

The Sacred Liturgy and the Seven Sacraments



Catholicism 101 (RCIA) 2011-12

Liturgy

- The word liturgy comes from the Greek word *liturgia* which means “public work”
 - The liturgy is the Church’s official *public* worship
 - Through it Christ continues the *work* of Redemption
 - This is different from private worship like the rosary, novenas, prayers to the Sacred Heart, or prayers to the saints
- The liturgy is the work of the most Holy Trinity
 - The Father pours out his blessings in the Word and Spirit, and the paschal mystery of Christ is signified and made present by the power of the Holy Spirit
- 4 Aspects
 - The Eucharistic Sacrifice
 - 7 Sacraments
 - Liturgy of Hours
 - Sacramentals



The Earthly and Heavenly Liturgy



- The liturgy is the action of both God and man; the “whole Christ” (head and members) acts in the liturgy
 - As our High Priest Christ celebrates with his body, which is the Church in heaven and on earth
- The Heavenly liturgy which we learn of in the book of Revelation is celebrated by the angels, the saints of the Old and New Testament, Mary, the apostles, the martyrs, and the “great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue” (Rev 7:9)
 - In the sacraments we participate in the heavenly liturgy
 - Heaven truly comes to earth in the liturgy

Christ, the Church, & the Sacraments

- “What was visible in our Savior has passed over into his mysteries” (St. Leo the Great)
 - The mysteries of Christ’s life are the foundations of the sacraments
 - Christ has entrusted the sacramental mysteries to the Church and they are dispensed by his ministers



- We call these mysteries of Christ *Sacraments of the Church* because:
 - They are “from her” in that they are actions of Christ’s mystical body, the Church
 - They are “for her” in that they build and sanctify the Church

Christ, the Church, & the Sacraments

- Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, ... but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Mt. 18:20)."
(Vat II, Sacrosanctum Concilium, 7)

The Sacraments

- There are a total of seven sacraments
 - Baptism
 - Confirmation
 - Eucharist
 - Penance
 - Anointing of the Sick
 - Holy Orders
 - Marriage



The Seven Sacraments

- There are different ways to categorize the 7 sacraments; one way is by looking at what they do
 - Sacraments of initiation
 - Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist
 - Sacraments of healing
 - Penance, Anointing of the Sick
 - Sacraments of vocation
 - Holy Orders, Marriage



A Sacrament

- ***A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace***
- Outward sign
 - Form (words) and matter (sacred action)
- Instituted by Christ
 - Scriptural foundation
- To give Grace
 - Effect of the sacrament



Outward Sign

- Every sacrament deploys the use of sensible things which constitutes its outward sign
 - These signs and symbols come from *creation* (water, bread, wine, fire), *social life* (washing, anointing), and the *history of salvation* (sacrifices, laying on of hands)
 - There are two inseparable aspects to the outward sign: matter and form
- Matter (actions)
 - The concrete elements and actions necessary to bring the sacrament about, e.g. pouring of water, anointing with oil, laying on of hands
- Form (words)
 - The words necessary to specify the meaning of the sacrament
- The outward signs bring about what they signify
 - E.g. in baptism the washing with water and the words brings about the cleansing of the soul from original and personal sin



Instituted by Christ

- There are references in the Scriptures to each of the seven sacraments
 - At the time of their institution (baptism, penance)
 - Leading up to their institution (marriage, holy orders)
 - After their institution (confirmation, eucharist, anointing of the sick)



The Upper Room in Jerusalem

To Give Grace

- **Sacramental grace** – is a grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ, that is proper to each sacrament
 - Each sacrament has unique effects and gifts
- The Sacraments also give (or increase) sanctifying grace and many actual graces
 - **Sanctifying grace** – God’s life within us
 - **Actual grace** – gifts for specific actions and circumstances



