

## **SEGMENT TEN**

**THEME: SACRAMENTS – AN OVERVIEW**

**OPENING PRAYER / SCRIPTURE READING:**

Luke 24: 13-49 (Emmaus)

**INSTRUCTORS' SUMMARY STATEMENTS:**

During his earthly ministry Jesus preached and taught with authority and performed powerful healings and miracles through which he forgave sins and healed the wounds of sin. In the sacraments of the Church, Christ now **continues** the saving works he performed during his earthly life. In the sacraments the Church offers to each of us the saving power of God in Jesus Christ for the healing of our whole person - soul, mind and body as we daily journey in faith with the community of believers.

The seven sacraments of the Church are baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, confession and reconciliation, holy orders, matrimony, and anointing of the sick. Over the centuries the Church discerned that among the many sacramental celebrations there are **seven** sacraments that were instituted by Jesus himself.

In every sacramental celebration we are led to God, the Father through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Each of the sacraments of the Church were instituted by Christ so that we may continue to participate in the divine life of grace and forgiveness he brings. Christ Himself works in and through the visible rites and symbols of bread, wine, oil, and water taken from the world of creation. Christ is the guarantee of the sacramental graces that transform us into children of God.

The minister – bishop, priest, or deacon and the assembly together participate in the sacramental celebrations that make present the mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection – His Paschal Mystery. Every sacramental celebration invites us to participate in the mystery of our dying and rising with Christ.

- ❖ A sacrament may be defined as an “efficacious sign 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.” (CCC, 1131)
- ❖ Jesus Christ now lives and acts in the Church through the sacraments by which we are invited to participate in the mystery of His life, death and resurrection (CCC, 1076). We say the sacraments are *efficacious* because it is Christ himself at work in them: it is he who baptizes, he who forgives sins, he who acts in the sacraments in order to communicate the grace that each offers (CCC, 1127 – 1129)
- ❖ The word “liturgy” means the “participation of the People of God in the “work of God.” Through the liturgy Jesus Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with, and through his Church. (CCC 1069)
- ❖ In the sacraments the Church “celebrates above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation. The mysteries of Christ’s life are the foundations of what he would offer in the sacraments, through the ministers of the Church, for what was visible in our Savior has passed over into the sacraments (CCC 1114 – 1116)
- ❖ The sacraments are “by the church” and “for the church.” The Church is the primary sacrament or sign of Christ’s saving actions. The sacraments are “for the Church” in that they “make” the Church since they manifest the mystery of our communion with God (CCC, 1117 – 1121)
- ❖ “The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify us, to build up the Body of Christ, and finally to give worship to God. They not only presuppose faith but they also nourish, strengthen and express it. That is why they are called “sacraments of faith.” (CCC, 1122 – 1126)
- ❖ The sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist are called the “**sacraments of initiation**,” because they are steps toward union with Christ and the Church. The sacrament of reconciliation (confession) and the sacrament of anointing are called “**sacraments of healing**” as they heal soul, mind, and body. The “**sacraments of service**” are holy orders and matrimony, given for the service of the Church and the world.

- ❖ Sacraments express and shape the unity of the Church. For that reason they may only be received by Catholics.
- ❖ We celebrate the sacraments with signs and symbols (CCC, 1145 – 1152), with words and actions (CCC, 1153 – 1155), with singing and music (CCC, 1156 – 1158) and in liturgical time – Sundays and throughout the Liturgical Year (CCC, 1163 – 1171)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

The following questions may be used by the RCIA team to guide large or small group discussions during weekly RCIA meetings. They may also be given to the participants as a basis for personal reflection during the week.

1. How can the sacraments help you to grow spiritually?
2. What is the relationship of personal prayer and personal reading of scripture to participation in the Church's sacraments?
3. What part will the sacraments play in your spiritual life?

### **SCRIPTURE REFERENCES/QUOTATIONS:**

Ephesians 1: 3-6

John 6: 32; 20: 21-23

1 Peter 3:21

“The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations.”

*Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 14*

“Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations...by his power he is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptizes, it is really Christ himself who baptizes.” (CCC, 1088)

“For it is in the liturgy, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist that “the work of our redemption is accomplished,” and it is through the liturgy especially that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.”

*Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 2*

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:**

Universal Catechism, “*The Celebration of the Christian Mystery*,” Part Two, Article nos. 1066 - 1209

Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Chapter One.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Luke 24: 13-49 (Emmaus)