

# **LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS MODULE (B)**

## **Chapter 1... The Sacrament of Baptism**

### **Aim**

To introduce the Sacraments of Initiation, with a special attention to the Sacrament of baptism.

### **The Sacraments of Initiation (CCC 1212)**

There are seven Sacraments:-

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- The Eucharist
- Reconciliation
- Anointing of the sick
- Holy Orders
- Marriage

They are given to us to help us through all the stages of life.

The 1<sup>st</sup> three are known as 'the Sacraments of Initiation'.

Christian initiation is more than just a series of ceremonies – it is this, but more, it is an activity of God whereby we are united with our Saviour Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit and through which

we are given a participation in God's own life and love.

They inwardly transform us.

It is because Christian Initiation unites us with Jesus Christ as members of His Body that it works and secures our entry into His Church.

The three Sacraments of Initiation perform the following: -

1. Frees us from the powers of darkness
2. Joins us to Christ's death, burial and Resurrection
3. Gives us the spirit of filial adoption in the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's death and Resurrection.
4. Brings us, the faithful of Christ, to His full stature and enables us to carry out God's mission in the Church and world.

Originally these three Sacraments were received at the same ceremony and this practice has been renewed in the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

They are however three distinct Sacraments amongst which The Eucharist holds a unique place.

### **History of the Sacrament of Baptism (CCC 1217 – 1225)**

In the OT there are several pre-figurative examples of the Sacrament –

The Church sees these in : -

- The hovering of the creative spirit of God over the waters (**Gen 1:2**)
- The rescue of Noah from the flood (**Gen 7 – 9**)
- And especially the rescue of the people of Israel in the passing through the waters of the Red Sea (**Ex 14:19 – 30**)

This is why the last of these readings is compulsory during the Liturgy of the Easter Vigil.

Before the coming of Jesus the Jews had a baptismal rite for Gentiles wishing to become Jews – this often took place after instruction during the feast of the Passover.

John the Baptist practised a purification rite of Baptism (**Mark 1:4 –6**)

Jesus Himself underwent Baptism in the River Jordan, an event through which He was proclaimed Son of God and the Spirit filled Messiah (**Mark 1:9 – 11**)

According to St. John's Gospel, Jesus Himself began His mission by baptising together with His disciples (**John 3:22 – 4:2**)

We also know from His commissioning of the Apostles before His Ascension, that it was His will that this should continue (**Matt 28:16 – 20**).

This practice was also carried out throughout The Acts of the Apostles.

What is different about Christian Baptism is that it is done in the name of Jesus Christ.

The practice developed in the early Church of a period of 'Catechesis' followed by baptism by total immersion – this however was replaced by 'pouring of water on the head three times' where it was impractical to carry out total immersion.

Baptism by pouring was therefore practised from a very early date

In the early Church adult baptism was the norm, nevertheless there is explicit mention of baptism of children from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the mention in the NT of whole 'households' being baptised. (**Acts 16:15,33;18:8; 1Cor 1:6**) may well indicate that infant baptism dates back to Apostolic preaching.

The practice of infant baptism is therefore an ancient one and with the development of the doctrine of Original Sin became the most common rite.

Several points need to be noted from the development of Baptism in the early Church:-

1. Each candidate had to make a positive decision to become a Christian through a series of steps designed to test their seriousness. There was nothing automatic about it.
2. What we now identify as three Sacraments were originally experienced as a unity, building up over three years to a community celebration at Easter.
3. The period was not just a matter of instruction in doctrine, but a time of acquiring values and beliefs – this was monitored and tested.
4. The process was not a private one but one in which the whole community was involved together with the Bishop.

With the growth of the Church, because of practical difficulties the three Sacraments began to be separated. In the Western Church Confirmation was held over until later when the Bishop could be present for the 'imposition of hands'.

### **Current developments**

1. The Reformers asked legitimate questions about the faith required for reception of any Sacrament
2. The discovery of new continents led to large scale Evangelization and adult initiation.
3. For several centuries now much of Europe and some of North America have become post-Christian, much as in earlier times.
4. The Church has had to re-consider the relationship between Evangelization, Catechesis and the reception of the Sacraments
5. After decades of pressure and experience from the missions in Africa and the Church in France, Vatican 2 called for a new rite for the Baptism of Infants and the restoration of a progressive rite for the Initiation of Adults – this after 1500 years (issued in 1972 and in English in 1987)

### **The meaning of Baptism**

1. Incorporation of the Body of Christ - (**1 Cor12:~; Rom 6**) In Baptism we pass from the death of sin into life (**John 3:5; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 13:25; 2:2**).

2. Initiation into the Church – In Baptism we are built together in spirit into a house where God lives  
**(Eph2:2) ‘a holy nation and a royal priesthood’ (2 Peter 1:4; Rom 6:11)**
3. Faith – Is both the condition for and the effect of Baptism **(S.C 9)** the Sacrament by which, enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we respond to the Gospel of Christ.

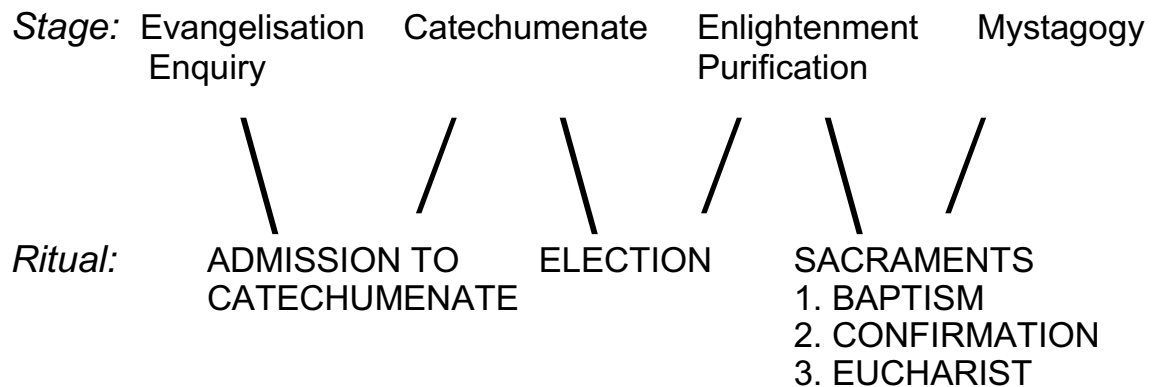
**The Rite of the Sacrament of Baptism (CCC 1229 – 1252)**

There are two common models for the Rite of Baptism.