Ex Opere Operato



- The Sacraments are effective *ex opere operato*, that is, by the very fact that the sacramental action is performed
 - This is the case since it is Christ who acts in the sacraments and communicates the grace they signify
 - Thus, the efficacy of the sacraments do not depend upon the personal holiness of the minister
- Yet, the fruits of the sacraments do depend on the dispositions of the one who receives them

Sacramental Character

- **Sacramental character** - is a spiritual seal which confers an indelible (permanent) mark on the soul
- The three sacraments which bestow a sacramental character are:
 - Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders
 - Since this character is permanent these sacraments can only be received once
- It has four characteristics
 - **Configures** one to Christ
 - **Distinguishes** one from others
 - **Disposes** one to live out the character
 - **Obliges** one to live out the character



Liturgical Year

- The liturgical year cycles through different seasons similar to the natural year

- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- Spring



- This parallels the life of Jesus Christ – based upon the central mysteries of His life

- Birth
- Life
- Death
- Resurrection



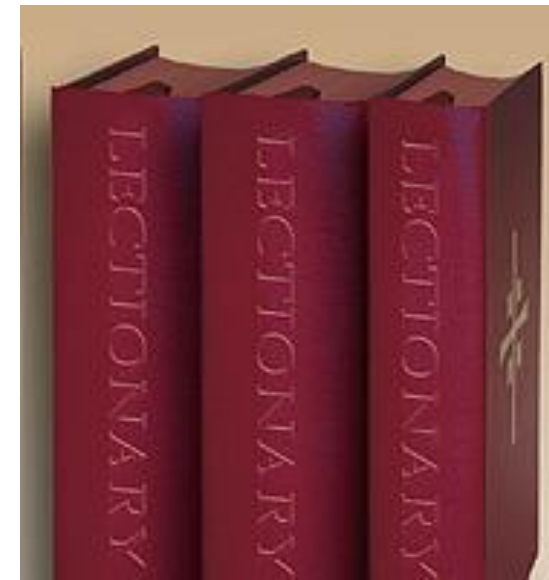
Seasons of the Liturgical Year

- **Advent** – preparation for the coming of Christ
- **Christmas** – celebration of Jesus' Incarnation and birth
- **Ordinary Time** – recollection of Jesus' public life
- **Lent** – Christ's life culminating in his betrayal and crucifixion
- **Easter** – celebration of Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, as well as the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost
- **Ordinary Time** – period when we continue to learn about the path to holiness as witnessed by the life of Christ
- *Feast Days* – days throughout the year dedicated to Jesus, Mary, the saints, and angels



Readings of the Liturgical Year

- The readings at Mass reflect the liturgical year, for example we have:
 - Readings about the Nativity at Christmas
 - Readings on the Passion during Holy Week
 - Readings about the Christian life during Ordinary Time
- There are 3 yearly cycles to the readings; thus in three years the Church goes through nearly the entire Bible
 - Year A: Matthew
 - Year B: Mark
 - Year C: Luke
- On Sundays the first reading is from the Old Testament (and Acts) and is chosen because it corresponds to the Gospel reading



Liturgical Colors



	Green	Red	White	Purple	Rose
Meaning	Life, Hope	Fire, Love, Blood	Purity, Joyful Festivity	Sorrow, Penitence	Joy
Use	Masses during Ordinary Time	Feasts of martyrs, Pentecost, and Passion Sunday	Masses during Christmas and Easter, and feasts of Jesus, Mary, and the saints	Masses during Advent and Lent, and masses for the dead	Gaudete Sunday in Advent and Laetare Sunday in Lent

Holy Days of Obligation

- These are special feast days the solemnity of which obliges us to celebrate the Liturgy
- The Church celebrates six holy days of obligation in the United States
 - **The Immaculate Conception** – December 8
 - **Christmas** – December 25
 - **Mary, Mother of God** – January 1
 - **The Ascension of Jesus** – Forty days after Easter*
 - **The Assumption of Mary** – August 15
 - **The Solemnity of All Saints** – November 1

**The bishops' conference may transfer this feast to the following Sunday*