



# In the Steps of Jesus

## 5. Sacraments

**Sunday, October 14, 2012  
10 to 10:50 am, in the Parlor  
*Presenter: David Monyak***

*St. John in the Wilderness*

# In the Steps of Jesus

- **Sep 16: The Bible**
- **Sep 23: Faith**
- **Sep 30: Worship**
- **Oct 7: History**
- **Oct 14: Sacraments**
- **Oct 21: Spirituality and Prayer**
- **Oct 28: Navigating the Church**

# References

## ■ *Series:*

- **Welcome to the Episcopal Church. In Introduction to Its History, Faith, and Worship**, by Christopher L. Webber, Morehouse, 1999.
- **Your Faith, Your Life, An Invitation to the Episcopal Church**, by Jenifer Gamber, Morehouse, 2009.

## ■ *Sacraments:*

- **A Guide to the Sacraments**, by John Macquarrie, Continuum, 1998
- **Catholicism (Revised Ed.)** by Richard P. McBrien, HarperOne, 1994. Part Five. The Sacraments
- **Sacramental Theology. A General Introduction**, by Kenan B. Osborne, Paulist Press, 1988
- **The Sacraments. A NEW Understanding for a NEW Generation**, by Ray R Noll. Twenty-Third Publications, 1999

O God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant us, we pray thee, to be grounded and settled in thy truth by the coming down of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. That which we know not, do thou reveal; that which is wanting in us, do thou fill up; that which we know, do thou confirm; and keep us blameless in thy service, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

St Clement of Rome, c. 100 AD

***This Week:***

**5. Sacraments**

# A Sacramental Universe



# A Sacramental Universe

## Quotes

- “Teach me, my God and King, in all things thee to see”  
- George Herbert, Anglican poet
- “Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.” (NRSV)  
- St. Paul, Romans 1:20

# A Sacramental Universe

## The Finite and the Divine

- Duality of Experience:
  - we are embodied beings existing in a very material world
  - we can feel intimations of beauty, mystery, meaning through this material world (a flower, a sunset, the sound of the wind, . . .)
- There are mysterious dimensions to all reality: the cosmos, nature, history, events, persons, objects, rituals, words.

# A Sacramental Universe

## The Finite and the Divine

- Everything is, in principle, is capable of embodying and communicating the divine.
  - For God is not only *transcendent* over the universe, but also *immanent* within it.
  - God is the *external* creator of the universe by his creative act, and God through his presence *within* the universe continually sustains it.
  - God is *near* as well as *far*.
- There is thus no “finite instrument,” no part of God’s creation that God cannot put to use to reveal God’s self and the dimensions of God’s reality – the “divine” – to us.

# A Sacramental Universe

## The Finite and the Divine

- We humans in turn have nothing else apart from “finite instruments” to express our own response to God’s self-communication.
- Just as the divine reaches us through the “finite,” so we reach the divine through the “finite.”
- The point at which this “divine commerce” occurs = the point of *sacramental* encounter.

# A Sacramental Universe

## Definition of Sacrament

- In the *widest sense*, a **sacrament** can be defined as
  - any “finite reality”
  - through which we can sense a “divine reality”
  - causing us to respond in some way.
- *In other words*: a **sacrament** is a “door” or “window” to the divine, allowing us to sense and respond to / be changed by the divine.

# A Sacramental Universe

## The “Seven Sacraments”

- We will be discussing the “Seven Sacraments” of the Church: seven specific actions *within the church* and *by the church* which are known to be *sacramental encounters*:
  - Eucharist
  - Baptism
  - Confirmation
  - Reconciliation
  - Anointing of the Sick or Unction
  - Ordination or Holy Orders
  - Marriage

# A Sacramental Universe

## The “Seven Sacraments”

- These “Seven Sacraments” are not the only *sacramental encounters* that can occur in the church.
  - Sacramentality is “latent in,” underlies *all* church activity (indeed, the Church itself has been described as a “fundamental” sacrament.)
- The “Seven Sacraments” do represent the:
  - The densest, the deepest concentration of the sacramentality latent in all church activities;
  - Privileged moments when the Church most fully manifests itself as *church* (= as the people of God, as the kingdom of God on earth).

