

The Seven Sacraments: God's Saving Deeds Among Us

INTRODUCTION

- *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the liturgy demands that the Christian faithful be lead to a “full, conscious, and active part in liturgical celebrations.”¹
- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, in his book *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, offers an explanation . . . the *active participation* that the faithful are called to refers primarily to the central, or principle, *actio* (action) in which all the faithful take part.²
- The *actio divina* present in all the forms of the Church’s liturgy, especially the sacraments, consists of God acting in time and space under veiled form to communicate the fruits of Christ’s Paschal Mystery
- According to one scholar, the sacraments “carry on in our midst the *mirabilia*, the great works of God in the Old Testament and the New.”³
- Jean Corbon describes the sacraments as the “river of the mystery.”⁴

I. BAPTISM

A. Baptism in Jesus’ Teaching (John 3:3-5, 7, 9, 10: New Birth by Water and Spirit)

1. The Jewish Tradition of Water and Spirit in Ezekiel 36:25-27

The late New Testament scholar George Beasley-Murray explains:

The conjunction of water and Spirit in eschatological hope is deeply rooted in the Jewish consciousness, as is attested by Ezek 36:25–27 and various apocalyptic writings (e.g., *Jub.* 1:23; *Pss. Sol.* 18:6; *Test Jud* 24:3), but above all the literature and practices of the Qumran sectaries, who sought to unite cleansing and the hope of the Spirit *with actual immersions* and repentance in a community beginning to “see” the kingdom of God (cf. 1QS 3:6–9; 1QH 11:12–14).⁵

2. Preceding and Subsequent Context Involving Water and Spirit (John 1:29-34; John 3:23; John 4:1-2;

3. Clues for *Infant* Baptism

- a. Life Not Available in First Birth
- b. “Someone” or “Anyone” Without Restriction

B. Baptism in Paul

1. Romans 3:6-3-4, 11
2. Colossians 2:11-12 (Infant Baptism) (cf. Gen. 7:10-12)

C. Baptism in Peter (1 Peter 3:21)

II. CONFIRMATION

A. The Church’s Teaching (CCC 1288)

B. Biblical Support (Acts 8:14-19; cf. Acts 2:38; CCC 1288)

C. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5; CCC 1288)

¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14, in *The Basic Sixteen Documents of Vatican Council II*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1996), 124.

² See Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. by John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 171.

³ Danielou, *Bible & Liturgy*, 5 quoted in Scott Hahn, *Letter and Spirit* (New York: Doubleday), 25.

⁴ Jean Corbon, *The Wellspring of Worship*, trans. by Matthew J. O’Connell (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 36.

⁵ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 49; emphasis added.

III. ANOINTING OF THE SICK

A. James 5:14-16

1. **The Catholic Appeal (CCC 1510)** - anointing with oil by “presbyter”
2. **Protestant Counter: Only Act for Bodily Remedy**
 - a. **Answer #1:** James gives instruction to call in a presbyter of the Church and not a physician
 - b. **Answer #2:** James gives instruction to administer the oil “in the name of the Lord” -
 - c. **Answer #3:** Administering the oil is associated *with* the “prayer of faith”

IV. THE PRIESTHOOD

A. Argument from Parallel Between Israel of God and the Christian Church (1 Pet. 2:5,9)

1. **The Allusion to Exod. 19:6**
2. **Priestly Ranks in the Old Testament (Exod. 28; Lev. 8)**
3. **Parallels Priestly Ranks in NT (high priest—Heb. 3:1; Lower rank—1 Pet. 2:9)** – Therefore reasonable for middle rank.

B. Argument from Apostles’ Priestly Duties

1. **John 20:23 – The Forgiveness of Sins**
 - a. **Old Testament background:** Lev. 5:5-6; Num. 15:27-28
2. **Luke 22:19 – “Do This in Remembrance of Me”**
 - a. **Clue #1:** “Do This” (see Lev. 9:7; Psalm 66:15)
 - b. **Clue #2:** “In Remembrance [Greek, *anamnesis*] of Me” (see Num. 10:10; Heb. 10:3)

C. Argument from Early Recognition of Priestly Ministry

1. **Romans 15:15-16: “Priestly Service”** - The Greek word that Paul uses for “priestly service” is *hierourgeō*, which is the verb form of the Greek word *hierous*. Cf. Exod. 28:1, 4, 41
2. **The Rebellion of Korah (Jude 11)** – Cf. Jude 4, Numbers 16:8, 10-11, 32, 40

V. MARRIAGE

A. Mark 10:6-9

1. **The Catholic Appeal**
 - a. **Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* 34**
2. **The Protestant Objection: The Exception Clause in Matt. 19:9**
 - a. **Answer:** The Greek word for “unchastity” isn’t part of the group of words that Matthew uses for adultery [*moichaō*] in his Gospel.
 - b. **Answer:** The reaction of the disciples to Jesus’s teaching is unintelligible on the supposition that Jesus is allowing spousal infidelity to be grounds for divorce and remarriage (Matt. 19:10)
 - c. **Answer:** There is good reason to think that the unchastity clause refers to unlawful unions, like incestuous marriages. (Cf. Acts 15:29 and Lev. 11, 17, 18; 1 Cor. 5:1-2)