1. Adult Model

Initiation is to be seen as a ‘journey in faith’ – a continuous process of conversion and growth in faith.

This follows the pattern - Evangelization, Catechesis, and the Sacraments – each stage of which is celebrated in sacramental rituals



2. Infant Baptism

Is a true Baptism and washes away Original Sin and bestows new Grace.

However, if it is to follow the path of true Initiation it must be followed by subsequent Catechesis.

There should therefore be a well-founded expectation that the child will be brought up as a Catholic before Baptism is give. (The responsibility lies with the parents – not forgetting other members of the extended family).

Where this is not possible it might be prudent to delay Baptism ( In recognition of this the RCIA provides a rite for the Baptism of children of ‘catechizable age’.

A sensitive handling of parents under these circumstances can be an occasion leading to their own evangelisation and catechesis.

This is a much better approach than indiscriminate baptising – often with no further contact with the Church or its faith.

In a de-Christianised society this becomes ever more important.

In both of the above models there are common elements:

**SYMBOLISM**

Symbolism

The use of water and the human actions in using it –

Immersion – the early Christians used running water or later on baptisteries containing pools or tanks into which candidates could descend.

Immersion continued to be practised until the 13<sup>th</sup> century –

Immersion is now once again an option in the revised Rite of Baptism.

Pouring

Baptism by pouring however still retains the rich symbolism of immersion

There are some ‘Secondary Symbols’ associated with Baptism:-

### Anointing

This seems to have had its origins in pre-baptismal Roman bathing habits –skin care prior to bathing – it was interpreted by the Fathers as a preventative against Satan.

Post-baptismal anointing with Chrism is a literal expression of conformity with Christ (Anointed One) in His Messianic mission as prophet, priest and king. It is the origin of the word ‘Christening’

### Signing

The signing of the cross on the forehead was analogous to the branding of slaves – indicating ownership.

### Clothing

After immersion and anointing the newly baptised were given new clothes (white garment) suggesting the reversal of the Fall and the Second Coming (Parousia)

### Candle

A later development, indicating the sharing of the Paschal Candle (Easter Candle) and a reference to wedding lamps.

## TEXTS

The words that accompany the symbols:

Prayers of thanksgiving  
And the formula of the administration

### Thanksgiving

The blessing of God over the water that takes place at the Easter Vigil and at every Baptism – recalling God’s interventions through the medium of water (anamnesis or memorial) and the calling of the Holy Spirit to continue that saving work here.

### Administration

The formula of baptism is “I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” said as the water is poured.

**N.B.** The signing of the forehead with water is not a legitimate administration.

Baptism in adults presumes the renunciation of sin, so as to live a life of acceptance of the faith by which the Church adheres to and confesses Christ and His Gospel.  
These are articulated before baptism by the recital of the Apostles Creed.

In the case of infants, the parents and Godparents make the profession of faith.

Whilst the infant is incapable of a conscious affirmation of faith, this is no obstacle to the receipt of Grace.

In fact infant Baptism demonstrates that salvation comes to us as a free gift of God – it is into the faith of the Church that they are baptised.

### Ministries

In normal circumstances a Bishop, priest or deacon presides over Baptism (In emergencies, such as imminent death, anyone may do this on behalf of the Church).

In the revised rites, Baptism is seen as a celebration of the whole local church, accordingly, adult baptisms should normally be celebrated once a year at the Easter Vigil.

Infant baptism should normally be celebrated for several babies at a time of public liturgy on a Sunday.

### Structure of the Rites

The RCIA normally takes place as a series of celebrations over several months and intensifies during Lent with Scrutinies and Exorcisms.

Finally the period of 'Mystagogy' sees the newly baptised being 'acclimatised' to the regular sacramental worship of the Church.

The Rite of infant Baptism echoes this progressive structure in a form appropriate for infants: -

- Reception at the church door equates to the period of the catechumenate.
- The liturgy of the Word parallels the catechesis of the catechumens but it is now the faith of the family which is being elicited and nourished.
- The administration of Baptism follows the adult liturgy.
- The concluding rites at the altar look forward to the completion of the Initiation one-day by the reception of The Eucharist and Confirmation.

# **LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS MODULE (B)**

## **Chapter 2...The Sacrament of Confirmation.**

### **Aim**

To explain the meaning and effect of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and to show how together with the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, it incorporates someone fully into the Church.

### **Introduction (CCC1285)**

Christian life, like any other must grow and mature.

This is the role of Confirmation, where the Holy Spirit is received and Christians built up into the Body of Christ.

### **History (CCC1286 – 1292)**

As we have seen previously the early Church did not have a clearly defined distinction between the Sacraments of Initiation as we do today.

Paul in (**Acts 8:14f**) tells of Christians in Samaria who had been baptised but had still to receive the Holy Spirit. The Apostles went and laid hands on them “and they received the Holy Spirit”.

This passage tells us 2 things: -

- The laying on of hands united the community of Samaria more firmly with the Church and Jerusalem.
- The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Christians of Samaria by the laying on of hands.

