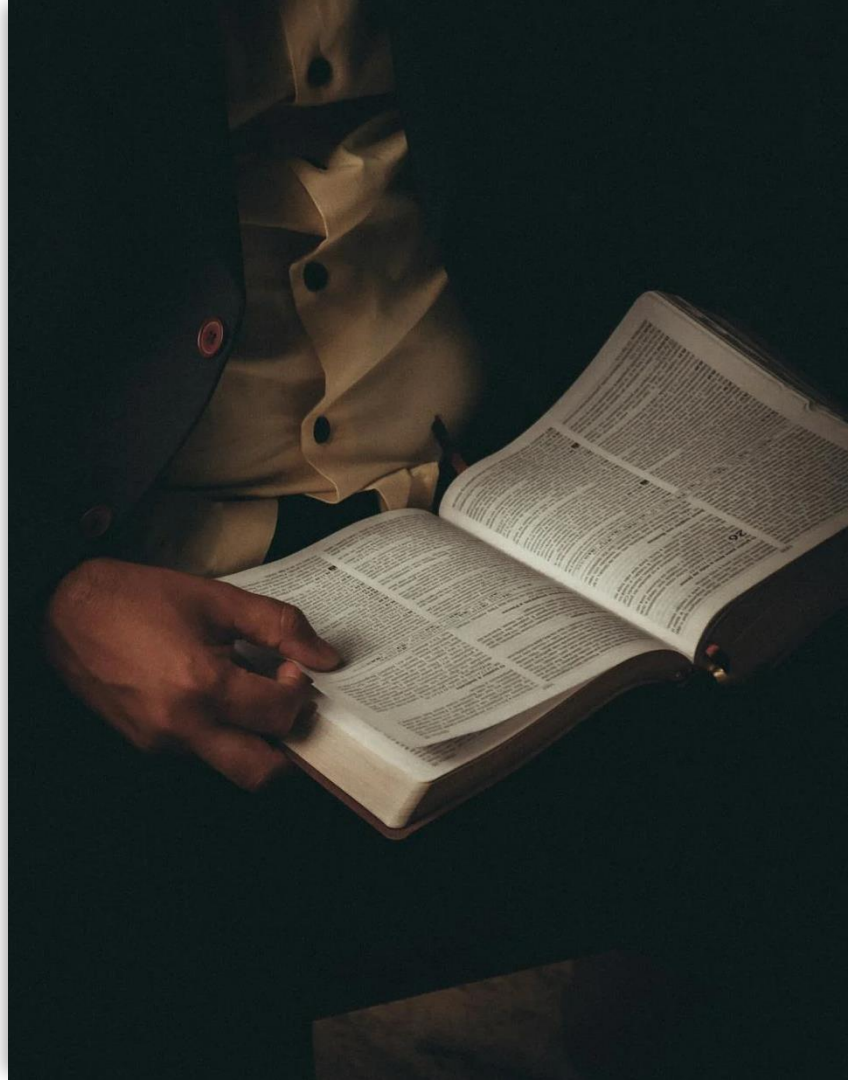

The Sacraments of the Church



Scripture Readings

1 Timothy 4:12–16: Paul exhorts Timothy to be an example in word, conduct, love, faith, and purity, devoting himself to Scripture, preaching, and teaching with the gift given through the laying on of hands. He must persevere in life and doctrine, so that his progress is evident and both he and his hearers may be saved.

Luke 7:36–50: Jesus is welcomed by a Pharisee but honoured instead by a repentant woman who washes His feet with her tears and anoints them with ointment. He teaches that those forgiven much love much, declares her sins forgiven, and tells her that her faith has saved her—sending her away in peace.



Summary of the Readings

The readings from 1 Timothy and Luke both speak to the transforming power of faith and witness. In 1 Timothy, Paul urges Timothy to be an example of faith, love, and teaching, emphasizing dedication and spiritual leadership. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus shows mercy to the sinful woman, revealing the profound connection between forgiveness and love.

Together, these readings remind us that God calls us to holiness and to be living signs of his grace, much like the sacraments themselves.



What is A Sacrament?

CCC1131: 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.