# A Sacramental Universe

## The “Seven Sacraments”

- In the “Seven Sacraments” of the church, the “finite reality” through which the divine is being communicated is termed the:
  - “**matter**” and/or “**form,**” or
  - “outward and visible **sign** or **symbol**”
- The “divine reality” which is disclosed and communicated is usually termed:
  - inward spiritual reality = “*res*” or
  - “inward and spiritual **grace**”
- St. Augustine’s summaries: “visible forms of invisible grace.” and “visible signs of a sacred thing”

# A Sacramental Universe

## Definition of Grace

- The “divine reality” disclosed and communicated is the “*res*” = the “inward and spiritual **grace**.”
- What is “**grace**”?
  - **Grace** is a *label / shorthand* for the **power of God to redeem and transform human beings**.
  - **Grace** is given freely by God [Latin *gratis*].
    - Which, Saint Augustine says, is why it is called **grace** [Latin *gratia*].

# Jesus: Primordial Sacrament



# Jesus: Primordial Sacrament

## The Sacrament of God Incarnate

- If a sacrament is defined as “any *finite* reality through which we can sense a *divine* reality, causing us to respond in some way” –
- then what better sacrament could there be than **God incarnate, God in finite human form?**

# Jesus: Primordial Sacrament

## The Sacrament of God Incarnate

- Jesus, *in his humanity*, was a visible, embodied, historical phenomenon within the world.
- Jesus can be thought of as a “sacrament of God” in that Jesus *in his humanity* was a unique manifestation – in visible, tangible, material, “finite” form – of the authentic life of God.

# Jesus: Primordial Sacrament

## The Sacrament of God Incarnate

- The “sign” or “material” of the Jesus as Sacrament is Jesus’ *humanity* – a finite reality perceptible, tangible, visible to us.
  - In other words, the *human nature* of Jesus.
- The “inward spiritual reality” or the “*res*” of the Jesus as Sacrament is the *divine nature* of Jesus, the second person of Triune God.

# Jesus: Primordial Sacrament

## The Sacrament of God Incarnate

- In particular, the “inward spiritual reality” or the “*res*” received by those encountering Jesus has been described by various theologians as including the:
  - spirit of God
  - mercy of God
  - redemptive grace of God
  - eternal life of God

# Jesus: Primordial Sacrament

## Primal, Root Sacrament

- Theologians say that not only is Jesus a Sacrament, but Jesus is the **Primordial Sacrament**, or the **Primal Sacrament**, or the **Basic Sacrament**, or the **Root Sacrament**, or the **Fundamental Sacrament**.
- Primordial, primal, basic, root, fundamental, in the sense that the other “Seven Sacraments” have meaning only in and through Jesus’ sacramentality.

# Jesus: Primordial Sacrament

## Primal, Root Sacrament

- *That is:* primordial, primal, basic, root, fundamental, in the sense that:
  - Baptism is a sacrament fundamentally and only because Jesus is a sacrament.
  - Confirmation is a sacrament fundamentally and only because Jesus is a sacrament; and so on ...
  - The most basic component of Baptism as a sacrament is Jesus,
  - the most basic component of Confirmation as a sacrament is Jesus; and so on ...