These two elements still remain central to the Sacrament of Confirmation, although its history has been rich and varied.

The Church teaches that Confirmation strengthens and confirms the gifts already received in Baptism. Confirmation can be seen as a two way process:

- the candidate ‘confirms’ the promises made at Baptism = personal commitment
- Confirmation is a ‘sealing’ by the Bishop which enables the candidate to commit themselves to the service of God.

### **The meaning and effects of Confirmation (CCC 1302 – 1305)**

The gift of the Holy Spirit allows us to participate more intensely in the mission of Jesus Christ and of the Church.

Since Confirmation, like Baptism, takes place once and for all, it leaves an indelible spiritual mark on the soul.

The coming of the Holy Spirit is often associated in the Bible with extraordinary signs such as the ‘Gift of Tongues’. See (**1 Cor 12:4 – 11**) for St. Paul’s list of ‘charismata’ or gifts associated with the receipt of the Holy Spirit.

The Church’s tradition links 7 particular gifts of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation which help us become fruitful members of the Christian Community, these are: -

**Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord.**

The 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit are : -

**Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Benignity, Goodness, Longanimity, Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Conrtinency, and Chastity.**

## **Relationship to Baptism and the Eucharist**

Vatican 2 (**S.C. 71**) asked that the rite of Confirmation be more clearly linked with Christian Initiation. Traditional teaching is that Confirmation is a 'completing' or 'perfecting' or 'sealing' of Baptism.

Vatican 2 also teaches (**L.G. 10**) that by Confirmation the baptised "are bound more perfectly to the Church; they are endowed with a special strength of the Holy Spirit and are thus more strictly obliged to spread and defend the Faith by word and deed.

Confirmation 'seals' baptism and looks forward to "the source and summit of Christian life" – the Eucharist.

It is in the Eucharist that the baptised and confirmed Christian is united with Christ and His Church and is nourished and strengthened.

This order of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist is the constant tradition of the Church.

In its decrees, canon law, councils, and its catechisms, the Church has unfailingly placed Confirmation between Baptism and the Eucharist.

Our current practice has been adopted to suit circumstances – dating from the beginning of this century when Pope Pius X lowered the age for reception of Communion to the 'age of reason' without lowering the age for reception of Confirmation.

The age for reception of Confirmation is not fixed or a matter of dogma, but of pastoral judgement.

There is currently considerable debate about the most appropriate age for Confirmation. However it is agreed that the strong link with the Bishop should be maintained – the reason why the original sequence was broken (**CCC 1313**).

## **The Rite of the Sacrament of Confirmation (CCC 1293 – 1314)**

When Confirmation is celebrated separate from Baptism, it is preceded by a 'renewal' of the baptismal promises made either by the candidate, or in the case of an infant, by the parents or Godparents.

### Symbolism

#### a) Chrism

Candidates for Confirmation are anointed with the oil of Chrism during the ceremony – the same oil used at Baptism and also at the ordination of priests and bishops.

The Bishop at the Chrism Mass has previously blessed it on Maundy Thursday and distributed it to all parishes within the diocese.

Until 1970 Chrism had to be a mixture of Olive Oil and Balsam. Now the Church only requires it to be from plants with the addition of some perfume to enhance the odour.

Anointing with oil is an ancient symbolism – see (**Ex 30:30; 1Sam 10:1; 1Sam 16:13**). It was used on priests, prophets and kings

In the ancient world oil was used in washing like soap and is therefore a symbol of purification, but it also indicates strength, power and splendour.

The title Christ comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Messiah meaning Anointed One.

#### b) Laying on of hands

Has a threefold meaning: -

- Being cleansed for Christ
- A sign of a blessing

- A sign of commissioning

It is the biblical gesture whereby the Holy Spirit is invoked (**Acts 8:18; 9:17**)

c) Texts

The Rite of Confirmation takes place within the celebration of the Mass after the Gospel and the Homily.

The principle text is a relatively short prayer dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century in Rome and which accompanies the extension of the Bishop's hands over all the candidates.

*All-powerful God, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of right judgment and courage, the Spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the Spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

(Rite of Confirmation)

The anointing is administered with a new formula based upon an Eastern Rite: -

“N..., be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit”  
the candidate is then greeted with the Sign of Peace.

d) Ministers

The ordinary minister is the Bishop – however this can be delegated to a priest commissioned by the Bishop in cases where it is difficult for the Bishop to visit individual parishes.

The revised rite stresses the responsibilities of the whole parish community in the preparation of candidates.

The sponsor, who should ideally be one of the Godparents, presents each candidate. Care should be taken to ensure that the sponsors are Catholics.

Parents cannot sponsor their own children.

**Preparing candidates for Confirmation**

See Notes in the Course Book for practical guidance p20



# **THE LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS MODULE (B)**

## **Chapter 3... The Sacrament of Reconciliation**

### **Aim**

To examine the meaning and the effects of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to understand how the Church has received authority for this Sacrament from Our Lord and to also explore ways of celebrating it.

### **Introduction (CCC 1420 – 1422)**

We should all be aware of our falling short of the perfection required of us as Christians. This was the original understanding of Sin.

Jesus says that we should be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (**Matt 5:48**) but it does not mean that we should give up if and when we fail.

Jesus' whole ministry was directed towards reconciling sinners with God.

The apostles and their successors were given authority to 'bind and loose' in the name of God (**Matt 16:19; 18:18**)

They can act on behalf of Christ and of His Body the Church, to reinstate a repentant sinner into a proper relationship with God.

This is done through the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession.

The Church teaches that a Catholic in a serious state of sin, should seek the Grace of God offered through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

If no serious sin has been committed then private confession is sufficient or in the Penitential Rite at the beginning of Mass.

However the Church encourages us to celebrate the Sacrament regularly in order to benefit from the graces it bestows.