A sacrament, in simple terms, is a sacred action the Church celebrates—like baptism or the Eucharist—where an outward sign (like water, bread, or oil) is used by Christ through His Church to really give us God's grace and life, as long as we're open to receiving it.

JESUS: SACRAMENT OF GOD

- Jesus is the visible sign of God's presence in the world.
- He unites divine and human nature in himself.
- In Jesus, God communicates love through a human life.
- Jesus is called Emmanuel, meaning 'God with us.'

Socratic Questions

- Why is Jesus described as the sacrament of God?
- What does Emmanuel mean and how does it relate to Jesus?

THE CHURCH: SACRAMENT OF JESUS

- The Church continues Jesus' presence and mission in the world.
- It is called the Body of Christ, signifying unity with Jesus.
- Despite human weakness, the Church is a sign of God's saving work.
- Through sacraments and service, the Church makes Christ visible today.

Socratic Questions

- Why is the Church called the sacrament of Jesus?
- How can the Church be a sign of Christ despite sinfulness?

THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

- There are seven sacraments rooted in Jesus' life and teachings.
- Sacraments help believers encounter Christ's grace.
- They connect significant life moments to God's saving work.
- Each sacrament carries unique graces for spiritual growth.

Socratic Questions

- Why are sacraments important for Catholics?
- Did Jesus directly establish all seven sacraments?

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

- Sacraments use signs and symbols to make God's grace visible.
- Vatican II urged simple, meaningful rites.
- Sacraments deepen faith and build community.
- Celebration involves communal worship and participation.

Socratic Questions

- Why do sacraments include symbolic rituals?
- How do communal celebrations enhance sacraments?

Via Pulchritudinis

🌟 Rogier van der Weyden — *The Seven Sacraments*
Altarpiece (c. 1445–1450)

Location: Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, Belgium

Medium: Oil on oak panel (triptych)

Dimensions: Central panel 200 × 223 cm; wings 200 × 92 cm each

Rogier van der Weyden's *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece* unfolds inside a Gothic church, where angels hover over each sacrament—Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Confession, Marriage, Ordination, and Extreme Unction—while the Crucifixion dominates the central panel. With meticulous detail and symbolic colour, the painting proclaims that all the sacraments flow from Christ's sacrifice, nourishing and guiding the faithful from birth to death in the life of grace.



ORIGINS IN SCRIPTURE

- Many sacraments are rooted in Jesus' words and actions.
- Baptism and Eucharist come directly from Jesus' instructions.
- Other sacraments grew from early Christian practice and Scripture.
- Scripture shows Jesus using physical signs to convey grace.

Socratic Questions

- Which sacraments have explicit biblical foundations?
- Why do sacraments matter for connecting Scripture and Church life?

WHY SEVEN SACRAMENTS?

- The Church settled on seven sacraments over time.
- Each sacrament corresponds to key stages of spiritual life.
- Sacraments address human needs for grace and assurance.
- They provide certainty of God's presence in important life moments.

Socratic Questions

- Why are there exactly seven sacraments?
- Can God work outside the sacraments?

GOD'S SIGNS OF LOVE

- Sacraments respond to human need for visible signs of love.
- They use familiar symbols like water, oil, bread, and wine.
- These symbols carry deep spiritual meaning.
- Sacraments reassure believers of God's presence and love.

Socratic Questions

- Why use physical elements like water or bread in sacraments?
- How do sacraments reassure believers of God's love?

CONTINUING CONTACT WITH CHRIST

- The sacraments keep believers connected to Jesus today.
- Christ continues to heal, forgive, and strengthen through sacraments.
- We can't meet the historical Jesus physically, but we meet him spiritually in the sacraments.
- Sacraments express faith that Jesus is alive and active in his Church.

Socratic Questions

- How do sacraments connect us to Jesus today?
- Why do Catholics say Jesus still acts through the sacraments?



Closing Prayer

Lord, you are great
and greatly to be
praised;
great is your power,
and your wisdom
infinite.

We would praise you
without ceasing.
You call us to delight in
your praise,
For you have made us

for yourself,
And our hearts are
restless
Until they rest in you.

(St Augustine, 354-430)