



# Transformations

An HSCC Youth Newsletter

February, 2007

## This month: Sacraments: a win-win deal!

When we participate in the sacraments we participate in an oath between God and His people. How is an oath different from a promise or a vow?

A promise is giving one's word based on one's own reputation.

A vow is a promise made directly to God.

An oath is a promise made in God's name, putting God's reputation at stake. It is definitely the most impressive of the three, and what we use in each sacrament.

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:**  
See paragraphs #1113-1134 for specific teaching on the sacraments and salvation.

**Next page:**  
\*The Enlightenment  
\*Sacrament Challenge

**E**xcitement is in the air. Hard work. Constant study. Challenges at every turn. It must be sacrament preparation time in the Catholic Church!

## Signs of God

Sacraments are the visible signs instituted by Jesus to give us grace. From the beginning of time God made promises to His people. Of course, back then the promises were called covenants - an oath which created a sacred family bond. Although man always seemed to mess things up, God was always willing to open His arms and welcome His people back. Each new beginning was made apparent by a physical sign. (*God is well aware that we understand things much better when we can taste, feel, or see something obvious!*) When Noah and his family came out of the ark, God gave them a rainbow to show the new beginning of creation. When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, Moses sealed the deal by sprinkling the blood of a sacrificed animal on the Israelites. Each covenant was made obvious by visible signs.

## Covenants for the ages

Not only did Jesus become man to fulfill all God's promises in the Old Covenants, He also made a New Covenant with us. He died to give us the grace necessary for salvation, and established sacraments as the primary means for our receiving that grace. Just like in the Old Covenants, every sacrament has

a physical sign which makes it obvious when we receive grace and have a new beginning to convert our hearts to God. Water, oil, bread and wine, and laying on of hands are just a few of the visible signs we experience when we receive the invisible grace of the sacraments.

## The Magnificent Seven

Jesus established seven sacraments, no more, no less. They were purposefully designed to nourish our souls throughout our lives, so they can be neither added to nor abolished. Even better, during each and every sacrament Christ is present to help us grow closer to God and each other. Can you match the sacrament with the part of life it satisfies?

Baptism	We need family
Eucharist	We need strength
Confirmation	We need healing
Reconciliation	We need food
Matrimony	We are born
Holy Orders	We are ill
Anointing of Sick	We need leaders

## Actions and Consequences

We sense the physical signs, we experience the rituals, we receive God's grace. In return we have a few obligations as well. We are expected to live according to the laws of God and the laws of the Church. Following in the footsteps of Jesus is not always easy - He does set a pretty high standard. Fortunately the grace we receive in the sacraments gives us the strength we need to do our best.

# CHURCH HISTORY

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What comes to mind when you hear the term “The Enlightenment”? If you thought of the eighteenth century philosophical movement that promoted the superiority of reason over faith, you’ve got it! It was also a time of fierce struggle for the Catholic Church.

For over six centuries the Catholic Church was the leader in university education, intellectual debate, scientific investigation, and support of human reason. It was in large part thanks to the Catholic Church that Europe experienced the scientific revolution that changed the

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world. Throughout all those centuries, however, there was always faith that God was the Creator from whom all truth and goodness had come.

By the 1700s, that faith wavered. Philosophers were so awestruck by the accomplishments of human beings they started to think more highly of science, and looked down on anyone who studied theology. They even concluded that only human reason and science could achieve salvation. They had little need for God, so came up with their own religion, Deism, which stated there was a God who created the world, but He had completely left it alone after that. It was not too long before many people did not feel the need to believe in God at all. Only things in the world which could be observed mattered, and Christianity should be destroyed.

The Catholic Church certainly had an uphill battle to counteract this lack of faith. Not surprisingly, thanks to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, amazing men and women embraced their Catholicism, defended God against the attacks of the Deists, and spread faith throughout the world. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton established the Sisters of Charity and Jesuit priests staffed universities in the “New World.” Missionaries traveled throughout Asia and Africa spreading Catholicism. We can still feel the effects of the Enlightenment’s attack on faith, yet the Church has emerged stronger than ever.

## Sacrament Challenge

### The Seven Sacraments:

Baptism	Reconciliation
Eucharist	Holy Orders
Confirmation	Matrimony
Anointing of the Sick	

1. These three sacraments result in an ontological change (*Hint: Ontological change means a permanent effect on the character, so the sacraments can only be received once*)

- ◆ \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which two sacraments are specifically for uniting and ministering to the community?

- ◆ \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ \_\_\_\_\_

3. Jesus established this sacrament by breathing on the Apostles. (Jn 21:22-23) The other time God breathed on man was at creation. Therefore, this sacrament is as important as life itself.

- ◆ \_\_\_\_\_

4. The grace from this sacrament gives a special peace to the soul, assisting the recipient of the sacrament to avoid discouragement, anger, depression, and fear.

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5. This is the central sacrament, the one from which all the other sacraments flow.

- ◆ \_\_\_\_\_

Answers from previous page: Baptism - We are born; Eucharist - We need food; Confirmation - We need strength; Reconciliation - We need healing; Matrimony - We need family, Holy Orders - We need leaders; Anointing of Sick - We are ill. Answers from this page: 1- Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders; 2-Matrimony & Holy Orders; 3-Reconciliation; 4-Anointing of the Sick; 5-Eucharist