A good examination of conscience is essential.

### **History of the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

In the NT it is possible to discern a two fold discipline where minor sin was dealt with by fraternal correction and prayer (**Matt 18:15; Gal 6:1 – 2; James 5:16 – 20; 1 John 5:16**). While grave and public sin incurred expulsion or 'excommunication', with the later reintegration with by the 'laying on of hands' (**1 Cor 5:2 – 11; 1 Tim 5:20 – 22**)

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> century we can find references to 'confession' of sin in a public act of worship.

By the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in the Western Church, 'canonical penance' was the form for the next 300 years. It followed the stages of the Catechuminate and Baptism thus: -

- a) The candidate confessed their serious sins to a Bishop who expelled them from the Eucharistic community to the 'order of penitents' for a determined period
- b) In this order they were subject to fasting and to works of penance; they were excluded from the Eucharist and prohibited from practising many professions. They were also forbidden to marry. This period could last for years or decades and the only positive aspect was that the prayers of the whole community supported them throughout.
- c) After their penance had been discharged, they were subjected to a beautiful liturgy, when the whole community gathered to welcome them back to reintegration in the Church. In Rome this took place in what is now known as the Triduum (three days of prayer) leading up to Easter Sunday - Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Saturday.

Such penance was required for public or scandalous sin such as apostasy, murder or adultery.

During the 7<sup>th</sup> century Irish missionaries brought to continental Europe a more benign form of confession and penance which did not require long penance before reconciliation.

This combined the private confession of serious and lesser sins, and for their repetition.

This basic form has persisted ever since.

The essential elements are: -

- a) Repentant confession of sin
- b) A penance determined by bishop or priest.
- c) Reconciliation effected by the bishop or priest in the name of Christ.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council ( AD 1215) obliged all Christians conscious of grave sin to make a confession at least once a year. The Council of Trent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century required that such confession should be 'integral' and that every grave sin should explicitly and individually confessed.

Regrettably the reception of the Sacrament is now on the decline.

### **The meaning and effects of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (CCC 1440 1460; 1468 – 1470)**

*Those who approach the Sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offence committed against Him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, example and prayer labours for their conversion.*

*Lumen Gentium, 11*

The Code of Penance 1974 sought to re-site the Sacrament in a much wider 'mystery of reconciliation' and provided three forms for its celebration

- The Rite for the Reconciliation of an Individual Penitent.
- The Rite for the Reconciliation of several Penitents, with Individual Confession and Absolution.
- The Rite of Reconciliation for Several Penitents with General Absolution.

### *Mystery of Reconciliation*

Jesus during His life and ministry welcomed sinners and reconciled them with the Father.

The Church continues to call men from sin through Baptism and the Eucharist and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The people accomplish this repentance through sufferings, works of charity and mercy, penitential celebrations, prayer, liturgy and the Eucharist but most specifically in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### *Reconciliation and the Community*

The sin of one harms another – hence it is fitting that they should help each other in doing penance.

### *Parts of the Sacrament*

True conversion demands contrition and acts of penance, which is a remedy for sin.

God pardons the sinner and renews the broken covenant.

### *Scriptural Models*

For several centuries the scriptural warrant was seen as the power of 'binding and loosing' given by the Lord to His Church (**John 20:19 – 23**).

It is also linked to Jesus' wider teaching of The Prodigal Son (**Luke 15:11 – 32**)

Jesus' request that we forgive our neighbour many times is relevant also (**Matt 18:21 – 22**)

## **The Rites of the Sacrament of reconciliation (CCC1448, 1449, 1461 – 1467)**

### Rite 1 Individual Confession

Can be celebrated behind a grill or face to face. It should be a 'serene and tranquil dialogue' with no pressure on time. It should be accompanied by prayer and reading from the Word of God.

### Rite 2 Communal Confession

This can powerfully improve the quality and experience of Individual Confession through readings and a homily, together with a shared examination of conscience.

It can be a means of 'maturing' the Rite of Confession learnt as a child.

### Rite 3 General Absolution

This rite may not be used indiscriminately. Individual Confession remains the norm.

Occasions for the valid use of this rite are: -

- Insufficient confessors for the number of penitents in time available. It is for the bishop to determine when these conditions might arise. When resorted to, the penitents must have true sorrow for sin and purpose of amendment – mentioning any grave sin at a subsequent Individual Confession. The General Absolution is not conditional and is wholly effective at the time of reception.

### Symbolism

In the days of 'canonical penance' sackcloth and ashes were often employed ( The origin of Ash Wednesday).

At the end of their period of penance the penitents were once again reconciled with the Church with a beautiful celebration of Reconciliation – the penitents lying prostrate on the steps of the church, who were then led back into the assembly.

Throughout the Middle Ages the confessor continued to lay his hands upon the penitents head at the absolution.

Today the confessor holds out his hands in a gesture of acceptance and welcome.

### Texts

The core words of absolution " I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of....etc" remain the same. They are now preceded by the following statement : -

*"God, the Father of mercies, through the death and Resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*

The two communal forms begin with the Liturgy of the Word and conclude with thanksgiving and the Eucharist.

### Ministries

In order to celebrate the Sacrament lawfully the confessor must have 'faculties' from the bishop – emphasising the role of the bishop at the centre of unity in his diocese.

The revised rites require the confessor to act as judge, physician and spiritual counsellor but above all as a welcoming father and good shepherd.

## Preparing Children for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

As a general rule the first celebration of the Sacrament should come before First Holy Communion – both often received within the space of a year.

Preparation for the two Sacraments should be kept separate.

A number of books and programmes are available to assist e.g. *Veritas RE Programme “Children of God” - Book 3 “Show us the Father”*.

Wherever possible first celebration of the Sacrament should be according to Rite 2.