# Jesus: Primordial Sacrament

## Primal, Root Sacrament

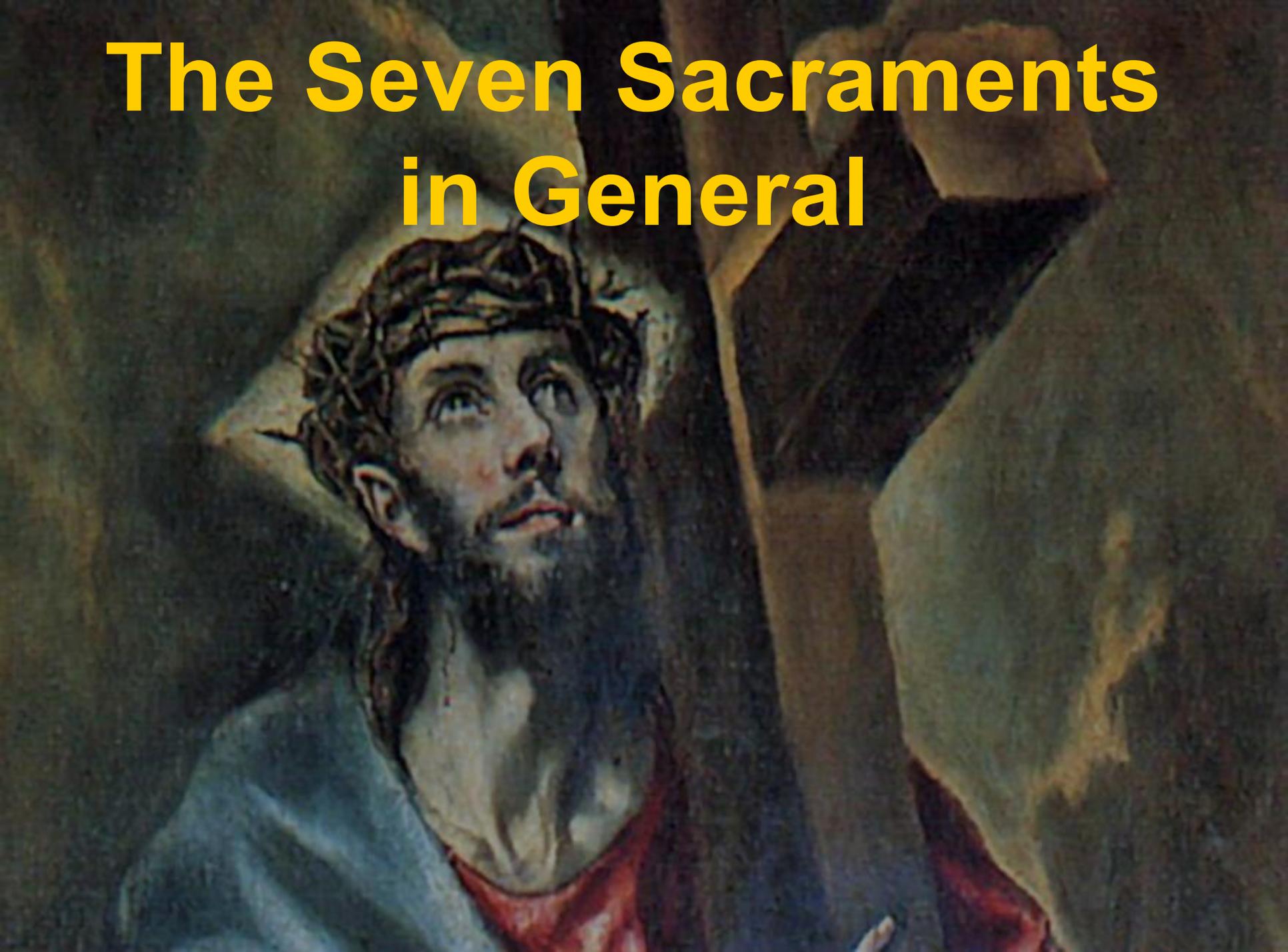
- **Baptism** is a *sacramental encounter* with **Jesus the Baptized One**
- **Confirmation** is a *sacramental encounter* with **Jesus the Confirmed One**
- **Eucharist** is a *sacramental encounter* with **Jesus the Really Present One**
- **Reconciliation** is a *sacramental encounter* with **Jesus the Reconciler**
- **Ordination** is a *sacramental encounter* with **Jesus the Priest**
- **Matrimony** is a *sacramental encounter* with **Jesus the Lover.**
- **Anointing of the Sick** is a *sacramental encounter* with **Jesus the Healer.**

