



# The Masterworks of God

**A**re you in some kind of slump where life has lost its glimmer? How can life become an adventure, living with joy, peace and all that is good in your daily routine, even amidst life's difficulties? The only way is through the power of God's grace. There are seven particular means by which we receive the power of God's grace: the seven sacraments that Jesus has made available to us. In order to better appreciate these seven gifts that are a necessary part of our lives, it is helpful to reflect firstly on why we need the sacraments.



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The essence of this explanation for why we need the sacraments is the desire for our goal: union with God. The place to begin is with the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Blessed Trinity is an eternal communion of total, self-giving love. God wanted to share His love and so He created us to be united with Him in a relationship of love by means of His gift of grace. It is God's greatest desire to be united with us in a deep, personal friendship. Through the original sin of our first parents, we lost union with God. He did not leave us to be forever separated from Him. Rather, out of His perfect love for us, God promised a Redeemer to fix the catastrophic problem of separation begun by our first parents. The Redeemer would bring us back into

union with our Heavenly Father.

God began to form the chosen people, beginning with Abraham, who followed the call of the Lord in faith. Later, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments so that the people would know how to live in such a way as to stay close to Him, under His protection. The people tried to follow these laws of love, but they were too weak without the gift of sanctifying grace. The prophets spoke of the coming of the Messiah, who would reunite God and man, and called them to prepare. The prophet Hosea challenged the people to set aside their evil ways and deeds of worshipping false gods, which was idolatry against their covenant with the one, true God. The people now began to recognize their need for a savior.

Mary gave her fiat—her yes—to

the Angel Gabriel to be the Mother of Jesus. The Incarnation is God taking on human flesh. This mystery of Jesus coming to be among us and solving the problem of our separation from God is crucial to our story—God's plan to save us. Only Jesus, because He is God, could reunite us with the Father. Jesus established the foundation of the Church by choosing 12 men, with Peter as the head, giving them the teachings of the Catholic Church and instituting each of the seven sacraments. The sacraments entrusted to the Twelve Apostles are the means whereby the Church dispenses the grace of the Holy Spirit, necessary for our transformation to be reunited with God.

Jesus suffered, died and rose from the dead so our sins could be forgiven and we could be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit Who empowers us to live a life in union with God and other people. We are enabled to participate in God's very life—to be reunited with Him—by receiving sanctifying grace through these sacraments.

We need to respond to God's grace. We do this by cooperating with the power of His grace



This is the first in a series of articles on each of the seven sacraments. The sacraments are “power houses,” where we receive the power of God’s grace to live the Christian life.



received in the sacraments to overcome temptations and reject sin, and to live as committed disciples of Jesus Christ by loving and serving others as Jesus has loved us.

*What are sacraments?*

The sacraments are channels of grace entrusted by Christ to the Church by which divine life is dispensed to us. In other words, the grace that we receive in the sacraments is a participation in God’s own life in which He dwells within us. The power of conferring the grace of divine life was purchased for us by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ.

Every sacrament has an outward or visible sign, also referred to as the “matter”; for example, in baptism, it is water; in the Eucharist, it is bread and wine. The sacrament also has a “form” or formula, or words of spiritual significance given to the matter when it is conferred. In turn, the sacraments accomplish what they intend to do. For example, through baptism, a person becomes a child of God and is freed of original sin; through confession, personal sin is taken away.

Of course, the person receiving a

sacrament needs to prepare properly to receive God’s grace contained therein. We will want to seek the help of the Holy Spirit in preparing to receive the sacraments. What we need to remember is that the sacraments are not magic. The sacraments are powerful, but they require our willingness to receive them and our cooperation in acting from the grace given. In cooperating with the power of God’s grace, the sacraments will bear these fruits in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23)

*How do the sacraments relate to our daily life?*

“The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life.” (CCC 1210) Thus, there is a similarity between the stages of natural human life and the stages of the supernatural life of grace received in the seven sacraments. †

*Human Life*

*Supernatural Life*

In order to live, we must be born.	We must be spiritually born in baptism to be united with Jesus Christ.
It is necessary to feed ourselves to stay alive.	We must nourish the divine life in the soul through the Eucharist.
We must grow to maturity and assume the responsibilities of adult life.	We must grow to spiritual maturity and assume full responsibilities as members of the Church through confirmation.
When wounded, we need to see a doctor who will help with the healing process.	When wounded by sin, we need to see the Divine Physician, who will heal our soul in confession.
We must live under government and justice in human relationships.	We must live under the spiritual government of the Church, which is holy orders as established by Christ.
Parents are called to propagate members of the human race.	It is the faithful and fruitful union of husband and wife in matrimony that ensures the continuation of the raising of children who themselves become members of the Kingdom of God.
A person suffering disease or nearing death receives special care.	A person suffering from serious illness or the frailty of old age is ministered to through the Anointing of the Sick, receiving the Lord’s grace of strengthening, peace and courage. In addition, the Christian about to leave this earth receives the Risen Christ in the Holy Eucharist as strength to pass over from this world to the Father.