The confession may take place on the sanctuary or other place in church – always ensuring that the confession cannot be overheard.

It is important that the following areas are covered adequately.

- a) God’s love for us – belonging to Him through Baptism.
- b) We are invited to love God in return.
- c) Jesus shows us how to live a life of love
- d) We love by being a friend of Jesus and trying to live like Him.
- e) Sometimes we fail to love – we make wrong decisions – we sin.
- f) God never stops loving us even when we sin.
- g) God invites us to say ‘sorry’
- h) When we say ‘sorry’ we become friends again (reconciled) with God and with one another.
- i) The Sacrament of reconciliation is the special sign of God’s forgiveness. He expresses His forgiveness (absolution) through the words spoken by the confessor.

The catechesis of the celebration of the Sacrament should reflect clearly the following three stages.

### A) Preparation

- 1) We ask Jesus to help us see how we have failed and to help us to be sorry.
- 2) We find out how we have failed by looking at how we have behaved (examination of conscience)
- 3) We tell God that we are sorry and that we wish to live like Jesus (prayer).

### B) Celebration

- 1) The child goes to the priest and after an exchange of greeting they make the Sign of the Cross together.
- 2) The priest invites the child to have confidence and joy in God’s presence – a short scripture quote might be said.
- 3) The child makes his/her confession and receives a penance.
- 4) The child expresses sorrow and a purpose of amendment in an appropriate way – and then receives absolution.

### C) After the Celebration

- 1) Carry out the assigned penance.
- 2) Thank God for His mercy and ask help to go out and live a life like Jesus (prayer after the Sacrament).

For young children the distinction between Mortal and venial sin is left to a later stage of catechesis, as does the need to confess Mortal sin.

Nevertheless children can be led to appreciate that some sins are more serious than others. Also that knowledge and consent are pre-requisites for sin.

The ‘Seal of Confession’ should also be emphasised – it should never be a fearful experience.

Children should be taught an ‘Act of Contrition’ by heart – this should be appropriate for their age.

A child learns best about forgiveness by seeing it practised in his parents and Catechists.

This aspect is crucial.

## **Sample Formulas for the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

### *Formula at the beginning of Individual Confession*

It may be useful for children to have a formula with which to begin their individual confession. This should be kept simple. The following is still widely used and is adequate for the purpose.

“Bless me, father, for I have sinned”.

At first reception of the Sacrament, children are often taught to say, “This is my first confession”. Before any subsequent celebration they should be told that, thereafter, they should not say: “This is my second, third, etc., confession”, but should tell the priest as well as they can how long it is since their last confession. Since children’s recollection of time spans can often be very hazy, they should be told to give this as well as they can remember, and not to get worried if they are not very sure.

### *Act of Contrition*

The following simple formula may be taught:

“O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you. And with your help I will not sin again. Amen”

Alternatively, the form found in the Veritas Programmes may be used:

“O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins, for not loving others and not loving you. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen.”

### *Prayer before Confession*

It is useful to teach children a prayer to use before they make their confession. The following is one example:

“God our Father, help me to remember the times when I did not live as Jesus asked me to. Help me to be sorry and to try again.” (Veritas)

### *Prayer after Confession*

Children should be taught always to make a prayer of thanksgiving after Confession.

The following is one prayer they may be taught:

“God our Father, thank you for forgiving me. Help me to love you and to love others. Help me to live as Jesus asked me to.”

(Veritas — slightly augmented)

Children should also be recommended to ask Our Lady to pray for them. They can appropriately do this by reciting the “Hail, Mary”.

### **Preparation of Adults**

Adults also need to be prepared but are more likely to find this a daunting experience than children – at the same time they are more likely to want to be reconciled with God.

The main points for Catechesis are the same as for children but allowing for their greater understanding and experience.

Above all they should be encouraged to make a mature Examination of Conscience.

# **LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS MODULE (B)**

## **Chapter 4 The Sacrament of Marriage**

### **Aim**

To explain the nature and importance of the Church's teaching about marriage.

### **Introduction (CCC 1601)**

With the possible exception of the Eucharist, Marriage is probably the Sacrament most seen by non-Catholics and lapsed Catholics.

It is a beautiful Sacrament through which two people are given the grace to commit themselves to a lifelong commitment of love.

### **History of the Sacrament of marriage (CCC 1602 – 1617)**

Jesus did not institute or invent marriage as such. Nor did He indicate how it should be celebrated. He did however grace weddings with His presence (**John 2:1 – 12**) and upheld a challenging ideal of marriage in His teaching (**Matt 19:1 – 12**)

In the OT, the covenant between a man and a woman becomes an 'image of likeness' of the covenant between God and humanity (**Hosea 1 – 3; Isaiah 54, 62; Jer 2 – 3, Ezk 16, 23**).

In the NT, the church was already developing a specifically Christian understanding of marriage before the time of the Pauline epistles.

Paul exhorts one to enter into marriage 'in the Lord' (**1Cor 7:39**). Marriage is taken into the new being 'in Christ' begun in baptism.

For that reason the NT sees marriage and the family as a place of particular Christian testing. The daily behavior of a man and a woman is to be orientated by love, faithfulness, self-surrender and obedience to Jesus Christ. (**Col 3:18 – 19; 1Peter 3:1 – 7; 1 Tim 2:8 – 15; Titus 2:1 – 6**).

The most important description of domestic order is to be found in (**Eph 5:21 – 33**). Here the covenant between man and woman is described as an image of the covenant between Christ and His Church.

The basic idea is one of mutual subordination.

The texts most important statement is that the love between a man and a woman in marriage is a sign that makes present God's love and faithfulness – Such is the definition of a Sacrament.

Because marriage is a natural reality the Church tended to accept the rituals and customs of society for establishing a marriage. The exchange of consent, giving away of the bride, contract etc.- In Roman law it was the exchange of consent that made the marriage and the Western Church ultimately accepted this definition.