# Jesus: Primordial Sacrament

## Primal, Root Sacrament

- Jesus:
  - The Baptized One
  - The Confirmed One
  - The Really Present One
  - The Reconciler
  - The Priest
  - The Lover
  - The Healer
- are all facets of the primordial, primal, basic, root, fundamental sacrament of God = Jesus.
- **The Sacrament of God = Jesus, Primordial Sacrament** thus unites, and is the “root” of the Seven Sacraments, the “primal source” of the Seven Sacraments.

# The Seven Sacraments in General



# The 7 Sacraments in General

## The “Seven Sacraments”

- The “Seven Sacraments” of the Church = seven specific actions *within the church* and *by the church* which are known to be *sacramental encounters*:
  - The Sacraments of Initiation:
    - Baptism,
    - Confirmation,
    - Eucharist.
  - The Sacraments of Healing:
    - Reconciliation,
    - Anointing of the Sick or Unction.
  - The Sacraments of Vocation and Commitment:
    - Ordination or Holy Orders,
    - Marriage.

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## Corporate and Communal Encounters

- Note these seven particular sacramental encounters are actions
  - *within the church* and
  - *by the church*.
- They are not merely personal, sacramental encounters between an individual and God.
- They are also corporate and communal encounters.
  - The community of the people of God, the community of the Faithful are part of the sacramental encounter.

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## Corporate and Communal Encounters

- They are corporate and communal sacramental encounters because these seven actions of the church are manifestations of the fundamental nature and mission of the church.
- The individual receiving the sacrament receives grace (= the power of God to transform and redeem them; the inward spiritual reality or “res” of the sacrament) that:
  - changes their relationship with God, and
  - changes their relationship with the People of God, the Community of the Faithful = the Church.

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## Corporate and Communal Encounters

- For example, sin:
  - Injures our personal relationship with God
  - Compromises the mission of the church (the people of God) to be a Holy People, a manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation:
  - heals the breach caused by the sin with God, and
  - heals the breach caused by the sin with the People of God

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## Matter / Form, “*Res*” / Inner Grace

- The “finite reality” through which the divine is being communicated is termed the:
  - “**matter**” and/or “**form,**” or
  - “outward and visible **sign** or **symbol**”
- The “divine reality” which is disclosed and communicated is usually termed:
  - inward spiritual reality = “*res*” or
  - “inward and spiritual **grace**”
- Each Sacrament involves a “finite reality” (an outward and visible sign) that is a door / window to a “divine reality” (res, inward and spiritual grace).

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## Material or Form; Sign of the Sacrament

- The the “finite reality” (“material” or “form”) part of the sacrament:
  - is a sign or symbol designed to call to mind the inward spirituality reality (the “res”) of the sacrament.
- Examples:
  - Eucharist: bread and wine → real presence of the body and blood of Jesus.
  - Anointing of the Sick: anointing with oil / laying on of hand (signs of physical healing) → “grace” of God’s healing.

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## The “res” or “inward spiritual grace”

- Sacraments open to us a “divine reality,” causing us to receive a “*res*” or inward and spiritual “grace”
- This grace, this power of God within us is *not* something special or exclusive to the sacrament.
- God’s offer of grace (= the power of God to transform and redeem us) is already present to the individual, to the Church, and to the human community at large.

