



Sacraments

In short, a sacrament is a visible sign of God's invisible presence. For the Christian, Jesus is the ultimate sacrament as it is through him that God became human. Through sacraments, God communicates through the Church and the Church responds to God's self-communication.¹ The Catholic Church recognizes the Church itself as the fundamental sacrament of the encounter with Christ and celebrates seven sacraments that mark points along the believer's faith journey: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist (together known as the Sacraments of Initiation), Reconciliation (also known as Penance), Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders.

(see Awakenings Core Document 4.2 Enduring Understandings by Strand: Prayer, Liturgy & Sacraments)

Sacramentals

Prayer and worship are essential in nurturing and strengthening the faith life of the believer. To enhance and support one's faith the Church recognizes a number of signs and actions that promote devotion. These can include rituals such as blessings, sign of the cross and sprinkling with holy water; as well various forms of piety such as pilgrimages, stations of the cross, the rosary and religious medals.² While important, sacramentals do not reflect the fullness of God's self-communication and grace as contained within the sacraments.

Sacramentality

The principle of sacramentality recognizes that for the believer all reality is sacred. All of creation is a sign of God's presence. St Ignatius Loyola referred to a "sacramental vision" that saw God in all things – people, places, events, the environment. Such a vision requires of the believer to respond through loving actions of care and responsibility animated by a sacramental imagination.

(see Awakenings Core Document 4.2 Enduring Understandings by Strand: Prayer, Liturgy & Sacraments)

¹ McBrien, R. (1994). *Catholicism*. North Blackburn, Vic.: CollinsDove, p.788

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd. ed., 1667-1679, accessed July 23, 2018, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c4a1.htm