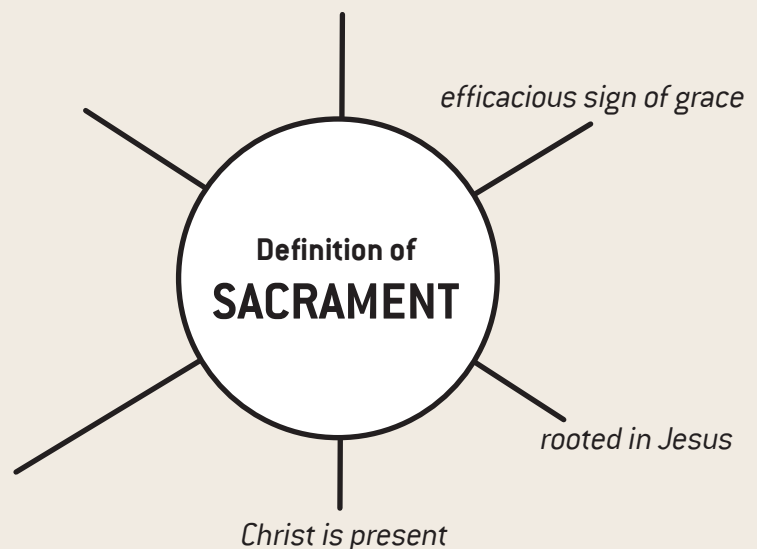
Sacraments Are Efficacious Signs of Grace

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that sacraments “have efficacy from the incarnate Word himself.” Recall that *efficacious* is a term that means “capable of producing a desired effect.” The sacraments themselves are efficacious signs, meaning they effect, or bring about,



NOTE TAKING

Forming Word Webs. Create a word web for the definition of *Sacrament*. To make a word web, draw lines from the circle to key words and phrases that will help you understand the meaning of the concept. Add as many lines as necessary.



what they signify and signify what they effect. As an “efficacious sign of grace,” each sacrament confers a grace that is proper to it and that comes from Christ.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines grace as “free and undeserved help that God gives us” so that we can respond to his call (CCC, 1996). Grace is “a participation in the life of God” (CCC, 1997).

It is important to understand that grace is not some *thing* that is outside of the relationship you have with God. Rather, grace is the gift by which you participate in the life of the Blessed Trinity. Grace is, first and foremost, the gift of God’s very own life, but grace also includes the ability God gives you to participate in, and collaborate with, his work. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, “the fruits of the sacraments also depend on the disposition of the one who receives them” (CCC, 1128).

God gives you his grace in many ways and through many opportunities in your life. When they are celebrated “worthily in faith,” the Seven Sacraments “confer the grace that they signify,” providing opportunities for encountering God the Father and God the Son, through the grace of the Holy Spirit (see CCC, 1127). Sacraments strengthen and deepen your relationship with Jesus, with the Church, and with all people throughout the world. They draw you into the wonder and completeness of the divine life.

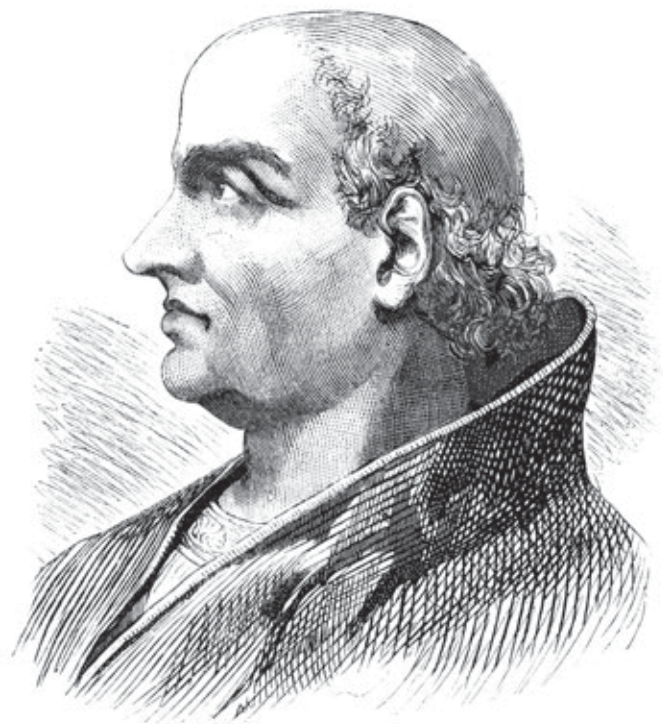
Sacraments Are Instituted by Christ

The sacraments are rooted in Jesus and traceable to him. “Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law” (CCC, 1210). His ongoing presence in the Church through the gift of the Holy Spirit has helped the Church know and understand the Seven Sacraments as times when Christ is present with the Church in a special way. The same Jesus who in the efficacious signs of his earthly ministry healed the sick, forgave

the sinner, celebrated marriage with his friends, and fed thousands with bread and fish and with his words is present today in the Seven Sacraments. As St. Leo the Great put it, “What was visible in our Savior has passed over to his sacraments.”

Sacraments Are Commemorations of the Paschal Mystery

The sacraments celebrate the Paschal Mystery—the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ—that brought about the salvation of humankind. In each sacrament, the saving actions of Christ are made present. The way Christ dispenses the fruits of the Paschal Mystery until he comes again is the sacramental economy. The term *economy* originates from a Greek word that means “management of the household.” The *sacramental economy* refers to the way Christ cares for his household, the Church.



St. Leo the Great

Of course, the actual historical events of the Paschal Mystery occurred only once, but by the power of the Holy Spirit the liturgy makes the events truly present today. The Paschal Mystery brings a person into communion with the Blessed Trinity and with Christ's Body, the Church. Chapter 2 explores more about how the Blessed Trinity works in the liturgy.

Sacraments Are the Masterworks of God

In the sacraments, God really becomes present. No created object, spoken word, or ritualized action can ever “force” God to be present. Nothing anyone says or does can control what God himself says or does. Pouring water over someone's head or saying certain words doesn't produce God “on demand.” Instead, God comes to you in the sacraments because he has chosen these rituals and times, places, and ways to be present. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* simply and beautifully puts it, the sacraments are “the masterworks of God” (CCC, 1116).

A sacrament always involves a relationship between God and humanity. When you participate in a sacrament, God acts first, and then you act in response. God takes the initiative of being present, of offering you a share in his own life and love. You, in turn, open your heart to the divine, giving to God through your worship and by accepting God's Word as the truth on which to base your life. In other words, every sacrament is an encounter with Christ, a dialogue, and a two-way street.

This means that a sacrament is a visible sign that confers the grace that the liturgical rite of the sacrament signifies. When a sacrament is properly administered and celebrated worthily in faith, grace is received. Grace is necessary for salvation. Through the sacraments, God invites you to enter into communion with him and with all those who are celebrating with you.

But even this definition falls short of what a sacrament truly is. You also need to realize that each sacrament fills you with grace and *transforms* you. Each sacrament works to make you completely whole and holy. You grow in God's likeness through your participation in the sacraments. Each sacrament empowers you to come alive in the Holy Spirit, so that your every thought and action can praise God and give witness to Christ's saving power.

In summary, every sacrament has four aspects, or dimensions:

- 1** *memorial*—a remembering that God is present now and has always acted for the benefit of all in the past;
- 2** *celebration*—a Church-approved ritual, involving objects, words, and actions, that gives worship and thanks to God for salvation in Christ;
- 3** *communion*—a real encounter of union with Christ, with members of the Church, and with people throughout the world; and
- 4** *transformation*—an empowerment to become more holy and to minister to others through the gift of God's grace.

It is important to realize that these four aspects are not like stages or steps. One does not necessarily happen before the other, nor is there any particular order. Rather, each sacrament—in its entirety—is a memorial, a celebration, a communion, and a transformation that must be understood through the sacramentality of Christ, particularly through the mysteries of the Incarnation and the hypostatic union.

WHY SEVEN SACRAMENTS?

Why are there exactly Seven Sacraments in the Catholic Church? The simple answer is that Jesus instituted exactly seven. Take some time to read the following Gospel passages to discover how the sacraments are connected to Jesus' ministry and how he met people in their time of need. Answer:

1. Which sacrament is each set of passages connected with?
2. What value(s) of Jesus appear in the passages?

GOSPEL PASSAGES

- Matthew 9:35–38 and Matthew 28:16–20
- Luke 22:14–20 and John 6:47–58
- John 2:1–11
- Luke 12:8–12 and John 16:5–16
- Luke 7:36–50 and John 20:19–23
- Mark 1:40–45 and Mark 8:22–26
- Matthew 3:13–17 and John 3:3–8

Why Seven Sacraments? In the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas expanded on the simple answer and taught that human development is likewise marked by a similar seven stages. He thought that while it was not mandatory for Christ to institute exactly Seven Sacraments, it was reasonable because of the way human lives unfold:

- You are born. (Baptism)
- You grow. (Confirmation)
- You are fed. (Eucharist)
- You are healed. (Penance)
- You recover. (Anointing of the Sick)
- You need, and form, family. (Matrimony)
- You need, and respond to, leaders. (Holy Orders)

What do you think of St. Thomas's reasoning?

SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Use the word web you created for this section to help you complete the following items.

1. Name and explain four aspects, or dimensions, of the sacraments.
2. What are some words that show that the sacraments are traceable to Christ?



