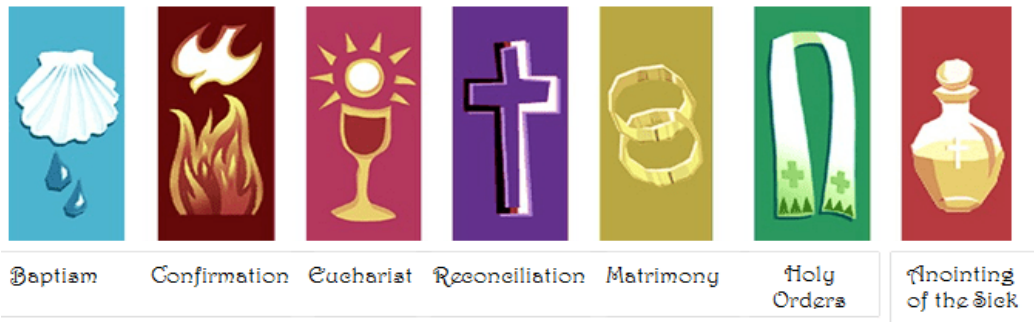


The Sacraments



Sacraments are outward signs of inward grace, instituted by Christ, for our sanctification. According to the United States Council of Bishops their “*visual reality* is their outward expression, the form they take, and the way in which they are administered and received. Alternately, their *invisible reality* goes far beyond the senses and these physical signs, so that individuals can receive the very life and holiness of God. The sacraments give us God’s help and grace and show Jesus’ presence in our lives.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, there are seven sacraments of the Church, organized into three categories: (1) Sacraments of Initiation that lay the foundation of Christian life—Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist; (2) Sacraments of Healing that celebrate the restorative power of Jesus—Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick; and (3) Sacraments of Service—Matrimony and Holy Orders.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, Christ instituted these sacraments to sanctify and nourish those who receive them worthily as part of the saving work of Christ. God shares his holiness with us, so we can make the world a better and more reverent place.