

Sacraments: important notes for your understanding

A sacrament is "an outward sign of an inward grace" (Catholic teaching). By grace we mean the invitation to participate in God's life

God (the Father) is infinite and beyond our imaginations. We cannot know Him. Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity (the 3rd being the Holy Spirit) and even though He is totally God He is also totally human. That's why he says "all those who want to reach the Father must come through me". It is because it is only at the human level that we can catch a glimpse of the infinite God. Jesus was perfectly adapted to communicate God's grace to us. Remember grace being this pure invitation to share in the divine life.

The most important sacrament is the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is at the centre of the seven sacraments. All the others orbit the Eucharist like planets around the sun. Catholics believe that somehow through actually eating the bread and drinking the wine they are in some way participating in Jesus life, death and resurrection. His body and blood are literally being taken inside of you and through this sacrament this invitation to be "Christ like" is offered to us.

Every time a Catholic celebrates the Eucharist he /she reminds himself/herself that Christ became one of us to show us the way (teach us what is important) and died on the cross and then resurrected in order to show that death could not hold him- just as that divine soul in us can not be held by death.

Catholics constantly try to "align" themselves with this "Christ like" nature but know they often fall short (sin) but they know that if they genuinely ask for forgiveness they will be forgiven. By celebrating the Eucharist Catholics remind themselves of God's endless grace for them. (This is after all the sacrament that celebrates /remembers the fact that Jesus love for us was so strong that he was prepared to undergo tortures and death on the cross in order to die and then rise again) This strengthens their faith and hopefully their commitment to live out Christ's teachings.