COMPREHENSION

3. What does it mean to say that the Paschal Mystery is made present in the celebration of the sacraments?
4. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes the sacraments as “the masterworks of God” (CCC, 1116). Briefly explain what is meant by this phrase.



REFLECTION

5. Recall your participation in one of the sacraments. Write a paragraph describing any way you have noticed God’s grace transforming your life through a sacrament.




Section Summaries



Focus Question

How does the Church reveal and communicate Christ's saving work through the sacraments?

Complete one of the following:


-  Create a collage that creatively expresses how the Church reveals Christ's saving work to the faithful and to the world.
-  Write a journal entry summarizing what you have learned about the Church and her role in carrying on Christ's work of salvation. Then write questions you have that you can seek answers to throughout this course.
-  Write a three-paragraph essay explaining how the Church reveals and communicates Christ's saving work. Imagine that your audience for the essay is unfamiliar with the Catholic faith.



INTRODUCTION (PAGES 3–7)

Jesus Christ and the Sacramental Life of the Church

Christ makes himself known in the sacraments and liturgy, known as the *sacramental economy*. Christ is the living sacrament of God by virtue of his Incarnation and hypostatic union. The mysteries of Christ's life—the Incarnation, his ministry, and the Paschal Mystery—are efficacious signs of God's love. Christ's entire holy and sanctifying humanity is an efficacious sign. The Son of God makes God's love present to the world. The sacraments, too, are efficacious signs, but only because of Christ acting in and through them.

-  Write a two- to three-paragraph journal entry describing how you have experienced God's love through the work of Jesus Christ.



SECTION 1 (PAGES 8–13)

The Church, the Universal Sacrament of Salvation

In the Church, especially in her sacraments, Jesus continues to live and work among us. The Church is the “universal sacrament of salvation” and an efficacious sign because she makes the saving actions of the Risen Christ present to you through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Church completes the mission of Christ, which is to bring the Church into communion with the Blessed Trinity.



Read paragraphs 1088 and 1089 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Write a two-paragraph summary that supports the statement that the Church “makes the saving actions of the Risen Christ present to us.”



SECTION 2 (PAGES 14–18)

The Sacraments Transform the Church and the World

As sacrament, the Church is the instrument Christ uses to offer and facilitate the gift of salvation. Baptism incorporates you into the Church and makes you a member of the Body of Christ. This gives you the rights of a Christian, including the right to receive the other sacraments. You are also charged to profess your faith and share the faith with others.



Tell two concrete ways you can profess and share your faith in Christ with others.



SECTION 3 (PAGES 19–23)

Breaking Open a Definition of the Sacraments

The sacraments are efficacious signs, meaning they effect what they signify and signify what they effect. They are instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, and through them divine life is dispensed to us.



Write one or two paragraphs explaining your understanding of the meaning of the phrase “they effect what they signify” as it pertains to the sacraments.

Chapter Assignments

Choose and complete at least one of the following three assignments assessing your understanding of the material in this chapter.

1. Creating a Musical Collection



Using contemporary Christian music, liturgical hymns, or other music with suitable themes, create a music medley (e.g., the audio portion via YouTube) that connects to, or supports, the themes covered in this chapter. Your compilation should include at least seven songs. Suggested themes include the following:

- Jesus as the Way to the Father
- the Church as the instrument of salvation
- the Church as the Body of Christ
- your mission as priest, prophet, and king (or specifically one of these titles)
- one or more of the individual sacraments

For Catholic hymns, check the index of a parish or school hymnal for titles. After you have made your music selections, give your medley a title. Create suitable cover art or a cover slide, if possible.

2. Developing a Lesson Plan



Develop a lesson plan that can be used for teaching the main content of this chapter to a group in a parish youth ministry setting. The object of the lesson plan is to make sure teens who do not attend Catholic high school are able to answer the chapter's Focus Question—How does the Church reveal and communicate Christ's saving work through the sacraments?—by the end of a ninety-minute session. The plan should include the following elements:

- an icebreaker to begin the session that has a connection with the sacraments
- a succinct one-page script that summarizes the chapter and that could be read by a youth minister to the teens
- one suggestion for a small-group activity to help teens reflect on, respond to, or teach one another a key part of the material
- five test items (in several different formats) that can be used at the end of the session to assess the teens' understanding of the material

3. Understanding Primary Sources



Read chapter 1 of the Second Vatican Council document *Lumen Gentium*. You can find the document on the Vatican website. Write a two- or three-page essay summarizing the mystery of the Church as explained in this chapter of *Lumen Gentium*. Include at least five quotations from the document in your essay, and provide proper citations for the quotations. Conclude your essay by explaining how your reading of chapter 1 of *Lumen Gentium* strengthened your understanding of what you learned in this chapter of your text.

