

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

What Are God's Primary Vehicles Of Grace?

Know This...

Our Father in heaven has given us many gifts: our lives, His Son, His Church, His infinite and eternal love, wisdom and truth, and the grace necessary to attain heaven. The sacraments are the primary vehicles of God's grace. Every time we receive a sacrament, God gives us the means to grow in holiness and perfection. The sacraments are supernatural. They are not magical. If they are properly received, they will sustain faithful Catholics from birth to death and lead us down the highway to heaven.



John: Jesus instituted the seven sacraments to continue His saving work. Before His ascension, He entrusted His Church with their propagation and administration.

James: A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Each sacrament is a visible, sacred sign of an invisible, sacred reality.

John: The Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—bring souls fully into the Church and celebrate total commitment to Christ.



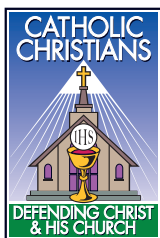
James: The Sacraments of Healing—Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick—bring physical and spiritual healing to the faithful.

John: The Sacraments at the Service of Communion—Matrimony and Holy Orders—direct the faithful to the salvation of others.

James: The sacraments help us grow in holiness toward spiritual perfection as we worship God and perform works of charity.

Deacon John Beckmann and Deacon James Russell are permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

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The sacraments are channels of the living waters of God's grace. "Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'" ^{Jn 4:13-15} "On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, 'Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: 'Rivers of living water will flow from within him.'" ^{Jn 7:37-38}



"The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ, and, finally, to give worship to God. Because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it. That is why they are called 'sacraments of faith.' They do, indeed, confer grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them most effectively disposes the faithful to receive this grace to their profit, to worship God duly, and to practice charity." ^{Vatican II} "The seven sacraments are the signs and instruments by which the Holy Spirit spreads the grace of Christ the head throughout the Church which is His Body." ^{ccc 774}



BE ATTITUDES "The sacraments of the Church are designed to achieve two effects: to render man perfect in all that pertains to the worship of God as expressed in the religion of Christian living, and also as a remedy to counteract the harmful effects of sin. Now from both points of view it is fitting to have seven sacraments... The sacrament is not wrought by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the recipient, but by the power of God!" ^{St. Thomas Aquinas} "You want to be strong? Then first realize that you are very weak. After that, trust in Christ... He makes us strong, entrusting to us the means with which to conquer—the sacraments. Live them!" ^{St. Josemaria Escriva}

Most loving and merciful Father; You are the bearer of endless gifts. I cannot begin to thank You for all You have done for me. Yet, through the sacraments, You give me new life and the ability to reject the lure of earthly wealth and success. Your Church has taught me, and I believe, that neither wealth nor success will satisfy my search for eternal happiness. I pray that I will always show my gratitude for all You have given me. May Your Son's presence in my life be my source of protection here on earth and the light that leads me and all your children to eternal happiness in heaven. Grant this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

