



John Paul Prayer Group

The Church, The Sacraments & Me



“Church”

- The community of Jews who escaped from Egypt.
- Hebrew: *Qahal* (pronounced “ker-hull”)
- Greek: *Ekklesia*
- A Church is formed at the point of the Israelites crossed the Red Sea.
 - Death of the old life of slavery.
 - Life to the new life of freedom.



How God Made Himself Present

- Passing through the Red Sea. No way back. (Ex 14:21-29)
- God descended upon Mt Sinai in smoke and fire (Ex 19:18)
- Fed by manna from Heaven and water from the rock (Ex 16:12-15;17:5-6)
- Healed by glazing at the bronze serpent (Num 21:8-9)
- God forgave the people for worshipping the Golden Calf (Ex 32:31-33)
- Ordained Aaron and his sons as priests (Ex 29:1,29-30) Elders elected to act in the place of Moses (Num 11:16-17.24-25)
- “I am the Lord your God” - the Lord wedded the people to Himself (Ex 20:2, Rev 21:2)



Devine Mercy Vision

- A vision of Maria Faustina Kowalska in 1931.
- “One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.” (Jn 19:34)
- What does water and blood represents?
- Just as the first Eve was born out of the side of the first Adam, the Church as the new Eve is born out of the side of the new Adam on Calvary.



Sacraments

- The Church was formed out of the Sacraments.
- Comes from Latin ‘sacramentum’ meaning ‘oath’: God’s oath to us as promised by Jesus, “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt 28:20)
- Channels through which the grace of God flows to us, God connecting with the human soul.
- Outward signs conferring inner grace.
- The term “sacraments” were used loosely in early church.
- In 13th Century, the Church came to recognise 7 Sacraments.



7 Sacraments

- 3 Sacraments of Initiation
 - Baptism
 - Confirmation
 - Eucharist
- 2 Sacraments of Healing
 - Anointing of the Sick
 - Reconciliation
- 2 Sacraments of Vocation
 - Matrimony
 - Holy Order



The Sacramental Principle

- God, by His divine nature, is beyond our ability to see and understand.
- Faith in God finds expression in symbols, stories, songs.
 - Outward signs that gives grace.
- The world is a sacrament.
 - God comes to us, speaks to us, touches us through people, through his creations.
 - God uses things, events and objects that we can experience with our senses to convey His Truth and Grace to us.



Sacramental Principle & Salvation

- Finite human beings could not atone for the insult of sin against an infinite Being.
 - We cannot “reach up” to God to restore the broken relationship.
 - The relationship can only be restored by God “reaching down” to us.
 - Hence God became man.
- At Christ’s conception, a mingling of divinity and humanity occurred.
 - The Sacramental Principal is established.



Redeeming All Of Creation

- “For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that **the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay** and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (Rom 8:20-21)
- How does human redeem the whole of creation?



“Seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.” Matthew 13:13



The Church as a Sacrament

- Christ is the sacrament of God.
 - “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” (Jn 14:9)
 - “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” (Jn 14:10)
- We must do the same.
 - The Church is the sacrament of Christ.
 - “The one who believes in me will do the work that I do.” (Jn 14:12)



Living the Sacramental Principal

- From *Celebrating Sacraments To Living the Sacraments*.
- “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (Mt 25:35-36)
- Mother Teresa said that she saw the face of Jesus in the face of each sick and dying person she helped.
- “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” (Gal 2:20)



We are the Body of Christ.

- Living the Sacramental Principal means getting more in tune with how often Christ answers our prayers through the touches of others.
- More in tune how Christ uses us to answer the prayers of others.



Wrapping up ...

- The term "catholic church" was first used by Bishop Ignatius of Antioch in 110AD.
 - "Katholikos" (καθολικός), meaning "total" or "universal".
- St Paul on Christian living:
 - Eph 4:4-6

One body	One Spirit
One Lord	One faith
One baptism	One God and Father of all
 - Gal 3:28
 - No longer Jew or Greek
 - No longer slave or free
 - No longer male and female

Christian Living

- Book of Ephesus: Model of Christian Living
 - Eph 1-3: Being Evangelised
 - Eph 4-6: Living out our baptism
 - In other words, **Sacramental Living**

Q&A



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