

Liturgical Year Supplemental Lesson

Lent and Easter

Correlated Materials

Student Text: Chapter 19, pp. 92–96;
Chapter 20, pp. 97–100; Chapter 25,
pp. 119–23; Chapter 28, pp. 134–39

LESSON FOCUS

When we are baptized we receive new life. Lent is like Baptism because during Lent we are born into new life. During Lent we prepare for Easter by offering small sacrifices so that we may receive the new life of the Risen Christ.

AIMS

- Students will realize that through sacrifices we make, God blesses us and we can actually learn to change our ways.
- The students will learn that Lent prepares our hearts through prayer and fasting.
- Students will learn that through Baptism and Lent we receive new life.
- Students will learn that we can imitate Jesus if we are close to Jesus during Lent and Easter. Students will see that we are remembering Jesus during the liturgical year of Lent and Easter.

MATERIALS

- Bible
- White board and markers

Begin the Lesson

Preparation (5–10 minutes)

Use one or more of the following resources for prayer and student preparation for the lesson.

SCRIPTURE:

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly”
(John 10:10).

Jesus died for us because He loves us. Jesus rose from the dead so we may have life. Jesus is alive!

SACRED ART: Student Text, pp. 92, 98, 120

The Crucifixion with Saint Jerome and Saint Francis, Pesellino;
Deposition (detail), Fra Bartolomeo; *Noli Me Tangere* (Do Not Hold Me), Duccio

Look at the picture of the Crucifixion; then Jesus being taken down from the Cross; and lastly, Jesus after He has risen from the dead.

PRAYER WITH CHILDREN: Act of Faith, Student Text, p. 157

Proclamation (1 minute)

(Proclaim slowly, then repeat.)

During Lent we prepare for Easter so that we may receive the new life of the Risen Christ. When we are baptized we receive new life. Lent is like Baptism because during Lent we are born into new life.

Lesson Explanation (20–35 minutes)

Explain focus points in your own words or use the discussion points and questions.

WORDS TO KNOW

Good Friday: the day Jesus suffered and died for us

Easter: the day on which Jesus rose from the dead

sacrifice: something that is offered to God. At Mass we offer Jesus to God the Father as a sacrifice for our sins.

Baptismal Promises

- Do you renounce Satan?
- And all his works?
- And all his empty show?
- Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death, and was buried, rose again from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Focus 1: Because of the sin of Adam and Eve we are all in need of new life. Baptism restores the life of grace in our souls.

- *Have you ever done something wrong and later wished that you could take it away?* (Answers will vary.)
- Baptism takes away our sins. When we are baptized, all of our sins are forgiven. *Why do we need to be baptized?* (To take away Original Sin; to become part of God's family.)
- **Briefly review** the Fall of Adam and Eve.
 - Adam and Eve disobeyed God; nothing could take away their sin until Jesus came. Jesus is our Savior.
 - *What did Adam and Eve lose as a result of their disobedience?* (Life in paradise; grace—God's life in their souls.)
 - *What did mankind need as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve?* (We needed new life; we needed to restore the grace that was lost.)

Conclusion: The life of grace was taken away with the sin of Adam and Eve; grace is restored in Baptism.

Focus 2: Baptism gives us new life.

- *What is the first Sacrament received that gives us new life?* (Baptism.)
 - *What happens to us when we are baptized?* (Original Sin is taken away; we become part of God's family; we receive grace in our souls; we receive new life.)

Conclusion: Baptism gives us new life.

Focus 3: Lent gives us new life.

- Lent is a time in the Church year that helps us to prepare for Easter. The color used at Mass during Lent is purple. Purple is the color for penance.
- During Lent we want to imitate Jesus' love and obedience.
 - *What types of things can we do to imitate Jesus, show love and obedience, or give up things in small ways?* (Answers will vary.)
 - *If we pray, obey, or give things up, how does this help us?* (If we give up video games, for example, we have more time for our family; by giving of ourselves we are opening the door for God to change us and bless us; if we pray, we become closer to Jesus so He can help us; if we obey, Jesus will bless us.)
 - *How do our souls change?* (Through God's grace, we see how we need to change; through the grace received, we are nourished by God to change our ways.)
 - *What blessings will God give to us if we love and obey as Jesus did?* (God will give us joy and happiness in our hearts.)