Christian couples may have invited priests/bishops to attend and give a blessing – such custom can be found in Anglo-Saxon England from the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

They might also have gone to Mass. Formulas for a Nuptial Mass exist in the Roman Rite from the 5/6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Only with the breakdown of civil authority did the Church begin to take responsibility for 'solemnizing' or formally witnessing marriage.

The Council of Trent decreed that for the Sacrament to be valid, it had to involve the free exchange of consent by both parties in public and before an accredited priest and two witnesses.

## **Meaning and effects of the Sacrament of Marriage (CCC 1638 – 1654)**

### Marriage is a Covenant

Vatican II deliberately did not refer to marriage as a 'contract', but to the more scriptural term 'covenant'.

Contracts establish rights and obligations whereas covenants involve the gift and commitment and mutuality.

The new Marriage Rite makes this clearer:- brides need no longer be 'given away', rings are exchanged reciprocally. **Ephesians 5:21 – 33** is no longer the only reading for the Nuptial Mass and the blessing now addresses the bride and groom equally.

### Marriage as a Sacrament

In marriage the union is not just physical but a coming together of the couples whole persons – a total and self-giving which reflects and shares in the relationship of Christ and His Church.

As with every Sacrament, the grace of the sacrament consists of 3 things: -

- Through their love and faithfulness they reveal and mediate God's love and faithfulness in Jesus Christ, not only to each other but also to their offspring, the Church and mankind generally. **(L.G.11)**
- They receive and share in that divine life "Authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is directed and enriched by the redemptive power of Christ and the salvific action of the Church" **(G.S.48)** see also **(Matt 22:1 – 14)**

### Sacrament and the Church

A sacramental celebration, like all Sacraments should belong to the whole church – sadly in modern times marriage has become 'privatized' (It is for the two individuals and their guests). Even Banns now are rarely read/published in church.

Proposed changes to the rite would give families and the congregation and wider parish community a much greater role.

Couples would be supported by the prayers of the community both during their preparation as well as during the service itself.

### The Essential Properties of Marriage

At a wedding the "I do" of the couples is asked for in three forms – Yes to unity, fruitfulness and to indissoluble faithfulness

- **UNITY** – The unity is stressed by Our Lord when asked a question about divorce **(Mark 10:2 – 9)** "They are no longer two, but one in body"
- **FRUITFULNESS** – Conjugal love of its essence wishes to be fruitful. A child is the fruit of common love. According to **Gen. 1:28** God's first command to man and woman was "Be fruitful and multiply". By living according to this command couples share in God's own creative love. The fruitfulness of marriage however extends beyond procreation to the teaching



of children in the ways of faith and to the moral, spiritual and supernatural life that their love extends to.

The fundamental task of marriage is to serve life (**L.G. 50**) and thus can extend to elderly couples and those not able to have children

- . **INDISSOLUBLE FAITHFULNESS** – This comes from the completeness of the giving to each other. God wills this as Jesus said “What God has united, man must not part” (**mark 10:9**). To emphasize this point is one of the Church’s most important and urgent duties today. There are however unfortunately occasions when ‘separation’ must be accepted as a last resort when every attempt has been made to save the marriage. The Church community must help and support those in this situation.

### **The Rite of the Sacrament of Matrimony (CCC1621 – 1632)**

Matrimony should normally be celebrated within the Mass, after the Gospel and Homily and before the Prayers of the Faithful..

If the Sacrament is celebrated apart from the Mass, the readings from the Nuptial Mass are to be read at the beginning of the rite. The blessing should also always be given.

#### Symbolism

Contrary to popular belief the ‘ring’ is not the sacramental sign, but the free, personal act ‘by which the partners mutually surrender themselves to each other’ (**G.S. 48**).

Couples these days often exchange rings which have been blessed.

A ring is a circle having no end – and is an ancient sign of ‘love and fidelity’

#### Tests

The words may vary but the essential moment of the Sacrament lies in the undertaking by each of the couple to the unity, faithfulness and indissolubility of the marriage in words such as these:-

*I ..., take you, ..., to be my lawful wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part.”*

Receiving their consent, the priest says:

*“You have declared your consent before the Church. May the Lord in His goodness strengthen your consent and fm you both with His blessings . What God has joined together, man must not divide.”*

#### Ministries

Couples give each other the Sacrament of marriage and are therefore the ministers.

The priest or deacon who assists receives their consent in the name of the Church and pronounces the blessing.

His actions show that marriage is not simply a private affair.

# **LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS MODULE (B)**

## **Chapter 5... The Sacrament of Holy Orders**

### **Aim**

To introduce some of the basic ideas concerning the nature of Holy Orders and to explore some of the topical issues arising from this.

### **Introduction**

Jesus came to bring the Kingdom of God to all.

He announced it to all and He called all to follow Him.

However from the multitude He selected 12 in particular, saying that they might share in His mission in a special way (**Mark 3:13 – 15; 6:6 – 13**).

Their calling was a free choice of Jesus and was not due to any particular merit on their part (**John 15:16**).

He made it clear that “anyone who listens to you, listens to me, anyone who rejects you rejects me, and those who reject me, reject the One who sent me” (**Luke 22:19**).

After His Resurrection Jesus repeated this special calling and mission to preach, baptize and forgive sins (**Matt 28:19 – 20**).

He sent the Holy Spirit to help them to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (**Acts 1:8**).

The Risen Lord still gives graces for building His Church – prophets, evangelists, pastors etc. (**Eph 4:11 – 13**).

### **History of the Sacrament**

It is important to acknowledge that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century the Church unanimously recognized bishops as the successors to the Apostles (**Letter of St. Clement of Rome**).