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## The “res” or “inward spiritual grace”

- Thus, everybody does not strictly “need” Baptism to become a child of God and an heir of heaven:
  - Every human person, by reason of birth and of God’s universal offer of grace, is already called to be a child of God and an heir of heaven. The unbaptized infant is not condemned to hell.
- We do not “need” the sacrament of Holy Order to minister to others:
  - Every person, by reason of his or her graced humanity, is called and empowered to minister to others.
- We do not “need” the sacrament of Matrimony to commit ourselves to another for life.
- We do not “need” these sacraments *in the sense* the graces conferred by Baptism, by Holy Order, by Matrimony that empower us are not “exclusive” to the sacrament.

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## The “res” or “inward spiritual grace”

- The sacraments do provide a “setting” for a *sacramental* encounter that helps to “shape and focus” and maximize our receptivity to God’s grace for the task(s) or mission(s) we are facing.
- The sacraments do empower us to be disciples of Jesus Christ, to be the instruments of God’s presence and saving activity in the world.
  - As Jesus’ disciples and members of a community of fellow disciples of Jesus (= the church), we will naturally / as a matter of course want to partake of the community’s (the Church’s) Seven Sacraments.

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## The “res” or “inward spiritual grace”

- The graces conferred by the sacraments are not magical.
- A sacrament will bear no fruit if the intended recipient has no faith in it, or in the reality it symbolizes.
  - The grace conferred by the sacrament is freely given by God. We are free to say “yes”, or “no” to that grace.

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## Three Sacraments Confer “Character”

- In three of the 7 sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination / Holy Orders) the “*res*” or “inward spiritual grace” provided by the sacrament is said to include **character**.
- Term **character** was taken over from pagan antiquity, where it referred to the seal by which a soldier or a slave was identified as belonging to the service of the emperor or an owner.
- Applied to a sacrament, **character** meant the “*res*” or grace of the sacrament is *permanent*.
  - Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination / Holy Orders are therefore administered only once to the same person during the course of her or his lifetime.

# The 7 Sacraments in General

## The Intention of the Minister

- The sacraments are acts of the Church. The minister represents the Church and acts in its name and in the name of Christ
- A sacrament is valid if:
  - The minister voluntarily carries out the intention of the Church.
  - The minister intends to do with the sacrament what the Church intends.
- The minister does not have to be a person of profound faith or even of high moral character (although that would be very preferable).

# The Seven Sacraments: Sacraments of Initiation



# Sacraments of Initiation

## Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

- Both the Eastern and Western Churches agree that the three sacraments:
  - Baptism
  - Confirmation
  - Eucharist
- are the sacraments that initiate us into the Christian community.
- In the early Church in *both* the East and West, all three sacraments were given as part of a “initiation rite” into the Church at the Easter Vigil.

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

- Prior to the initiation rite, candidates went through a period of instruction called the *catechumenate*.
- 40 days before Easter, those *catechumens* who were ready underwent a special ceremony of “election.”
- For the next 5 weeks (a period we now call “Lent”) they were called the “elect.”
  - The community prayed regularly that all evil would be expunged from their lives,
  - The “elect” spent extra time in prayer and fasting to purify themselves

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

- On the night before Easter, the whole church community assembled to vigil through the night, listening to the great stories from Scripture of their salvation.
- The “elect” then gathered with their sponsors and the leaders of the community around the pool of baptism.
- The “servants,” called deacons and deaconesses, held up towels so the respective male and female candidates could disrobe and proceed down into the pool where they were “plunged” three times into the water.
  - The Greek verb from which we get the term baptism means “to plunge” or “to dunk.”

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

- Dripping with water, the newly baptized “neophyte” was then:
  - helped to dry off,
  - clothed with a pure white garment to symbolize sinlessness,
  - anointed on the crown of the head,
  - given a lighted candle to symbolize having received Christ, the light of the world.
- In the West, the *bishop* would place his hand in the chrism oil and anoint them a third and final time on the forehead. In the East, the *priest* did the final anointing.
- The neophytes would then process out to be welcomed by the community and receive the holy Eucharist for the first time.

