

Our **OCIA Mission Statement** is the **WHAT** (2 Peter 1:4); the Sacraments are the **HOW**. “... he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, **so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature ...**” (2 Peter 1:4) [All scripture citations are taken from: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible>]

What is a Sacrament?

Baltimore Catechism: Q. 574. “A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.” [What is “grace”?]

Catechism of the Catholic Church (§1131): Sacraments are “Efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.”

How many sacraments are there? List them:

Initiation	Healing	Order
1. _____	4. _____	6. _____
2. _____	5. _____	7. _____
3. _____		

Sacraments involve visible, tangible realities to human senses (water, oil, bread, wine, etc.)

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: We recognize that the Sacraments have a visible and invisible reality, a reality open to all the **human senses** but grasped in its God-given depths with the eyes of faith. When parents hug their children, for example, the visible reality we see is the hug. The invisible reality the hug conveys is love. We cannot “see” the love the hug expresses, though sometimes we can see its nurturing effect in the child.

The visible reality we see in the Sacraments is their outward expression, the **form** they take, and the way in which they are administered and received. The invisible reality we cannot “see” is God's **grace**, his gracious initiative in redeeming us through the death and Resurrection of his Son. His initiative is called *grace* because it is the free and loving gift by which he offers people a share in his life, and shows us his favor and will for our salvation. Our response to the grace of God's initiative is itself a **grace or gift** from God by which we can imitate Christ in our daily lives. [In Greek, *grace* = χάρις (*charis*) = gift. What is the tangible sign that for Catholics, grace is given as a freely given, unearned, unmerited gift?]

The **saving words and deeds of Jesus Christ** are the foundation of what he would communicate in the Sacraments through the ministers of the Church. Through the Sacraments, God shares his holiness with us so that we, in turn, can make the world holier. <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals>

No sacraments existed until the Paschal Mystery was complete. The baptism of John the Baptist was not baptism as we understand it. Acts 19:1-6 — “While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior of the country and came (down) to Ephesus where he found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the holy Spirit when you became believers?” They answered him, “We have never even heard that there is a holy Spirit.” He said, “How were you baptized?” They replied, “With the baptism of John.” Paul then said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid [his] hands on them, the holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”

Scriptural Foundations for the Sacraments:

- **Baptism:** Matthew 28:19, John 3:3, John 4:2, Acts 19, Gal. 2:20 – imparts a “character.”
- **Confirmation** (completes baptismal graces): John 3:5, Acts 2:11 – imparts a “character.”
- **Eucharist:** Bread of Life Discourse: John 6:22-71
- **Reconciliation:** John 20:23
- **Holy Orders:** Last Supper Discourse: John 14-17 – imparts a “character.”
- **Marriage:** Genesis 1, John 2 (Wedding at Cana), Matthew 19:4
- **Anointing of the Sick** (the least understood): James 5:14-15 (the what), Matthew 26:11-12 (the why).

What is this sacrament of the anointing of the sick ultimately for? For healing, but not necessarily physical healing (i.e., curing). The physical healings of Jesus point to spiritual realities.

Jesus is the Messiah or the Christ. What do the words *messiah* (מָשִׁיחַ) in Hebrew or *christos* (χριστός) in Greek mean? When was Jesus first anointed? It was in reference to his death. (Matt 26:11-12) Is he ever anointed again? (John 19:38-40)

Jesus's messianic identity is most profoundly revealed in his death and resurrection. We, too, at the end of our lives (*Viaticum*), are called to complete the journey that we began with baptism by being conformed to the crucified and risen Lord.

Anointing of the Sick can heal us from sickness if that is part of God's plan for our salvation. Still, ultimately, the sacrament is meant to orient us to spiritual healing so that we can be raised up with Christ on the last day, and that means participating in his suffering. **The anointing of Jesus is the sign of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick in the Gospels.**

Anointing of the Sick (James 5:14-15): Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the **presbyters** of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint [him] with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. **If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.**

The Anointing at Bethany (Matthew 26:6-13): Now when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster jar of costly perfumed oil, and poured it on his head while he was reclining at table. When the disciples saw this, they were indignant and said, "Why this waste? It could have been sold for much, and the money given to the poor." Since Jesus knew this, he said to them, "Why do you make trouble for the woman? She has done a good thing for me. The poor you will always have with you; but you will not always have me. **In pouring this perfumed oil upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Amen, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be spoken of, in memory of her.**"

The Burial of Jesus (John 19:38-40): After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom.

Sacrament:	Matter :	Form:	Who (ordinary minister):
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____	_____

Note the different stages of life: birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, sickness, and death.

Intention, intention, intention! There is nothing "magical" about the sacraments.

Ex opere operato: "From the work done." God is the principal actor in the sacraments, not the minister.

Ex opere operantis: "From the work of the worker," or "the work of the doer." It refers to one's openness to grace.

"In order for the unseen, spiritual world to become a living force in our minds, this invisible world needs to be visibly incarnated in space and time. This principle touches on the sacramental nature of things, the intercommunion between the material and the spiritual, and can be seen in the way God has revealed himself from the beginning. In showing himself to be the creator, the center of all being, the helper and redeemer of humanity, he did not merely get these ideas going esoterically in people's minds. He fashioned these invisible truths into visible forms that would be reminders of them and roads to experiencing them. Hence, he arranged for the Temple and its sacrifice, the Law, the Sabbath, the formation of a distinct people, the whole manner of life and worship that he gave to the Israelites. Finally, this principle of the invisible manifesting in the visible took definitive form in the coming of the incarnate Word of God. Ever since then, it has been expressed in a thousand ways by the Church. While faith is far more than its outward forms, without those forms it cannot long survive."

Monsignor James P. Shea, *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission: Pastoral Strategies for an Apostolic Age*, University of Mary Press, 2020 (p. 37).