In apostolic times, local churches were governed by a corporate body of ministers known as ‘presbyters’ or ‘episcopi’ subject to a roving apostle.

We have examples of this in the NT where presbyters were appointed and ‘ordained’ by the laying on of hands. (**1 Tim 4:14; 2Tim 1:6, 2:2**)

By AD 117 it is clear from the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch, that a system existed whereby each local church had a presiding bishop supported by a council of presbyters assisted by deacons.

By the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century such a system was universal.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council teaches that “the bishops have succeeded to the place of the Apostles by divine institution (**L.G. 21**) - a share in this ministry is handed on to priests.

In the earliest rites –3<sup>rd</sup> century–the people proposed candidates and their charisms were officially recognized by prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.

The prayers accompanying these action recalled God’s actions in the OT of ‘ordering’ His people.

In the early Church the bishops were the leaders, teachers and presidents of the liturgy. Only after the rapid growth of the Church in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, did presbyters begin to be regular preachers and presiders at the liturgy.

### **Meaning and effects of the Sacrament of Holy Orders (CCC 1554 – 1571, 1581 –1589)**

#### Christological Model

The Sacrament of Orders is defined not by relation to the Eucharist or to the ‘powers’ but by a relationship to Christ and His ministry.

When a priest is ordained he is consecrated in a special way to the Church as the representative of Christ in the community.

The priest’s role at Mass symbolizes his role throughout his life – helping people form a community of

love, sharing and witness.  
At Mass he stands 'in persona Christi'.

### Sacramental Hierarchy

The office of bishop is explicitly affirmed as the fullness of the Sacrament of Order (**L.G. 21, 26**).  
The bishops together form a 'college' with joint responsibility under the presidency of the Pope.  
The priesthood is likewise a collegial ministry, as advisors and assistants to the bishops.  
The source of their ministry is not as delegates of the bishops, but by their calling by God and the Sacrament of Ordination.  
Deacons do not form a 'college'.

The diaconate is no longer a stepping stone to the priesthood – but is a permanent rank in the hierarchy to which married men may be admitted.

A deacon is ordained to the 'ministry' and not to the 'priesthood'.  
His role is to assist the priest in his role with the exception of his role in the saying of Mass and hearing Confessions.

### Lesser Ministries

In the wake of Vatican 2, the sub-diaconate was abolished and real function were recognised and encouraged- readers and acolytes and later Eucharistic Ministers, Catechists to which people could be admitted not by ordination but by commissioning.

### **The Rite of Ordination (CCC 1572 – 1576)**

Vatican 2 called for a revision of the ceremonies (**S. C. 76**).

In the ordination of deacons the matter is the laying on of hands by a bishop in silence before the saying of the consecratory prayer required for validity of the Sacrament: -

*'Lord send forth upon them the Holy Spirit, that they may be strengthened by the gift of your sevenfold grace to carry out faithfully the work of the ministry.'*

In the ordination of presbyters (priests) the matter is the laying on of hands in silence before the consecratory prayer required for validity: -

*'Almighty Father, grant to these servants of yours the dignity of the priesthood. Renew within them the Spirit of holiness. As co-workers with the order of bishops may they be faithful to the ministry that they receive from you, Lord God, and be to others a model of right conduct.'*

Finally for the ordination of a bishop the matter is again the laying on of hands by a bishop in silence before the consecratory prayer required for validity: -

*'So now pour out upon this chosen one that power which is from you, the governing Spirit whom you gave to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Spirit given by Him to the holy Apostles, who founded the Church in every place to be your temple for the unceasing glory and praise of your name''*

The imposition of hands and the consecratory prayer are the essential sign at all 3 stages of the Sacrament of Holy Orders

In addition –

For the diaconate there is the investiture with the Stole and Dalmatic and the presentation of the Book of the Gospels together with the words “ receive the Gospel of Christ whose herald you are. Believe what you read, teach what you believe and practice what you preach”

For priestly ordination the new priest is invested with the Stole and Chasuble and there is the anointing of the Palms of both hands with the Oil of Chrism together with the presentation of the Chalice and Paten.

For the consecration of a bishop the rites include the anointing of his head with chrism, the touching of his head with the Book of the Gospels and the holding it over him during the consecratory prayer. He is also presented with the Book of the Gospels and the episcopal insignia ( Ring, Mitre and Crozier) Finally he is enthroned in the Bishop’s Chair.

### **Celibacy (CCC1579 – 1580)**

Celibacy is not demanded of the priesthood by its nature (**P.O. 16**). That means tha it is not impossible to have a married clergy.

In the early Church many priests and bishops were married and had families, although there is no evidence to suggest that this was allowed after ordination.

Vatican 2 could have changed the rules – it didn’t because: -

- There is a long tradition of celibacy in the Western Church.
- Christ Himself recommended perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. (**Matt 19:12**) Then again Jesus says that at the resurrection men and women do not marry (**Matt 22:30**).
- It is a sign to the world that the Kingdom of God ia to be embraced – especially in this modern world obsessed by sex.

It is very important that a priest’s celibacy is closely linked with his spiritual life – It is not to be seen as a life without responsibilities – dry and sterile.

### **Women in the Ministry (CCC 1577 – 1578)**

A number of women followed Jesus closely (**Luke 8:1 – 3**) and Mary His mother shared in His saving work.

Women have always played role in many ways in the life of the Church.

Christ’s treatment of women was more respectful than was the norm of His age.

However, he only called men to be Apostles and women have never been ordained as priests or bishops.

Even Our lady was not called to the priestly office.

Many argue that this was because of the social norms of the time and that now that women are ‘emancipated’ the priesthood should be open to them,

It has always been taught that by the will of Christ only male baptized persons may be ordained.

The witness of tradition is very important here.

If we accept that the Holy Spirit guides the Church, then the existence of a firm unbroken tradition is a powerful argument.