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

- For 2000 years, Eastern Christianity has always kept these three parts of the initiation rite into Christian community together.
- In the ancient Byzantine East, *priests* performed all three sacraments in a row, in a complete “initiation rite” into the Christian faith:
  - 1. Water baptism,
  - 2. Anointing with oil (= “Chrismation” in the Eastern Church; called “the third or final anointing with oil” in the Western Church),
  - 3. Giving of Holy Eucharist.

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

- In the West, after the late 300's AD, the three parts of the initiation rite began to fragment, for to emphasize the union of the local church with the bishop, the “third or final anointing with oil” was reserved for the bishop.
  - As Christianity grew, the bishop could not be present for every Easter Vigil baptism, so the third or final anointing with oil was delayed until the bishop's next visit.
  - Delaying the third or final anointing with oil also delayed the Eucharist.
- The separations between the three parts of the initiation rite grew:
  - 1. Water baptism, initial anointing with oil,
  - 2. “Third or final anointing with oil by the bishop (The postponed version was called “Confirmation” in the West for the first time in 439 and 441 AD),
  - 3. Giving of Holy Eucharist.

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

- Spurred by the reforms of Vatican II, the Roman Catholic branch of the Western Church decided in 1972 that the “norm” or ideal sequence (albeit not the most common practice) should be a return to the practice of the ancient church:
  - *Catechumenate* period, followed by:
  - Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist together
- To facilitate the above, priests are now allowed to perform Confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church; a bishop is not required.
- The Episcopal Church continues the “traditional” Western Church practice of requiring a bishop to be present at the sacramental rite of Confirmation.

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Baptism

- Baptism: Outward and Visible Sign:
  - Water.
- Baptism: Inward and Spiritual Graces:
  - Union with Jesus Christ / The Spirit of God:
    - The Baptized One,
    - The One Crucified, Sacrificed and Buried for Us,
    - The One Gloriously Resurrected to New Life,
    - The One Who Adopts Us as Children of God, Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven
    - The One Who Freely Forgives Our Sins.

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Confirmation

- Confirmation: Outward and Visible Sign:
  - Anointing with oil, laying on of hands.
- Confirmation: Inward and Spiritual Graces:
  - Union with Jesus Christ / The Spirit of God:
    - The Baptized and Confirmed One,
    - The One Crucified, Sacrificed and Buried for Us,
    - The One Gloriously Resurrected to New Life,
    - The One Who Adopts Us as Children of God, Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven
    - The One Who Freely Forgives Our Sins

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Eucharist

- The Eucharist is a sacrament of initiation, and also a sacrament that continues to sustain us through the journey of our lives.
- It is multidimensional, multifaceted (see the discussion from Worship):
  - 1. a meal,
  - 2. the real presence of Jesus,
  - 3. a remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus,
  - 4. a foretaste of the feast to come.

# Sacraments of Initiation

## Eucharist

- Eucharist: Outward and Visible Sign:
  - Bread and wine.
  - The Breaking of the Bread
- Eucharist: Inward and Spiritual Graces:
  - Union with Jesus Christ / The Spirit of God:
    - The One Really Present, Body and Blood,
    - The One Who Broke Bread with His Disciples at the Last Supper,
    - The One Crucified, Sacrificed and Buried for Us,
    - The One Who Presides at the Heavenly Banquet,
    - The One Who Freely Forgives Our Sins,
    - The One Who Strengthens Us for the Journey Ahead.

# The Seven Sacraments: Sacraments of Healing



# Sacraments of Healing

## Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick

- Initiation is only the beginning of a *process*:
  - We are not already fully mature in Christ by the mere fact of having been baptized, anointed, and invited to share the Lord's Supper.
  - We are human:
    - prone to sin,
    - vulnerable to illness, physical incapacity,
    - and finally death.