Faithful Disciple

St. John Paul II



Pope John Paul II gives Communion to people attending open-air Mass at the People's Stadium in Kinshasa, Zaire, on August 15, 1985.

In 1978, after the short reign of Pope John Paul I, when the College of Cardinals gathered again to elect a new pope, they surprised the world by electing the first Polish pope in history. His name was Karol Wojtyła, and he took the name John Paul II. His papal reign was the third longest in history: nearly twenty-seven years.

As a young man growing up in Poland, Karol Wojtyła followed a road to the priesthood that was neither easy nor simple. When World War II began, the Nazis closed the university where Karol had been a student. He was then forced to work in a quarry and later in a chemical plant. Deciding to be a priest, he studied in a secret “underground” seminary. He was ordained a priest in 1946, just after World War II ended. After ordination, Karol Wojtyła served as a parish priest and chaplain for university students in Poland. At only age thirty-eight he was named a bishop, and he later attended the Second Vatican Council.

Pope John Paul II frequently expressed his love of the sacraments. He explained how the mission of God the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit is present in them:

What else are the sacraments (all of them!), if not the action of Christ in the Holy Spirit? When the Church baptizes, it is Christ who baptizes; when the Church absolves, it is Christ who absolves; when the Church celebrates the Eucharist, it is Christ who celebrates

it: “This is my body.” And so on. All the sacraments are an action of Christ, the action of God in Christ. (*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*)

Pope John Paul II died on April 2, 2005. At his funeral Mass, many in the vast crowd outside St. Peter’s Basilica took up the chant “Magnus, Magnus, Magnus,” meaning “Great, Great, Great.” It was a public proclamation that Pope John Paul II should be given the title “Pope John Paul the Great” and should be remembered as a man who had great influence in the twentieth century while helping usher in the new millennium. This title is still used to describe him today. Even more significantly, Pope John Paul II was canonized by Pope Francis in April 2014.



Reading Comprehension

1. What was one surprising fact about the election of Karol Wojtyla?
2. Name two jobs that Karol Wojtyla held during World War II.
3. Who always acts in the sacraments?



Writing Task

- Choose one sentence from St. John Paul II’s quotation on the sacraments, and write a paragraph expressing what it means for you.

Explaining the Faith

Why do we need sacraments at all? Aren't the sacraments just celebrations to mark significant times in a person's life? And why not just approach God without signs, set prayers, or the help of the Church and a priest?



You may associate the celebration of sacraments with the commemoration of certain age markers in life; for example, Baptism shortly after birth or Confirmation during adolescence. However, sacraments are much more than simply celebrations of significant life moments. In the sacraments, you can encounter God in a uniquely powerful, grace-giving way. Far from blocking your full individual experience of God, sacraments bring you closer to him. Sacraments give you a point of contact with God's grace through things you can feel, smell, see, taste, and touch: water, wine, bread, oil, and the laying on of hands. Hearing the words of sacramental rituals spoken aloud, and speaking them yourself, can transform you in profound ways.

Sacraments proclaim and celebrate the mysteries professed in the Apostles' Creed, especially the Paschal Mystery by which Christ redeemed the world. These words and signs don't replace or diminish your interior prayer; instead, they strengthen and nourish it. They affirm your identity and your unity with every child of God.

This is true not just because of the words and the signs themselves but because of their connection to the Church. "Christ lives and acts in and with his Church" (CCC, 1076). That means Christ is truly present in the sacraments when they are conferred by an ordained minister of the Church. Through them, Christ acts in the Church to fill with his grace each person who receives the sacraments. This is the sacramental economy, the way in which the Church brings Christ's living and real presence to all people and the way in which Christ continues his work to bring about the salvation of humanity. Because the Church "both contains and communicates the invisible grace she signifies" (CCC, 774)—that is, the grace of Christ—you are able to access his grace directly in the sacraments.

Of course, all people can always pray directly to God. The prayers we say in the silence of our hearts are of irreplaceable value. However, Christ gave us the Church to teach and enrich us with his grace. He gave us the sacraments for our salvation. The sacraments are irreplaceable in Christian life.



Further Research

- Read paragraphs 774 to 776 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Write a one-paragraph summary answering the following questions: How are the sacraments connected to Christ’s saving work on earth? How do the sacraments figure into “the visible plan of God’s love for humanity” (CCC, 776)?

Prayer

Jesus, Abide in Me

Lord, you said, “Remain in me, as I remain in you . . . because without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:4–5).

Lord Jesus, reveal yourself to me.
Give me the strength to go out and
profess that I am your disciple.
Show me that you alone can fill my heart.
Teach me to accept your freedom
and embrace your truth.
Make me a messenger of the
certainty that I have truly been liberated
through your Death and Resurrection.
Let my experience of your love
generate through me a more just
society and a better world.

—based on a prayer by St. John Paul II