We must remember that the priest acts in the person of Christ as Head of the Church – especially in the Eucharist.

The priest is a sacramental figure and we must also remember that God only chose to reveal Himself in His own maleness.

Does the Church have the power to change this situation?

If it is the will of God – then NO, and this has been consistently re-affirmed by the Magesterium of the Church.

## **LITURGY AND THE SACRAMENTS MODULE (B)**

### **Chapter 6 ... The Anointing of the Sick**

#### **Aim**

To introduce and explain some of the ideas behind the Sacrament

#### **Introduction (CCC 1499 – 1513)**

Sickness and pain have always been a problem in human life.

Sickness is more than ill health, it affects the whole person and we experience our limitations and ability to control our own lives.

Ultimately sickness is a reminder of our own mortality and that one day we will die.

In the Bible we see that suffering and sickness exist because we live in a world disordered by sin.

However, the Gospel insists that sickness is not a punishment for personal sin.

Jesus went around curing the sick and His miracles are a sign that the Kingdom of God is breaking into our world bringing salvation for the whole person – body and soul.

Jesus gave His disciples a command “cure the sick” (**Matt 10:8**). In His discourse on judgment Jesus included visiting the sick amongst the works of love by which we will be judged (**Matt 25:36,43**).

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is given to us to assist in this work (**Romans 8:17; Col 1:24; 2 Tim 2:12; 1Peter 4:13**) (**L.G. 11**) and to help us share in the sufferings, death and Resurrection of Christ.

#### **The History of the Sacrament**

In the Gospels Jesus’ healing ministry is presented as a sign of the Kingdom or God’s reign in the world.

He sent out His disciples and “they anointed many sick people with oil and cured them” (**Mark 6:13**). A similar ministry is referred to by James (**James 5:14 – 16**)

The custom of the Anointing of the Sick has had a varied history in its application, but it was not restricted to use in the case of terminal illness only.

In the early days of the Church, anointing was carried out by the people themselves using oil blessed by a bishop.

Around 800 AD liturgical reforms restricted this ministry to use by the clergy.

In Europe where canonical penance was still practiced the receipt of the Sacraments was restricted until reconciliation was sought – often on peoples death bed.

The Sacrament thus became known as ‘Extreme Unction’ – ‘The Last Sacrament’

It is still viewed similarly today by many.

Vatican 2 reviewed the Rite and Extreme Unction was replaced by the term ‘Anointing of the Sick’. Its use in serious illness was encouraged rather than to be used as a last resort.

#### **Meaning and Effects of the Sacrament Of Anointing of the Sick (CCC1520 – 1523)**

*Extreme Unction, which may also and more fittingly be called Anointing of the Sick, is not a Sacrament for those only who are on the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this Sacrament has certainly already arrived.*

*Sacrosanctum Concilium, 73*

#### *The mystery of sickness and healing*

Christians know that sickness has meaning and value for their own salvation and that of the

world. They know that Christ loves them in their sickness – as He did whilst on earth. Christ in His Passion shared in all human pain, fulfilling the words of Isaiah (**Isaiah 53:4 – 5**)

God's plan is that we should fight against sickness. Christians do not have a duty of fatalistic acceptance of suffering as God's will. Doctors and all who help the sick should use all means available, physical and spiritual, to help them. They are participating in God's mission to the sick (**L.G. 28**)

#### Integral healing

Those who are seriously ill need the special help of God's grace, lest they become broken in spirit and weakened in their faith.

The Sacrament provides Christ's support and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, they are sustained by trust in God, strengthened against temptation and against anxiety over death. The sick person is therefore not only able to bear suffering bravely, but to fight against it.

#### Sacrament of Faith and Sacrament of Church

In Scripture passages the anointing was accompanied by 'prayers of faith, which will save the sick man' (**James 5:14 – 17**). This saving faith is the faith of the Church which is reflected in the minister and the recipient.

The Sacrament thus should be celebrated with a conscious patient who is able to participate and should not be simply 'administered'.

As with all Sacraments a public celebration is to be preferred.

Communal celebrations in parishes are now becoming the common and help to break the perception that the sacrament is only for the dying.

### **The Rite of the Sacrament of Anointing (CCC 1514 – 1519)**

#### Eligibility

The Sacrament is available to anyone who is seriously ill – but does not require a terminal or fatal diagnosis.

Chronic as well as acute, mental as well as physical handicaps are eligible as well as surgery for a serious condition.

The Sacrament can not be applied to the already dead.

#### Repeatability

The Sacrament may be repeated in the same illness if it becomes more serious and also in any subsequent illnesses.

#### Last Sacraments

If the Sacrament is given to the seriously ill it is even more proper that it should be given to those about to part this life.

It completes our configuration to Christ's death and resurrection, just as Baptism began it.

- Anointing at Baptism
- Anointing at Confirmation
- Anointing at the end of life and before entering the Father's house.

The 'Last Sacrament' is 'Viaticum' (Food for the journey) – the special celebration of Communion.

Anointing at the deathbed should now only be undertaken in cases of an unforeseen emergency – normally it would have been celebrated in advance during the course of sickness.

When it is necessary in imminent danger of death then the sequence of the Sacraments should be: -

Reconciliation – Anointing – Viaticum

#### Symbolism

- Oil – Chrism (but if not available the priest may use blessed Olive Oil)
- Laying on of Hands – performed in silence after the 'prayers of the faithful' and before the anointing.

- Texts – a) Prayer for the blessing of the oil
  - b) The formula of application: -  
“ Through this holy anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Amen. May the Lord who frees you from sin, save you and raise you up, Amen”

Ministries

The priest is the proper minister.

In cases of a shortage of priests the Sacrament is therefore likely to be limited.

Visiting and praying with the sick is a traditional and commendable lay ministry.

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