# Sacraments of Healing

## Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick

- Yet:
  - It is God's will that we be sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3; Ephesians 1:4),
  - It is God's will that we become as saints (Ephesians 5:3).
  - We are to love God with all our mind and all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30).
  - Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God is a call to conversion: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." (Mark 1:15)

# Sacraments of Healing

## Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick

- The Church offers two rites of sacramental encounter with the divine that help us see and be changed by Jesus, The One Who Heals and Freely Forgives Our Sins:
  - The **Sacrament of Reconciliation**: for those whose bond with the Church community and with God has been weakened or even severed by sin;
  - The **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick**, for those whose bond with the Church community and God has been weakened by illness or physical incapacity.

# Sacraments of Healing

## Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick

- These two sacraments of Church, like all the Seven Sacraments, are not merely personal, sacramental encounters between an individual and God.
- They are also corporate and communal encounters.
- The Sacraments of Healing proclaim and strengthen the church community as:
  - A healing and forgiving community;
  - A penitent community, ever bathing the feet of Christ with its tears and hearing Jesus' words "Neither so I condemn you" (John 8:11);
  - A community of hope, who gives up on no one and no situation, no matter how seemingly hopeless.

# Sacraments of Healing

## Reconciliation

- Reconciliation: Outward and Visible Sign:
  - Absolution by the priest.
- Reconciliation: Inward and Spiritual Graces:
  - Union with Jesus Christ / The Spirit of God:
    - The One Who Heals us,
    - The One Who Freely Forgives Our Sins,
    - The One Who Strengthens Us for the Journey Ahead.

# Sacraments of Healing

## Anointing of the Sick

- Anointing of the Sick: Outward and Visible Sign:
  - Anointing with oil,
  - Laying on of hands.
- Anointing of the Sick: Inward and Spiritual Graces:
  - Union with Jesus Christ / The Spirit of God:
    - The One Who Heals us,
    - The One Who Freely Forgives Our Sins,
    - The One Who Strengthens Us for the Journey Ahead.

# The Seven Sacraments: Sacraments of Vocation and Commitment



# Sacraments of Vocation

## Ordination, Marriage

- All Christians are initiated into the Church through the same essential process.
- Not all Christians are called to live as Christians in the same modes.
  - Some are called to live in intimate union with another in marriage.
  - Some are called to a life of service to the Christian community itself.
- So fundamental are both the call to married life and the call to pastoral care and leadership within the Church, that each of these calls and its corresponding commitment is celebrated as a sacrament.

# Sacraments of Vocation

## Ordination, Marriage

- These two sacraments of Church, like all the Seven Sacraments, are not merely personal, sacramental encounters between an individual and God.
- They are also corporate and communal encounters, for:
  - In Matrimony the Christian community itself will be built up at its most natural level, the family.
  - The union of Christ and his Church is symbolized in the intimate friendship of those married (Ephesians 5:22-32).
  - In Ordination / Holy Orders, those called will provide structure and direction for the Christian community and its mission.
- The Sacraments of Vocation and Commitment proclaim and strengthen the church community as:
  - A community called forth (the root meaning of the word church, *ekklesia*),
  - A community committed to a life of mutual love and service.

# Sacraments of Vocation

## Ordination / Holy Orders

- Ordination: Outward and Visible Sign:
  - Laying on of hands by a bishop (for a priest or deacon).
  - Laying on of hands by three bishops (for a bishop's consecration).
- Ordination: Inward and Spiritual Graces:
  - Union with Jesus Christ / The Spirit of God:
    - The Great High Priest,
    - The One Who Freely Forgives Our Sins,
    - The One Who Strengthens Us for the Journey Ahead.

# Sacraments of Vocation

## Marriage

- Marriage: Outward and Visible Sign:
  - Exchange of rings and vows.
- Marriage: Inward and Spiritual Graces:
  - Union with Jesus Christ / The Spirit of God:
    - The One Who Loves Us Unconditionally,
    - The One Who Freely Forgives Our Sins,
    - The One Who Strengthens Us for the Journey Ahead.

***Next Week:***

**6. Prayer and  
Spirituality**