

Policy #311 #2 – Catechesis on the Sacraments of Christian Initiation based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

1. The Church and Sacraments: context in which Christian Life is Developed.

INVITATION CHAPTER 12 HANDOUT written by Alfred McBride

Sacrament - (definition) - experiences that form us into community. They are special gifts given to us as members of the Catholic Church and are an integral part of what it means to be Catholic. They are the saving acts of Jesus designed to assist us on our faith journey to eternal life. Each sacrament offers us an encounter with Jesus in the context of the community of believers. They are experiences of faith and grace that gives us a deeper and loving union with the Lord and the church community.

3 essential elements that makes something a sacrament:

1) the believer - the person receiving the sacrament who has made a faith decision to live in Jesus with an open heart to receive the love and saving power of Christ.

2) the community - sacraments take place in the context of the Church community, who through their faith, express the significance of water, oil, bread, laying on of hands and other rituals

3) Christ - Christ offers us love, salvation, and spiritual power through the sacraments.

The 3 sacraments of initiation are Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

CATECHSIM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH PASSAGES

2. Baptism (nos. 1213-1284)

Baptism - begins our Christian life and marks us as one saved by Jesus Christ and sanctified with the Spirit of God. sign - baptismal waters - means the recipient and church community experience death to the old life and new life in Christ.

#1214 – Baptize comes from Greek (“baptizen”) which means to plunge or immerse. Doing this in water represents burial into Christ’s death and rising up with him from the water by resurrection into new life as a new creature.

#1219 – The story of Noah’s Ark was a prefigure of baptism in that although it wasn’t a true story it does show how water brings about new life and how people are saved through water.

#1223 – Jesus himself was baptized by John in the Jordan river to show its importance.

#1227 – According to the Apostle Paul, the believer enters through baptism into communion with Christ's death, is buried with him, and rises with him. The baptism of water purifies, justifies, and sanctifies a person.

#1238 – The baptismal water is blessed in a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to come upon the water so those who are baptized by it may be born of water and spirit.

#1241 – In the Roman Liturgy the post baptismal anointing announces a second anointing with sacred Chrism to be conferred later by the Bishop in Confirmation, which confirms and completes the baptismal anointing.

3. Confirmation (nos. 1285-1321)

Confirmation - full initiation into the Church community and empowers us to serve the Kingdom of God boldly. signs - laying on of hands and oil - the community passes on the gifts received from the Holy Spirit.

#1285 – The sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.

#1287 – On several occasions Christ promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which he did on Easter and Pentecost. Filled with the Holy Spirit then the Apostles began to proclaim the "mighty works of God".

#1288 – From that time on the Apostles conferred the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. (like you get in Confirmation today)

#1289 – The Chrism signifies the Holy Spirit and sometimes the sacrament is called Chrismation.

#1295 – By this anointing the person receives the "mark" or "seal" of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a sign of authority over another as you are marked with the Seal of the Holy Spirit, or authority of God over you.

#1302 – Effects of Confirmation:

- an increase and deepening of baptismal grace
- roots us more deeply with God
- unites us with Christ
- increases the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
- renders our bond with Jesus more perfect
- gives us the strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action

#1313 – In the Latin (Roman) Rite (us in San Diego), the Bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation. Bishops are successors of the apostles and Jesus gave the apostles the power to confirm so that is passed down to the current Bishops today.

#1319 – A candidate for Confirmation must profess the faith (why we study the Nicene Creed), be in the state of grace (why we have reconciliation service on retreat), intend to receive the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ.

4. Eucharist (nos. 1322-1419)

Eucharist (Communion) - unites us directly with Jesus and joins us as community. Jesus is truly present in the (signs) bread and wine, which enables us to form a real union with him.

#1323 – At the Last Supper on the night of his death Jesus institutes the Eucharist (mass) to remember his sacrifice of his body and blood. The mass perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he comes again. It is a memorial of his death and resurrection, a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet where Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

#1328 – Eucharist comes from Greek ("eucharistein"), which means thanksgiving, blessings...

#1391 – Holy Communion augments our union with Christ.

#1392 – what food produces in our bodily life, Communion achieves in our spiritual life.

#1393 – Holy Communion separates us from sin.