- We should celebrate the joy and happiness in our hearts.
What feast do we celebrate when Lent is over? (Easter.)
 - *What is the purpose of doing all of these things during Lent? (When we imitate Jesus, we become more like Him; we have new life in us.)* On Easter Sunday, we are filled with new life!
 - *What are some Easter symbols of joy and new life? (Mass—white color is used, and the Alleluia is sung; eggs; bunnies; spring flowers; etc.)*

Conclusion: Lent gives us new life. When we give things up, we realize that it is not easy and we need God to help us; when we turn to God, we become closer to Him and He blesses. We receive grace in our souls; grace gives us new life—we become good and holy girls and boys.

Focus 4: Baptism and Lent both provide new life.

Lent is a time to baptize those coming into the Church (becoming Catholic), and it is a time for all of us to renew our baptismal vows.

- **Draw** the following on the board (note the meaning of “new life”).

Baptism	Lent
Original Sin is taken away.	Many are baptized at the Easter Vigil; Original Sin is taken away. Others go to Confession during Lent, where sin is forgiven.
We become part of God’s family.	We renew our baptismal vows during Lent; many prepare to come into the Church.
We receive grace in our souls.	Through the Sacraments, prayer, and sacrifices, we receive grace in our souls.
We receive new life.	Through prayer and sacrifices, we receive grace and new life. We become new in Christ.

- Baptism gives us new life. Lent gives us new life.
 - *How are Baptism and Lent alike? (Baptism gives us grace and new life; through our prayer, sacrifices, and obedience, Lent gives us grace and new life.)*
 - *What do we mean by new life? (We change our ways to become good and holy people.)*
 - *What are some examples of change? (We become more like Jesus: kind, thoughtful, patient, caring, sharing, etc.)*
- In the early Church, and still today, Lent is a time of preparation for non-Christians to be baptized.
 - *Why do you think that Lent is a good time to prepare for Baptism? (Lent prepares us for new life. Sacrifices and prayers made during Lent open our hearts and prepare us for new life.)*

- ***Do you know who prepares for Baptism during Lent today?*** (Non-Christians who become Catholic today prepare for Baptism during Lent. This process is called RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults]. They are baptized at the Easter Vigil.)
- ***Do you know of any non-Catholics who were baptized at the Easter Vigil? Or, Do you know of anyone who became Catholic at the Easter Vigil?*** (Answers will vary.)
- Lent is also a time for those who already are baptized to renew their baptismal vows. Since you have already been baptized and have already made your First Penance and First Holy Communion, Lent is a good time for you to renew the vows that your parents made for you when you were baptized.
- **Renew** baptismal vows using Student Text, page 137 (see sidebar). Before renewing the baptismal vows, review the following.
 - Explain the three terms and that Baptismal vows do two things:
 - Renounce (give up) all that is evil:
 1. Satan (*The devil; remind students that the devil tempted Adam and Eve to disobey; he tempted Jesus to disobey; he also tempts us to disobey.*)
 2. Sin (*Any wrong we do on purpose. Sin turns us away from God.*)
 3. Evil (*Caused by the devil; opposite of good; results from our free choice to sin.*)
 - Accept the teachings of the Catholic Church as found in the Creed.

Conclusion: Because both Baptism and Lent give us new life, many are baptized during Lent.

Review Supplemental Lesson—Liturgical Year: Lent and Easter

- Because of the sin of Adam and Eve we are all in need of new life. Baptism restores the life of grace in our souls.
- Baptism and Lent give us new life.
- Through sacrifices we offer during Lent, we receive new life on Easter.

Application (20–30 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following for discussion.

- ***How can we keep these baptismal promises each day?*** (Discuss practical examples of each.)
 - Renouncing Satan, sin, and evil (*Obeying God and parents; following Ten Commandments, etc.*)

Penance

We have in the Church two penitential seasons, Advent and Lent, during which the priest wears purple. Penance prepares us for very important things: the coming of Jesus, and Jesus' death and Resurrection. There are different ways to do penance. We receive a penance when we go to Confession. We may abstain from meat on Fridays. Penance includes prayers, fasting, abstinence, works of charity, and almsgiving. At Fatima, Mary asked the children to do penance. If Jesus suffered and died to redeem the world, there must be value in our suffering and penance, if we unite it with Jesus and offer it to Him.

Stations of the Cross: Our Imitation of Christ

1. We can be obedient to our authorities.
2. We can suffer gladly.
3. Every time we fall, we turn to Jesus for help.
4. We can ask the Mother of God for help.
5. We can accept and give help to others.
6. We can console others, and be consoled.
7. We should persevere in our trials.
8. We should put others before ourselves.
9. We should not give up hope.
10. We should be humble.
11. We should die to our sin.
12. We should place our lives in God's hands.
13. We should receive the Body of Christ.
14. We should visit Jesus in the tabernacle.

- Believing in God the Father, Son, Holy Spirit ... (*Going to Mass, prayer, trust in God, etc.*)
- Believing in the forgiveness of sins (*Forgiving others and going to Confession.*)
- We should spend time at the end of each day examining our consciences to decide whether or not we have done a good job keeping these promises. (Allow time for students to quietly examine their consciences.)
- The Examination of Conscience on Student Text, pages 160–61, provides ways to decide if we have or have not renounced Satan, sin, and evil in our lives each day.
- **Remind the children** that (in most cases) these promises were made for them at the time they were baptized. But now they are old enough to renew their baptismal vows. (See sidebar.)
- Review the Sacrament of Penance. (See sidebar.)
- Discuss the Stations of the Cross. (See sidebar.)

Celebration (10–15 minutes)

Choose one or more of the following.

- Pray the Renewal of Baptismal Vows with student response, Student Text, p. 137 (See sidebar.)
- Quiet students and listen to refrain of “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today” in the *Adoremus Hymnal*, #410 (www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm).
- Focus on Jesus in the picture on Student Text, p. 92.



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Jesus Gives His Life for Us

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:13

After the Last Supper, Jesus went out to pray in the Garden of Olives. He asked His disciples to stay awake with Him for a little while, but they fell asleep. Jesus was alone in His great suffering.

Jesus saw all of our sins that night and it saddened Him. He thought of all the suffering He would accept to make up for our sins. Remember, Jesus was both God and man. As a man, He felt deep emotions. That night He felt sadness and fear. He asked God the Father, “If it is possible, take this suffering away from Me.” But then He told Him, “Your will, not Mine, be done.” God the Father sent an angel to comfort Him.

Later in the night, soldiers came to arrest Jesus. These soldiers were cruel, but Jesus was gentle and went with them. He knew He was about to fulfill His Father’s plan for our salvation. Jesus bravely went before the high priest and Jewish leaders. He was silent when they wrongly accused Him and wanted Him to be put to death.

By law, the Jewish leaders could not put Jesus to death. They needed Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, to condemn Him. Pilate also had the power to set Jesus free. He knew Jesus was innocent. But Pilate was too afraid of not being popular. When an angry crowd kept yelling out, “Crucify Him!” Pilate gave in. He did not protect Jesus. He sentenced Him to death as His enemies wanted.

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The soldiers grabbed Jesus and treated Him like a criminal. They beat Him with whips. They pushed a crown of sharp thorns on His head. They made fun of Him by saying in disrespectful voices, “Hail, King of the Jews.”

Now Jesus was very weak, but the soldiers hurt Him even more. They made Him carry a heavy Cross. They gave Him no rest or water. Jesus fell down three times, but they made Him go on. When Jesus reached the top of Mount **Calvary**, they nailed His hands and feet to the wood of the Cross, raised the Cross upright, and left Him to die in pain.

Even in the midst of great suffering, Jesus was full of love. He asked His Father to forgive the cruel soldiers. He gave hope and forgiveness to a thief hanging by His side. He told His Mother Mary to be the Mother of His beloved Apostle John, and of the whole world.

Some of the people laughed at Jesus and said, “He heals others, but He cannot save Himself!” Jesus was God, and He had full power to escape the pain of the Cross. But He stayed on the Cross. He freely chose to suffer and die because He loved us so much. He wanted to make up for our sins. He wanted to **redeem** us, or buy our freedom, so we could go to Heaven.

A **sacrifice** is something that is offered to God. Jesus’ sacrifice was so complete and so perfect that it conquered death for ever. It healed the wounds of Adam’s Original Sin. It restored full friendship between man and God.

Jesus’ great victory taught us the value of sacrifice. His **Passion** and death saved the world. When we offer up things out of love, we are part of Jesus’ great sacrifice. We make up for our sins and the sins of others. In some way we help Him in saving the world. Small acts of self-denial can be as simple as giving up a piece of candy we want

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to keep or helping our mother when we are tired. These acts of love become part of Jesus’ sacrifice and help bring grace into the world.

The next time you go to Mass, find the Stations of the Cross in your church. Look at all fourteen images. Remember that Jesus loved you so much He suffered and died for you. You must be very precious to Him. Tell Him that you will love Him forever.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

1. Jesus is condemned to death.
2. Jesus carries His Cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus meets His Mother.
5. Jesus is helped by Simon.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls a second time.
8. Jesus speaks to the women.
9. Jesus falls a third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of His clothes.
11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross.
12. Jesus dies on the Cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the Cross.
14. Jesus is placed in the tomb.

Words to Know:

Calvary redeem sacrifice Passion

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- Q. 87** *Why did the Son of God become man?*
The Son of God became man to save us, that is, to redeem us from sin and to regain Heaven for us (CCC 461).
- Q. 88** *What did Jesus Christ do to save us?*
To save us, Jesus Christ paid for our sins by suffering and sacrificing Himself on the Cross, and He taught us how to live according to God (CCC 571, 580).
- Q. 89** *What is a sacrifice?*
Sacrifice is the public offering to God of something to show that God is the Creator and Supreme Master to Whom everything belongs (CCC 606).
- Q. 90** *What are the Stations of the Cross?*
The Stations of the Cross are a devotional prayer in which we think about the suffering and death of Jesus (CCC 1674, 1676).

"Let not your hearts be troubled. . . . And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

John 14:1-3

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20 Offering Gifts of Love

"This chalice which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

Luke 22:20

All through the ages, God's children have offered sacrifices to Him as a sign of their worship and love. During the Old Testament days, before Jesus came to earth, the People of God offered up many things that were dear to them. In this way they told God that they loved His gifts, but they loved Him even more.

Whenever a person offered up something in sacrifice, he burned or destroyed it. This showed that he was giving it completely back to God. Farmers thanked God for their crops by sacrificing the first fruits of their harvest. It was a way of saying, "We believe that these gifts are from You. Thank You. Please keep blessing us."

So men made a present to the Heavenly Father of the very things that nourished them and kept them alive. Healthful grains like barley, wheat, and oats were baked into unleavened bread and cakes. Grapes were pressed into wine. Then the good grain and wine were given to God as gifts.

People of the Old Testament also offered up the bloody sacrifice of animals. They used cows, sheep, and doves. During an animal sacrifice, the priest placed the victim on an altar and put his hands on it. Then he killed the animal, shed its blood, and burned it.

Holy men of the Old Testament were generous in these sacrifices. Abel, who was a shepherd, offered up his best lamb. The first thing Noah did after the flood was build a stone altar and sacrifice some animals from the ark. Abraham was even willing to obey God's request that he sacrifice his own beloved son, Isaac. God was only

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testing Abraham's trust and love. He rewarded Abraham by stopping him and showing him a ram he could sacrifice instead.

In time, God had Moses anoint a few men to offer up gifts for all the people. These men were called priests. The people joined the priests in praying to God. Some of these prayers were cries for help or sorrow for sin. Others were gifts of praise or thanks.

Every Old Testament sacrifice had one great goal in common. Man deeply longed to make up for sin. Man wanted to restore his friendship with God.

When Jesus came into the world, people were still trying to restore friendship with God. Jewish families went to worship God at the **Temple** in Jerusalem. They offered up lambs, doves, and food. God was pleased with these sacrifices. But He wanted to give His people a far greater gift to offer. He wanted to give them one gift that would unite them with Him to the end of time. And He wanted to give them a perfect gift.

Jesus, God's beloved Son, was that perfect gift. When He shed His Blood and died on the Cross, He gave God that perfect gift as a sacrifice on our behalf. The sacrifice of Himself was so perfect and true that it was the best gift ever given to God. It was so powerful that it washed away Adam's sin and all sin and so saved the whole human race. It opened the Father's heart and the gates of Heaven.

Jesus knew that men and women in all of history would want and need to share in this perfect gift to God, too. So He made it possible for the perfect gift of His Body and Blood to be offered continually. On the night before He died, Jesus gave His Apostles the power to change bread and wine into His Body and Blood in the Sacrifice of the **Mass**.

Today all over the world the Sacrifice of the Mass continues in the same way. Listen to the words of the priest. "Take this, all of you, and

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eat of it, for this is my Body. . . . Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood. . . .” Every time we go to Holy Mass, we offer up Christ Himself to the Father. It is the very same sacrifice as the one on Calvary.

On the Cross Jesus offered Himself, shedding His Blood for our redemption. Through the ministry of the priest Jesus is offered on the altar again without shedding His Blood. At Mass we not only remember Jesus’ sacrifice of Himself to the Father, we continue it. Each time, Jesus brings His sacrifice before us in a real but sacramental way. He is the Lamb of God being offered continually to save our world. We can share in this perfect gift to God at each Mass. Together with the priest we offer Jesus to the Father. This is the most pleasing and powerful gift we can ever give God. It is our most wonderful offering. It unites us with God and fills our world with His life and love.

Words to Know:

Temple Mass

Q. 91 *What is the Holy Mass?*

The Holy Mass is the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The Holy Mass is offered on the altar by the priest of God, under the appearances of bread and wine, in memory of the Sacrifice of the Cross (CCC 1364–65).

Q. 92 *Is the Sacrifice of the Mass the same sacrifice as the Sacrifice of the Cross?*

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice of the Cross; the only difference is in the manner of performing it (CCC 1366–67).

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25 Jesus Rises in Splendor

“In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

John 14:2–3

Early on the Sunday morning after Jesus died, some women went to anoint His Sacred Body with spices and oils. But they arrived to find an empty tomb. The heavy stone that had sealed it was rolled away, and the Body of Jesus was nowhere in sight. A beautiful angel told the women Jesus was no longer dead, but alive. “He is risen!” the angel said. “Rejoice and tell the others!”

The women ran to find the Apostles and tell them the news. Even though Jesus had told His friends that He would rise on the third day after His death, they were surprised. They wanted to see with their own eyes. Peter and John ran to the tomb and trembled with excitement to see that it was true. Only the burial cloths remained. Jesus had risen from the dead. He was alive!

We are told that the first person to whom Jesus appeared was Mary Magdalene, the holy woman, whose many sins He had forgiven. She was weeping in the garden near the tomb because she missed Him. Jesus softly called her by name. She looked up and cried, “Teacher!” Jesus also appeared to two disciples who were walking sadly in the country. Once the men realized it was Jesus, alive and well, they too raced to tell the Apostles.

Soon after, the Apostles, who were some of Jesus’ **disciples**, were gathered together in an upper room. The doors were locked. Suddenly

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Jesus appeared among them! At first, the Apostles were afraid Jesus might be a ghost. But Jesus reassured them. “Peace be with you,” He said. Then He ate with them. Their joy was great.

The Apostle named Thomas doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead. He was not with the others right after Jesus rose from the dead. He said, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, touch them, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

When Jesus appeared in the upper room, He looked straight at Thomas. He said, “Put your finger here; look, here are My hands. Give me your hand; put it into My side, and believe.” Thomas did so and then answered in awe, “My Lord and my God.”



Jesus said: “Because you have seen Me, you believe. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed.” Jesus was speaking about all of us. One day He will reward us for our faith.

Jesus taught us by His life, death, and Resurrection that our suffering and death will be turned into glory and everlasting life. On **Good Friday**, He suffered and died on the Cross. But on Easter Sunday He arose from the dead in full splendor. Every **Easter**, we celebrate this miracle of the **Resurrection**: Jesus rising from the dead. We rejoice because Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross destroyed death. Each of us will die one day, but our death will be a doorway to Heaven. We will be alive for ever just like Jesus, our Risen Lord.

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“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . . and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

Matthew 28:19–20

After He rose from the dead, Jesus stayed among His disciples for forty days. He taught them more about the Faith and their mission on earth. He told Peter, the first Pope, to “feed My sheep.” He taught all of them to go out to teach and baptize. He promised He would send the Holy Spirit to help them.

Finally it was time for Jesus to go home to Heaven. “I am with you always, to the close of the age,” He promised. Then He ascended to Heaven and into glory. Jesus, the King of Heaven and earth, has prepared a place for us in Heaven, too. That is why, no matter what happens to us on this earth, we can be full of joy and hope.

Words to Know:

disciple Good Friday Easter Resurrection

Q. 104 *What is the Resurrection?*

The Resurrection is the fact that Christ is risen from the dead and has conquered death. Jesus rose from the dead on the first Easter Sunday, on the third day after his death on the Cross. The Resurrection is the crowning truth of our Faith (CCC 638, 640–41).

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Q. 105 *How can we know that our suffering and death will be turned into glory and everlasting life?*
Jesus’ Resurrection proves Jesus’ works and teachings, His power and divine authority. By Jesus’ death, we are freed from sin and death. By Jesus’ rising from the dead, the way to new life is opened for us (CCC 651, 654).

Q. 106 *Why did Jesus make Peter the first Pope?*
Jesus made Peter the first Pope so that Peter and the Apostles with him could rule and govern the Church according to Jesus’ will and teachings (CCC 816).

Q. 107 *Why did Jesus send His Apostles to teach and baptize all people?*
Jesus sent the Apostles to teach and baptize all people so that all people could share in Jesus’ life through the Church (CCC 1213, 1229, 1257).

Q. 108 *What was the Ascension?*
The Ascension was the moment when Jesus rose bodily into Heaven to sit at the Father’s right hand. The Ascension happened forty days after the Resurrection (CCC 659, 663).

WE PRAY TO GOD AT MASS:

To our departed brothers and sisters and to all who were pleasing to you at their passing from this life, give kind admittance to your kingdom.

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28 Our Life in the Church

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.”

John 10:27–28

Signs help us every day of our life. Often they call our attention to important things we cannot see or hear. Smoke is a sign of fire. Red lights or sirens are signs of danger. A heart is a sign of love.

We cannot see love. It is invisible. But love is real. We can show it to others through our actions. For example, your mother may show you her love by kind words, a hug, or a smile. Hearing, feeling, or seeing these signs helps you to understand the love in your mother’s heart. Without signs, her love would be hidden. With signs, you see and understand the wonderful gift that you are receiving.

In the Church, Jesus gave us signs of His grace in the seven Sacraments. A **Sacrament** is a sign. It uses things we can see and hear to tell us about something else that we cannot see or hear. Jesus and His grace are hidden from our eyes, but we know He is present in every Sacrament. Jesus promised this when He instituted these Sacraments during His public life on earth. He wanted to leave us visible signs of His grace being poured out to us.

The first Sacrament we receive is Baptism. The signs of this Sacrament are words and water. Most of us were baptized when we were little babies. Our parents and godparents took us to church. They made our baptismal promises for us because we were too young to speak. Then the priest poured water over our heads. He called us by

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name and said, "I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

At that very moment, we became **Christians**: baptized followers of Christ. Our sin was washed away and our souls were filled with brilliant new life. This new life in our soul was God's own life, called grace. God shared grace with us on our Baptism day so that we could be His own precious children forever. He welcomed us with open arms into His family on earth. Because of our Baptism, He can one day welcome us with open arms into His Kingdom in Heaven.

As a result of our Baptism, we can spend the rest of our life keeping the life of grace alive in our soul. God understands us completely, so He knows that we need special help to do this. That is why He gave us the other Sacraments: to keep God's grace. In this way, He can keep pouring His life and love into our hearts.

In the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, He gives us His own Son as food for our souls. Bread, wine, and the words of the priest are our signs that Jesus is present. Once the priest changes the bread and wine into Jesus' own Body and Blood, we can receive Him into our hearts. If we receive this Sacrament often, the life of grace in our soul grows more and more strong.

In the Sacrament of Penance, God gives us the chance to win back grace that we have lost in sin. We know God is really present, because we have the sign of the priest's healing, forgiving words. When he says to us, "I absolve you from your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," Jesus Himself speaks through him, forgiving and blessing us.

When we receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Holy Spirit fills us with the grace to be even stronger members of the Church. This Sacrament will help us to do whatever God asks us as members of His family.

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RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Do you renounce Satan?

I do.

And all his works?

I do.

And all his empty show?

I do.

Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?

I do.

Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?

I do.

Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin?

I do.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

I do.

And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins, keep us by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord, for eternal life. *Amen.*

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Later in life, we may receive some of the other Sacraments: Holy Orders, Matrimony (Marriage), and the Anointing of the Sick. The important thing to remember is that God gave us the Sacraments as a special invitation to share in His life. Receiving them strengthens our friendship with Him and unites us to Him. If we live up to the grace we receive in the Sacraments, we really will begin to think, speak, and act like Christ. His own life will shine out of us.

When we are full of God's grace, it is easier to keep our promises to God and follow His Commandments. We love Him so much we want to go to Mass every Sunday, we want to practice our faith and witness it to others. We want to love God most of all, and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Prayer is one of the greatest ways we can show our love of our neighbor. God wants us to pray, not only for those in His family, the Church, but also for others who do not have the gift of faith. Jesus told the Apostles that He came for everyone. He loves all people. He wants everyone in the world to belong to His family. Even if we cannot join the missionaries in distant lands, we can join them with our prayers. Prayer is powerful, and our prayers for people who do not yet know and love God can bring them closer to Him. Jesus said, "They will know you are My disciples by your love." To be His followers, we must love and pray for all the world.

Words to Know:

Sacrament Christian

Q. 115 What are the Sacraments?

The Sacraments are signs of grace instituted by Jesus Christ to make us holy (CCC 1114, 1116, 1127).

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Q. 116 How do the Sacraments make us holy?

The Sacraments make us holy either by giving us the first sanctifying grace, which takes away sin, or by increasing that grace which we already possess (CCC 1123).

Q. 117 What are the seven Sacraments?

The seven Sacraments are: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders (CCC 1113).

"... Put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body."

Colossians 3:14–15

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