



## Sacramental Information

The liturgical life of the Catholic Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments. There are seven sacraments in the Church:

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Eucharist
- Penance or Reconciliation
- Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.

The purpose of the sacraments is to make people holy, to build up the body of Christ, and finally, to give worship to God; but being signs, they also have a teaching function. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and object, they also nourish, strengthen, and express it; that is why they are called "sacraments of faith." The sacraments impart grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them disposes the faithful most effectively to receive this grace in a fruitful manner, to worship God rightly, and to practice charity.

Worship is integral to our lives as Christians. When we engage in the prayer and ritual of the Church, we are formed as Church. Our sacramental rites are of primary importance while we are gathered.

Although it is not a sacrament, Christian Burial will be addressed.

### Baptism

Baptism, the first and fundamental sacrament and the gate to the other sacraments, is the purifying and sanctifying sacrament of rebirth. It is the means by which its recipients are incorporated into the church in a sacramental bond of unity.

### Confirmation

By a signing with the gift of the Spirit, confirmation enriches the baptized with the Holy Spirit, binding them more perfectly to the Church, and strengthening them in their witness to Christ by word and deed and in their work to bring to its fullness the Body of Christ. Confirmation is conferred through anointing with chrism and the laying on of hands.

### Eucharist

The Eucharist is the most august sacrament, in which Christ himself is contained, offered and received, and by which the Church constantly lives and grows. The Eucharistic sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated over the centuries, is the summit and source of all Christian life and worship; it signifies and effects the unity of the people of God and achieves the building up of the Body of Christ.

As children reach the age of reason, generally around age seven, the Church extends to them an invitation to celebrate the sacrament of Eucharist. The initiation into the Christian community that took place at baptism is further extended by inviting children to enter fully into the heart of Christian faith through participation in the Eucharist. [Read more about the Mass.](#)

## **Penance or Reconciliation**

Through penance, the faithful receive pardon through God's mercy for the sins they have committed. At the same time, they are reconciled with the Church community. The [confession](#), or disclosure, of sins frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others.

## **Anointing of the Sick**

Through the sacrament of anointing, Christ strengthens the faithful who are afflicted by illness, providing them with the strongest means of support. Jesus showed great concern for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick and commanded his followers to do the same. The celebration of this sacrament is an opportunity for the deepening of the faith of the community who are able to witness the faith and devotion of those being anointed.

## **Marriage**

The Church has a rich tradition in its teaching on sacramental marriage and covenantal union. The Old Testament authors write of God making a covenant with the chosen people and promising them that they will never be forsaken. The New Testament authors write of Jesus as the new covenant and compare the relationship of Jesus with the Church to the relationship of a husband and wife. The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership for the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring.

**\*Note:** Engaged couples planning to be married at St. James should make contact with Fr. Fleming or the parish office at least six months before they plan to marry, but should know that many couples do so at least a year prior to their preferred date.

## **Holy Orders**

Holy Orders is the sacrament by which bishops, priests and deacons are ordained and receive the power and grace to perform their sacred duties. The sacred rite by which orders are conferred is called ordination. The apostles were ordained by Jesus at the Last Supper so that others could share in his priesthood.

## **Christian Burial**

The Church asks spiritual assistance for the departed, honors their bodies, and at the same time brings solace of hope to the living. The celebration of the Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living. While proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to the Christian hope in the resurrection, the funeral rites also recall to all who take part in them God's mercy and judgment and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis.