

The Seven Sacraments at a Glance

Visible words of the Word made flesh

A patristic and Thomistic synthesis of sign, causality, grace, communion, and glory

Formal definition. A sacrament of the New Law is a visible sign of a hidden reality, instituted by Christ to confer grace. It is an *efficacious* ecclesial sign: Christ, the principal cause, uses its sensible rite instrumentally to cause the grace it signifies in a capable and duly disposed recipient. Augustine calls the element a “visible word”; Aquinas orders every sacrament to Christ’s Passion, present grace, and future glory (CCC 1131; Trent VII; Augustine, *Tractates on John* 80.3; ST III, q. 60, a. 3).

Sacrament / order	Matter: sensible bearer / act	Form: signifying word	Capable subject	Ordinary minister	Extraordinary valid possibility	<i>Res et sacramentum:</i> sign-and-reality	Proper grace; primary / secondary end	Character / repetition
Baptism initiation	Natural water applied by true washing; immersion, infusion, or water flowing on the body	Authorized Trinitarian words joined morally to the washing	Any living, unbaptized human; an adult intends reception	Latin: bishop, presbyter, or deacon; East: presbyter	Anyone can baptize validly with water, form, and the Church’s intention; law / necessity governs liceity. Eastern deacon: necessity	Baptismal character: configuration to Christ and incorporation into his visible Body	Primary: purification / new birth into adoptive filiation by sanctifying grace: the same creature becomes God’s child without ceasing creature. Secondary: incorporation, virtues / gifts, sacramental capacity	Indelible character; once only; conditional under prudent doubt
Confirmation / Chrismation initiation	Sacred chrism / myron; anointing with liturgical imposition of hand	Approved words of sealing invoking the Holy Spirit’s Gift	A baptized, living, unconfirmed person; disposed when capable	Latin: bishop; East: presbyter ordinarily	Latin priest with faculty; by law for adult initiation / reception and danger of death. Never deacon or layperson	Confirmational character: baptismal deputation perfected for witness and worship	Primary: Spirit’s strengthening / perfection for witness. Secondary: deeper filiation / bond; gifts for worship, mission, defense	Indelible character; once only
Eucharist initiation; end of all	Valid wheaten bread and natural grape wine; both species integral to sacrificial celebration	Latin scholastic: Christ’s institution words; East: integral anaphora— institution, anamnesis, epiclesis; Addai–Mari is euchologically diffuse	Confection requires no communicant; Communion: a baptized living person, duly disposed	Bishop / presbyter alone consecrates. Latin ordinary distributors: bishop, priest, deacon; East: priest	No extraordinary consecrator. East: deacon / others only under particular law; deputed faithful distribute, never confect	Christ whole and entire, truly, really, substantially present under the species	Primary: sacrifice—adoration / thanksgiving; Communion— union with Christ / Body. Secondary: propitiation / impetration; nourishing fruits / pledge	No character; repeatable sacrifice and food
Penance / Reconciliation healing	Contrition, confession, satisfaction as <i>quasi-matter</i> ; submission to the keys is the sensible moral act	Approved priestly absolution, deprecatory or indicative according to rite	A baptized sinner, contrite and intending amendment	Priest with faculty over the subject	Danger of death: any priest absolves any penitent. Never deacon or layperson	Inward repentance effected and signified through the exterior sacramental acts (ST III, q. 84, a. 1 ad 3)	Primary: sin remitted, reconciliation with God, grace restored. Secondary: Church reconciled, peace, temporal penalty diminished, strength	No character; repeatable as sin wounds baptismal life
Anointing of the Sick healing	Blessed olive oil or, in current Latin law, suitable vegetable oil; anointing of the sick	Approved prayer asking salvation, forgiveness, strength, and relief	Baptized faithful endangered by sickness / age; Latin: after use of reason; give when doubtful	Priests entrusted with pastoral care normally confer; every bishop / presbyter validly can	No nonpriest. Latin necessity: minister may bless oil; East: priest–minister commonly blesses under CCEO 741	Interior spiritual anointing / devotion effected and signified by the outward anointing (Suppl., q. 30, a. 3 ad 3)	Primary: spiritual strength / healing, union, needed forgiveness, final readiness. Secondary: bodily health if salutary	No character; repeat for new serious illness or grave worsening
Holy Orders communion / mission	Consecrating bishop’s imposition of hands upon the ordinand	Consecratory prayer determining the degree and signifying the Spirit’s grace	A baptized male; freedom and suitability govern licit admission	A consecrated bishop	No nonbishop. One bishop suffices for validity; law ordinarily requires episcopal co-consecrators	Character of deacon, presbyter, or bishop: configuration to Christ for ecclesial service	Primary: apostolic ministry— chiefly Eucharistic / pastoral in priestly degrees; proper non-priestly diakonia in deacons. Secondary: ordered acts by degree	Indelible character in each degree; no degree repeated
Matrimony communion / mission	Baptized man and woman mutually give / receive themselves by consent; matter–form allocation is analogical	Legitimately manifested consent; Eastern law ordinarily also requires priestly blessing for validity	One eligible baptized man and one eligible baptized woman, free and capable of whole-life covenant	Latin: spouses confer; sacred minister assists. East: priest / bishop ministers Crowning (CCC 1623)	Latin necessity: witnesses alone; delegated lay assistant possible. CCEO 832: witnesses, call a priest if possible, seek blessing; no one supplies consent	Perpetual, exclusive bond: participation in Christ’s faithful union with the Church	Primary: generation / education of children. Secondary: mutual aid / good and remedy / ordering of concupiscence	No character; ratified–consummated bond until death; other cases governed by law

Common validity grammar. Christ is principal efficient cause; the minister is his intentional instrument. Valid celebration requires the essential sensible sign, valid minister, ecclesial intention, and—where reception constitutes the sacrament—a capable subject; fruit in a capable adult also requires no obstacle. Distinguish validity, liceity, and fruitfulness. The matrix uses Latin scholastic analysis without reducing Eastern mysteries to one ritual expression.

Metaphysical and Sacramental Lexicon

These terms are analogical instruments of disciplined contemplation. They do not place divine action inside a creaturely mechanism; they distinguish what God causes, what the ecclesial sign signifies, and how a rational creature receives the gift.

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Term	Meaning and sacramental use
Act / potency	Potency is capacity to receive perfection; act is possessed perfection. <i>Obediential potency</i> names creation’s capacity to be elevated by God beyond every naturally due perfection, without making grace a natural claim (Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i> IX; ST I, q. 105, a. 6).
Substance / accident	Substance exists in itself; an accident exists in another. In transubstantiation the whole substance of bread is converted into Christ’s Body and the whole substance of wine into his Blood; the sensible accidents remain (Trent XIII.4; ST III, q. 75).
Matter / sacramental form	Matter is the determinable sensible element or act; sacramental form is the word or prayer determining its sacred meaning. It is not a substance’s intrinsic substantial form; the analogy varies by sacrament (ST III, q. 60, aa. 6–7).
Remote / proximate	Remote matter names the material used (water, chrism, oil, bread and wine); proximate matter names its sacramental use (washing, anointing, offering). “Quasi-matter” names morally sensible human acts, especially in Penance.
Sign / thing (<i>signum</i> / <i>res</i>)	A sign leads knowledge beyond itself; the thing is what the sign signifies. A sacrament is a sign that Christ also uses to cause the sacred reality signified (Augustine, <i>De doctrina christiana</i> II.1; ST III, q. 60, a. 1).
<i>Sacramentum tantum</i>	The outward rite precisely as sign: washing and words, anointing and words, sacramental species, absolving judgment, imposition of hands, or externally manifested acts of matrimonial consent.
<i>Res et sacramentum</i>	An intermediate reality that is both effected by the outward sign and signifies a further grace: classically a character, Christ’s Eucharistic presence, or the marriage bond. The scheme is not assigned uniformly in every school.
<i>Res tantum</i>	The grace ultimately signified and caused: incorporation, strengthening, union, reconciliation, healing, ministerial or conjugal grace—all ordered to charity and glory.
Four causes	Material cause answers “from what?”; formal, “as what?”; efficient, “by whom?”; final, “for what end?” Sacramental analysis uses all four while naming God the transcendent first cause (Aristotle, <i>Physics</i> II.3; ST III, qq. 60–65).
Principal / instrumental	The Triune God is principal cause; Christ’s humanity is the conjoined instrument, and ecclesial rites and ministers are separated instruments. An instrument truly causes by received power (ST III, q. 62, a. 5; q. 64, a. 3).
Disposition / <i>obex</i>	Disposition prepares the recipient for perfection; an <i>obex</i> is an obstacle placed by culpable nonreceptivity. It can impede fruit without defeating the valid sacrament or Christ’s promise (ST III, q. 69, aa. 8–10).
Habit / virtue	A <i>habitus</i> is a stable quality disposing a power to act well or badly. Sanctifying grace and the infused virtues heal and elevate the person for supernatural acts and beatitude (ST I-II, qq. 49–55, 110).
Sanctifying, actual, and sacramental grace	Sanctifying grace is stable created participation in divine life; actual grace moves and helps acts; sacramental grace orders such life and helps to each sacrament’s proper end (ST III, q. 62, a. 2).
Character	An indelible spiritual sign configuring and deputing the recipient to Christian worship. Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders imprint distinct characters and therefore are not repeated (ST III, q. 63; CIC 845).
<i>Ex opere operato</i> / <i>operantis</i>	The valid sign is efficacious from Christ’s work, not the minister’s holiness. <i>Ex opere operantis</i> names the recipient’s graced disposition and cooperation, which govern fruit rather than sacramental power (Trent VII.8; CCC 1128).
Intention	The minister must intend at least to perform what the Church performs. Intention makes the bodily deed a human and ecclesial act; it need not include a complete theology or personal holiness (ST III, q. 64, aa. 8–10).
Validity, liceity, and fruit	Validity asks whether the sacrament truly occurs; liceity whether lawfully celebrated; fruitfulness whether its grace is unimpeded in this recipient. The three questions must not be collapsed.
Subject	The recipient as a determinate, capable person: Baptism precedes every other sacrament; further requirements arise from the nature of each sign and the Church’s stewardship (CIC 842–843).
Participation / adoptive filiation	A creature possesses by reception and likeness what God is by essence. Grace makes the person God’s adopted child and a real participant in divine life without ceasing to be a creature (2 Pet. 1:4; Gal. 4:4–7; ST I, q. 4, a. 3).
Teleology	Every nature and action is intelligible through an end (<i>telos</i>). The proximate ends differ, but every sacrament is ordered through charity and the Eucharist to resurrection, communion, and the vision of God (ST III, q. 65, a. 3).
Primary / secondary / ultimate end	A primary proper end gives an act or institution its governing objective order; secondary ends are real subordinate goods, not disposable extras. The ultimate objective end is God’s glory; the recipient’s is eternal life and the vision of God.
Nature / grace	Grace presupposes, heals, elevates, and perfects nature; it neither treats creation as evil nor makes supernatural beatitude naturally due (ST I, q. 1, a. 8 ad 2; I-II, q. 109).
Mystery / sacrament	Greek <i>mysterion</i> stresses the divine saving counsel revealed and enacted; Latin <i>sacramentum</i> stresses consecrating sign and bond. East and West accent the same Christological economy from complementary vocabularies.

Baptism at a Glance

Regeneration by water and the Trinitarian word

The sacramental gate: buried with Christ, reborn in the Spirit, incorporated into his Body

Identity	Definition and fulfillment			
Definition	Christ washes an unbaptized person with water and the Trinitarian word, raising the same human creature into adoptive filiation without abolishing creaturehood, and giving remission, grace, incorporation, and character.			
Institution	Christ teaches birth from water and Spirit, opens his side, and commands baptism of all nations in the triune name (John 3:5; 19:34; Matt. 28:19).			
Sacramental structure	<i>Sacramentum tantum</i> : washing and word; <i>res et sacramentum</i> : character; <i>res tantum</i> : inward justification and sanctification.			
Ends	Primary / proximate: purification from sin and new birth into adoptive filiation by grace—the same creature becomes God’s child. Subordinate: incorporation, punishment remitted, virtues, gifts, sacramental capacity. Ultimate: God’s glory in charity, resurrection, beatitude (ST III, q. 23, aa. 1–4; q. 66, a. 1; q. 69, aa. 1–7; Trent, sess. V, no. 5; sess. VI, ch. 7; CCC 1213, 1262–1274).			
Condition	Metaphysical / ritual fulfillment	Ordinary order	Extraordinary case or limit	
Sacramental matter	True natural water; real washing by immersion or infusion, ordinarily on the head.	With the form, this constitutes the outward <i>sacramentum tantum</i> .	A damp touch or non-water liquid does not suffice.	
Sacramental form	Latin Church: “N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (CCC 1240); Eastern rites commonly use a passive Trinitarian formula.	The word determines the washing; it is not the soul’s interior “form.”	Role-formulas and “we baptize” alter the sign; passive voice does not.	
Minister	Latin: bishop, priest, deacon; East: priest ordinarily. Christ is principal agent.	The full rite manifests incorporation and must not be bypassed casually.	Necessity: anyone, even unbaptized, with water, form, and Church’s intention.	
Subject	Any living, unbaptized person; capable adults intend, believe, and repent.	Infants receive in the Church’s faith with founded hope of formation.	Never rebaptize; after inquiry leaves prudent doubt: “If you are not yet baptized, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (USCCB Divine Worship <i>Newsletter</i> , 2020).	
Spiritual / formal change	Created grace elevates the same creature to adoption; the uncreated Trinity indwells; character deposes to worship.	Grace / character are intrinsic perfections distinct from the spoken sacramental form.	No substantial change or identity with God; grace can be lost, character remains.	
Axis	Creation / covenant	Christ and Pasch	Church and other sacraments	Last end
Passage	Creation, Flood, Sea, Jordan, and Ezekiel’s river prepare judgment and new creation.	Christ enters Jordan, dies, rises, and opens his side; Baptism buries and raises (Rom. 6).	It makes subjects for Confirmation, Eucharist, healing, and vocation in one Body.	The throne’s river unveils resurrection and divine vision (Rev. 22).
Faith	Covenant gift can precede reflective choice.	The objective Paschal sign summons, rather than rewards, faith.	Catechesis unfolds infant identity; adult disposition removes obstacles; Baptism unites Christians (UR 22).	Faith matures through charity and perseverance into sight.
Witness class	Principal loci	Controlling claim		
Scripture	John 1:12–13; 3:5; Rom. 6; 8:14–17; Gal. 4:4–7; 2 Pet. 1:4	Rebirth makes the creature God’s adopted child and participant by grace, never God by essence.		
Fathers	<i>Didache</i> 7; Justin I.61; Cyril, <i>Myst.</i> II; Augustine, <i>Tract. Jo.</i> 6.7, 80.3	<i>Didache</i> permits threefold pouring when water is insufficient; Justin joins regeneration to Trinitarian washing; Cyril gives Paschal immersion mystagogy; Augustine names Christ principal minister.		
Thomas / Magisterium	ST I, q. 43, a. 3; I–II, q. 110, aa. 2–4; III, q. 23, aa. 1–4; qq. 63, 69; CCC 1265–1274	Created grace participates divine life; the uncreated Trinity indwells; character remains distinct.		

Do not confuse

Baptism is neither hygiene nor a bare profession. Adoption perfects rather than abolishes creaturehood; participation is not identity with God’s essence. Conditional Baptism is not rebaptism; character does not guarantee perseverance.

Confirmation / Chrismation at a Glance

The Pentecostal seal perfecting baptismal grace

Anointed in the Anointed One, strengthened for Eucharistic worship, witness, and glory

Identity	Definition and fulfillment			
Definition	The risen Christ seals the already adopted and Spirit-indwelt baptized through chrism and word, imprinting a distinct character and strengthening grace for worship and witness.			
Institution	Christ promises and pours out the Spirit; apostolic prayer and hands distinguish Pentecostal strengthening within initiation (John 14–16; Acts 2, 8, 19).			
Sacramental structure	<i>Sacramentum tantum</i> : anointing and word; <i>res et sacramentum</i> : character; <i>res tantum</i> : strengthened baptismal grace for witness.			
Ends	Primary / proximate: Pentecostal strength for public confession and witness. Subordinate: deeper filiation, Christ-union, gifts, ecclesial bond, stability. Ultimate: God's glory in Eucharistic charity and beatitude (ST III, q. 72, aa. 1, 5, 7; Trent, sess. VII, Conf. can. 1, general can. 9; CCC 1285, 1302–1305).			
Condition	Metaphysical / ritual fulfillment	Ordinary order	Extraordinary case or limit	
Sacramental matter	Sacred chrism / myron in the approved anointing; the hand embodies apostolic communication.	1962: forehead under the bishop's hand; East commonly anoints several senses.	Ordinary oil or private anointing cannot substitute.	
Sacramental form	The unchanged Latin form used in 1962, in Deharbe's exact 1878 English: "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."	Current: <i>Accipe signaculum Domini Spiritus Sancti</i> . Byzantine: "The seal of the gift that is the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1300).	The approved word determines the sign; do not mix editions or measure East by Latin wording.	
Minister	Latin: bishop ordinarily, presbyter with faculty. East: presbyter ordinarily, with hierarchically consecrated myron.	Bishop or myron manifests the apostolic source.	Latin law grants priestly faculty for specified initiations and danger of death; never deacon / lay.	
Subject	Any living baptized, unconfirmed person; capable recipients are instructed and disposed.	Grace and formation govern fruit; sponsor assists.	Infants receive validly; maturity is not matter. Never repeat.	
Spiritual / formal change	Created grace is increased; the same Spirit is given anew <i>ad robur</i> ; a distinct character deposes to witness.	An interior Pentecostal perfection, distinct from the spoken sacramental form.	Not first indwelling or a new human substance; character remains if charity is lost.	
Axis	Creation / covenant	Christ and Pasch	Church and other sacraments	Last end
Anointing	Priest, king, prophet, Isaiah, Joel, and Ezekiel prepare the seal.	The Anointed possesses and pours out the Spirit through the Pasch.	Baptism gives birth and indwelling; Confirmation strengthens; Eucharist completes.	The pledge becomes possession when sealed servants see God (Rev. 7; 22).
Mission	Covenant office is received, not self-appointed.	Pentecost forms one many-tongued apostolic witness.	Penance restores charity; Orders serves unity; Matrimony witnesses domestically.	Signs cease; Spirit-perfected conformity and communion remain.
Witness class	Principal loci	Controlling claim		
Scripture	Isa. 11; Joel 2; John 14–16; Acts 2, 8, 19; 2 Cor. 1:21–22	Apostolic Pentecostal strength is distinct without denying baptismal indwelling.		
Fathers	Tertullian, <i>De bapt.</i> 7–8; Cyprian 73.9; Cyril, <i>Myst.</i> III; Ambrose, <i>Myst.</i> 7	Bath is followed by anointing, prayer, hand, and seal in Christ's Spirit.		
Thomas / Magisterium	ST I, q. 43, aa. 3, 6; III, q. 69, a. 4; q. 72, aa. 1, 5–7; CCC 1265–1266, 1302–1305	Baptism gives indwelling; Confirmation gives the same Spirit anew for strength and mature operation.		

Do not confuse

Confirmation is neither graduation, a second Baptism, nor the Spirit's first indwelling; "fullness" is not a liquid quantity. A Latin priest needs faculty; no deacon or layperson confers it. Eastern infant Chrismation is full Confirmation.

The Most Holy Eucharist at a Glance

The sacrament of sacraments: sacrifice, presence, communion, pledge

The one Pasch made present under bread and wine, forming one Body for the wedding supper

Identity	Definition and fulfillment			
Definition	Christ's one sacrifice made present: bread and wine become his Body and Blood while the species remain; whole Christ is offered and received.			
Institution	At the Supper Jesus gives his Body and covenant Blood, commands apostolic memorial, and orders the gift toward the kingdom (Matt. 26:26–29; 1 Cor. 11:23–26).			
Sacramental structure	<i>Sacramentum tantum</i> : species; <i>res et sacramentum</i> : whole Christ; <i>res tantum</i> : grace, charity, and Mystical-Body unity.			
Ends	Sacrifice—primary Godward: adoration, glory, thanksgiving; subordinate: propitiation, impetration. Communion—primary: union with Christ / Body; subordinate: venial remission, preservation, resurrection pledge, Ultimate: beatitude (ST II–II, q. 85, aa. 1–3; III, q. 73, a. 6; q. 79, aa. 1–7; Trent XIII.2, can. 5; XXII.1–2, can. 3; CCC 1359–1371, 1391–1405).			
Condition	Metaphysical / ritual fulfillment	Ordinary order	Extraordinary case or limit	
Matter	Wheat bread and grape wine; Latin / Armenian unleavened, most Eastern leavened; water admixture is not matter.	Within the approved Eucharistic liturgy.	Other substances are invalid; leaven is ritual.	
Form	Christ's word within the integral anaphora. 1962: <i>Hoc est enim Corpus meum; Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis mei, novi et aeterni testamenti: mysterium fidei: qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.</i>	Exact approved rite; Roman and Eastern anaphoras differ legitimately.	Addai–Mari is valid; no detached private formula.	
Minister	Validly ordained bishop / presbyter alone consecrates <i>in persona Christi</i> .	Bishop, priest, or deacon ordinarily distributes in Latin law.	No extraordinary consecrator; deputed faithful only distribute.	
Subject	Sacrament exists by consecration; baptized persons not prohibited receive fruitfully without unremitted grave sin.	Latin children discern; Eastern infants receive.	Grave sin: absolution; desire / media are not reception.	
Effect	Union with Christ / Body; charity, venial remission, preservation, resurrection pledge.	Whole Christ under either species; presence lasts with species.	Not ordered to forgive impenitent mortal sin.	
Axis	Creation / covenant	Christ and Pasch	Church and other sacraments	Last end
Sacrifice	Creation's fruits, Melchizedek, Passover, Sinai, Malachi prepare oblation.	Supper interprets Calvary; Mass makes the one sacrifice present.	Orders consecrates; the baptized offer; the other sacraments order to the altar.	The altar tends to the Lamb's wedding supper.
Communion	Manna and Wisdom's banquet prepare divine food.	The risen flesh assimilates and pledges resurrection (John 6).	Baptism makes, Confirmation seals, and one Bread unites the Body.	Species pass; charity, risen flesh, and vision remain.
Witness class	Principal loci	Controlling claim		
Scripture	Exod. 12, 16, 24; Mal. 1:11; John 6; 1 Cor. 10–11; Heb. 7–10; Rev. 19	Lamb, true food, participation, one sacrifice, judgment, Body, resurrection, banquet.		
Fathers	Ignatius, <i>Smyrn.</i> 7–8; Justin I.65–67; Irenaeus IV.18, V.2; Cyril IV; Augustine 272	Real flesh in communion; divine word converts; sacramental Body forms ecclesial Body.		
Thomas / Magisterium	ST III, qq. 73–83; Trent XIII, XXII; CCC 1322–1419; Addai–Mari Guidelines	Presence, sacrifice, disposition, effects, and ritual diversity.		

Do not confuse

Memorial is not recall; Mass is not another death; symbol is not absence; transubstantiation is not chemistry; breaking divides species, not Christ; extraordinary ministers cannot consecrate.

Penance and Reconciliation at a Glance

Healing after Baptism: conversion submitted to Christ's keys
Spiritual resurrection, restored friendship, and return to the Eucharistic feast

Identity	Definition and fulfillment			
Order	Fourth sacrament and first of healing: it restores or strengthens baptismal life wounded by post-baptismal sin.			
Definition	A baptized penitent, moved by grace, detests and confesses sin with amendment and satisfaction; through priestly absolution Christ forgives and reconciles the person with his Church.			
Threefold sign	The rite applies the pardoning Passion, effects conversion and grace, and anticipates merciful judgment and the Father's feast.			
Condition	Metaphysical / ritual fulfillment	Ordinary order	Extraordinary case or limit	
Quasi-matter	Contrition, confession, satisfaction; sins are "matter" only as rejected.	Examine, detest, integrally accuse remembered grave sins, accept repair.	Innocent forgetting is not concealment; deliberate concealment contradicts the sign.	
Form	Current Latin concluding words: "and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1449).	Approved absolution determines the acts toward remission; Eastern forms may be deprecatory.	God forgives principally, the priest instrumentally; no private substitute.	
Minister	Bishop or presbyter with Orders and authority to use the keys.	Latin validity ordinarily requires faculty for the subject (CIC 965–966).	In danger of death any priest absolves any penitent (CIC 976); never deacon or layperson.	
Subject	Living baptized person with post-baptismal sin; venial sin suffices.	Confess remembered grave sins in kind and number.	Baptism first remits the unbaptized; impossibility is governed by law.	
Disposition	Supernatural attrition, rejection of sin, amendment, submission to keys.	Perfect contrition includes charity; attrition disposes within the sacrament.	Sincere present resolve, not promised impeccability; intent to persist in grave sin blocks reception.	
Operation	Sign-order: outward acts and absolution → inward repentance as <i>res et sacramentum</i> → remission and grace as <i>res tantum</i> .	Christ acts principally through the keys; converted agency receives rather than earns pardon.	Logical, not temporal, order; ST III, q. 84, a. 1 ad 3; later schools vary.	
Ends	Primary: reconciliation with God—remission and grace / charity restored or increased.	Secondary: ecclesial restoration, peace, temporal-punishment remission, medicinal repair and strength.	All serve Eucharistic communion and final beatitude; felt relief is not validity (CCC 1468–1470, 1496).	
Duration	No character; repeatable; frequent reception opposes habits and increases charity.	General absolution is restricted and entails later integral confession.	CIC 961–963.	
Axis	Creation / covenant	Christ and Pasch	Church and other sacraments	Last end
Return	Levitical confession, David, Ps. 50, and the promised new heart join truth and mercy.	Christ seeks and forgives, gives keys, breathes the Spirit, and sends.	Restores baptismal grace; Orders ministers; Eucharistic communion is its principal sacramental goal.	Merciful self-judgment prepares final judgment and filial beatitude.
Paschal justice	Sin is guilt, wound, debt, slavery, and rupture; mercy first turns the heart.	The Passion is every pardon's sufficient satisfaction; Luke 15 moves death toward feast.	Penitent acts do not purchase grace; Church judges as physician and repairs communion.	Reparation frees love from injustice; the Father's banquet, not acquittal alone, is the end.
Witness class	Principal loci	Controlling claim		
Scripture / Fathers	Ps. 50; Luke 15; John 20:19–23; <i>Didache</i> 4.14; Cyprian, <i>Lapsed</i> 28–29; Ambrose, <i>Penance</i> I.2; Augustine, <i>John</i> 121.4	God converts; Christ entrusts remission; varied disciplines retain confession, conversion, ecclesial reconciliation, and Eucharistic return.		
Scholastic	ST III, qq. 84–90, especially q. 84, aa. 1–3; qq. 85, 89–90	Quasi-matter/form; virtue and sacrament; instrumental keys; restored grace and virtues; no character.		
Magisterium / law	Trent XIV, <i>De paenitentia</i> ; CCC 1422–1498; CIC 959–991	Institution, parts, effects, integrity, faculty, seal, general and emergency absolution.		

Anointing of the Sick at a Glance

Healing in serious illness: blessed oil and the prayer of the Church

Strength for the suffering member and preparation for resurrection

Identity	Definition and fulfillment			
Order	Fifth sacrament and second of healing: it addresses serious bodily illness, spiritual debility, and sin's remnants in the baptized.			
Definition	A bishop or presbyter anoints a seriously ill baptized person with blessed oil and approved prayer; Christ gives strength, forgiveness when needed, relief, and health if salutary.			
Threefold sign	The rite applies Christ's healing Passion, effects the Spirit's present strengthening, and points through death toward bodily resurrection.			
Condition	Metaphysical / ritual fulfillment	Ordinary order	Extraordinary case or limit	
Matter	Blessed oil sacramentally applied; olive oil is traditional.	Roman law permits olive or other plant oil; Eastern rites follow their law.	Latin presbyter may bless in necessity; Eastern priests ordinarily bless unless law provides otherwise.	
Form	Approved priestly prayer determines oil toward saving, raising, forgiveness, relief.	Word and anointing form one sign in the competent book.	Roman necessity permits one anointing with the whole formula; no private substitute.	
Minister	Every bishop or presbyter, and only one of these, validly ministers.	Pastors and priests charged with the sick ordinarily act.	Any priest may act in necessity; no diaconal or lay extraordinary minister (CIC 1003; CCEO 739).	
Subject	Baptized living faithful person seriously ill or endangered by age.	Receive timely; imminent death is unnecessary.	Latin law favors doubt and prior implicit request; not for certainly dead or merely healthy persons.	
Disposition	Faith, at least implicit desire, contrition when needed, nonresistance.	Conscious grave sinner ordinarily receives Penance first when possible.	Obstinate manifest grave sin blocks reception; illness never proves guilt.	
Operation	Oil and prayer → inward devotion / "spiritual anointing" as <i>res et sacramentum</i> → strengthening grace as <i>res tantum</i> .	Christ heals spiritual debility, remits sins when needed, and prepares passage.	Supplement, q. 30, aa. 1, 3; no character.	
Ends	Primary: spiritual strength and healing, remission when needed, and preparation for glory.	Secondary: bodily relief / recovery only when conducive to salvation.	All serve resurrection and beatitude; no cure is promised (Trent XIV, ch. 2; CCC 1520–1523).	
Duration	No character; repeat after recovery and new grave illness, or grave worsening.	Several Eastern priests express solemnity.	Plural ministers are not a validity condition.	
Axis	Creation / covenant	Christ and Pasch	Church and other sacraments	Last end
Oil and healing	Oil nourishes, lights, consecrates, soothes; Job and John 9 reject equating illness with a particular sin.	Christ heals and forgives; the Twelve anoint; his wounds pass through death into glory.	Distinct from chrism; Orders supplies the priest; the Church commends its sick member.	The mortal body is destined for incorruption, not discarded as failed.
James / passage	Remedies remain under providence (Sir. 38); sufferers lament and hope without calling pain good.	Jas. 5:14–15 names presbyters, oil, prayer, saving, raising, forgiveness; the Passion makes suffering participatory.	Penance, Anointing, Viaticum: forgiven, strengthened, fed; offered endurance benefits the Body.	"The Lord will raise him" promises resurrection beyond temporary recovery.
Witness class	Principal loci	Controlling claim		
Scripture / Fathers	Mark 6:7–13; Jas. 5:13–18; Origen, <i>Lev.</i> 2.4; Innocent I, <i>Ep.</i> 25.8.11; Chrysostom, <i>Priesthood</i> III.6	Christ sends; presbyters pray and anoint; early reception joins oil, ordained ministry, forgiveness, ecclesial care, and hope.		
Thomistic	SCG IV.73; ST Supplement, qq. 29–33	Medicine for debility; deprecatory form; bodily healing secondary; priestly ministry; no character; repetition.		
Magisterium / law	Trent XIV, <i>De extrema unctione</i> ; Paul VI, <i>Sacram unctionem</i> ; CCC 1499–1532; CIC 998–1007; CCEO 737–742	Institution, present sign, effects, subject, priest alone, Eastern/Latin discipline, timely repetition.		

Holy Orders at a Glance

The sacramental perpetuation of apostolic ministry

One sacrament in three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate

Identity	Definition and fulfillment			
Definition	Episcopal hands and consecratory prayer configure baptized men by character and grace in three degrees; office, mission, faculties, and communion govern exercise.			
Institution	Christ calls and sends the Twelve, commands Eucharistic memorial, gives keys and Spirit; the Pastorals clearly attest a gift transmitted through prayer and hands (Mark 3; Luke 22; John 20; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).			
Sacramental structure	<i>Sacramentum tantum</i> : hands / determining prayer. <i>Res et sacramentum</i> : character by degree. <i>Res tantum</i> : grace for priestly ministry or diakonia.			
Ends	Primary : public apostolic ministry; priestly degrees chiefly serve Eucharistic / pastoral sanctification, diaconate liturgy, word, charity. Secondary : ordered acts by degree. Ultimate : God's glory and the Bride's unveiled worship.			
Condition	Metaphysical / ritual fulfillment	Ordinary order	Extraordinary case or limit	
Matter	Ordaining bishop's imposition of hands.	Approved rite; supplementary rites unfold the sign.	No gesture replaces it; instruments are nonessential.	
Form	Consecratory words determining degree and signifying the Spirit's grace.	Approved prayer prayed integrally.	No private paraphrase or generic blessing.	
Minister	Validly consecrated bishop.	Mandate / dimissorial authority governs liceity; episcopal ordination normally has co-consecrators.	No nonbishop; one bishop suffices validly.	
Subject	Baptized male intending reception; formation, faith, freedom, suitability govern liceity.	Freedom required; coercion forbidden.	Coercion removing intention invalidates; fear need not.	
Effect	Character and grace by degree.	Bishop / presbyter acts <i>in persona Christi Capitis</i> ; deacon serves liturgy, word, charity.	Office / faculties can cease; character remains.	
Axis	Creation / covenant	Christ and Pasch	Church and other sacraments	Last end
Priesthood	Praise, Melchizedek, Israel, Aaron prepare mediated worship.	The one High Priest acts from his once-for-all Pasch.	Orders differs from and serves baptismal priesthood and every sacrament.	Stewardship yields to the Lamb's worship.
Authority	Ministry is received, bounded, answerable.	The Head governs by foot-washing self-gift.	Bishop / presbyter: priestly ministry; deacon: non-priestly diakonia.	Office ceases; charity and character remain.
Witness class	Principal loci	Controlling claim		
Scripture	Heb. 4–10; John 20; Acts 6; 13; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 1	Christ's unique priesthood grounds ministry; Pastorals attest transmitted gift.		
Fathers	Ignatius, <i>Trallians</i> 3; <i>Smyrnaeans</i> 8; Chrysostom, <i>On Priesthood</i> III; Nazianzen, <i>Oration</i> 2	Visible order serves unity; gifts heighten responsibility and demand purification.		
Thomas / Church	ST III, qq. 63–64, 82; Supplement, qq. 34–40; Trent XXIII; <i>Sacramentum Ordinis</i> ; <i>Lumen gentium</i> 18–29	Character is stable configuration; hands and prayer confer three degrees.		

Do not confuse

Validity is not holiness; character is not office or immunity; diaconate is not priesthood; ministerial priesthood differs from and serves baptismal priesthood; Christ alone mediates principally.

Matrimony at a Glance

One-flesh covenant elevated into an efficacious sign

A baptized man and woman joined for children and their education, mutual aid, and the glory of the Lamb

Identity	Definition and fulfillment			
Definition	An eligible man and woman freely establish an irrevocable whole-life covenant; between baptized persons it is sacramental and ordered to spouses' good and children.			
Institution	Created in the beginning, restored by Christ, honored at Cana, made a sign of Christ's self-gift for the Church (Gen. 1–2; Matt. 19; Eph. 5).			
Structure	<i>Sacramentum tantum</i> : Latin consent / applicable form; Eastern consent with sacerdotal Crowning. <i>Res et sacramentum</i> : bond. <i>Res tantum</i> : conjugal grace.			
Ends	Primary : generation / education of children. Secondary, intrinsic : spouses' mutual aid / sanctification; remedy / chaste ordering of concupiscence. Ultimate : God's glory and the Lamb's wedding. Fertility is not validity.			
Condition	Metaphysical / ritual fulfillment	Ordinary order	Extraordinary case or limit	
Matter / form	Latin analogy: visible consent as quasi-matter; present words / signs as form. East: consent with sacerdotal Crowning.	Consent indispensable; priest / bishop receives and blesses in East.	Persons are not inert matter; consummation completes, not constitutes.	
Minister	Latin: baptized spouses confer; cleric assists. East: priest / bishop ministers Crowning (CCC 1623).	Eastern minister receives consent, invokes Spirit, crowns.	CCEO 832 necessity: witnesses; call a priest if possible and seek blessing. CCEO 834 §2 retains priestly blessing in mixed marriage.	
Subject	One free, capable, eligible man and woman; both baptized for sacramentality.	Form and disposition serve lawful, fruitful reception.	Force / grave fear, incapacity, bond, exclusion, antecedent perpetual impotence invalidate; sterility does not.	
Effect	Exclusive bond; grace for fidelity, sanctification, parenthood, education.	Eucharist, Penance, prayer, virtue sustain covenant.	No character. Nonconsummated: CIC 1142; ratified-consummated: death alone (1141).	
Axis	Creation / covenant	Christ and Pasch	Church and other sacraments	Last end
Covenant	Image, one flesh, Israel, Tobit.	Christ restores the beginning, honors Cana, gives himself for the Bride.	Baptism makes sacramental; Eucharist crowns; Penance heals the domestic Church.	Persons / charity enter the Lamb's wedding.
Goods	<i>Proles, fides, sacramentum</i> : children, fidelity, permanence; mutual good.	Cross makes authority self-gift; violence contradicts.	Openness is orientation, not guaranteed fertility; love serves the common good.	Temporal sign yields to God's dwelling.
Witness class	Principal loci	Controlling claim		
Scripture	Gen. 1–2; Tob. 8; Matt. 19; John 2; Eph. 5; Rev. 19; 21	Creator joins; Christ restores / elevates; Paschal self-gift points to the Lamb.		
Fathers	Augustine, <i>De bono coniugali</i> 24; <i>Tractates on John</i> 120; Chrysostom, <i>Ephesians</i> 20; Tertullian, <i>Ad uxorem</i> II.8	Children, fidelity, bond are goods; Bride comes from Christ's side; home serves.		
Thomas / Church	Supplement, qq. 41–42, 49; Trent XXIV; CCC 1618–1666; CIC 1055–1165; CCEO 776–866	Consent indispensable; Eastern blessing causal; grace perfects ordered ends and bond.		

Do not confuse

One flesh is not fusion; headship not domination; Latin assistance not Eastern ministry; sterility does not invalidate, antecedent perpetual impotence does; primary does not mean spouse-as-means; Eucharist is summit, not form; separation is not dissolution.

The Twenty-Four Catholic Churches and the Order of Initiation

One communion, six ritual traditions, legitimately different disciplines

B = Baptism; C = Confirmation / Chrismation; E = Eucharist. A Church sui iuris is not the same thing as a rite.

Tradition	Catholic Church <i>sui iuris</i>	Infants under inherited / common-law order	Unbaptized adults and older catechumens	Disciplinary or documented pastoral note
Latin	Latin Church	B soon after birth; E after reason and first Penance; C at the age fixed by competent authority	B–C–E in one initiation, ordinarily at the Paschal Vigil	Restored-order dioceses place C before first E; other dioceses confirm later. Roman, Ambrosian, Mozarabic, Ordinariate, and other Latin uses do not create additional Churches <i>sui iuris</i> .
Alexandrian	Coptic Catholic Church	Inherited B–C–E in infancy; C is joined to B, E follows as soon as possible	B–C–E together	Infant Communion expresses the inherited norm; exact age and manner follow the Church's liturgical books and particular law.
	Ethiopian Catholic Church	Inherited B–C–E in infancy; C joined to B, E as soon as possible	B–C–E together	Local restoration or remaining Latinized delay must be reported from current particular / eparchial law, not inferred from the ritual family.
	Eritrean Catholic Church	Inherited B–C–E in infancy; C joined to B, E as soon as possible	B–C–E together	The Eritrean Church is distinct from the Ethiopian Church although both receive the Alexandrian–Ge'ez patrimony.
Antiochene / West Syriac	Maronite Catholic Church	Inherited B–C–E; B and C remain joined in infancy	B–C–E together	Many present Maronite communities document B+C in infancy but postpone first E to catechetical age: a particular pastoral discipline, not the ancestral Eastern order.
	Syriac Catholic Church	Inherited B–C–E; C joined to B, E as soon as possible	B–C–E together	Latinized postponement of E persists in some places; the competent Church's current books / law control and should be cited for any claimed age.
	Syro-Malankara Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy, with later catechesis	B–C–E together	A later solemn Communion observance can renew and catechize a reception already begun in infancy; it need not be the first sacramental reception.
Armenian	Armenian Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Uses its own Armenian patrimony; its unleavened Eucharistic bread does not make it part of the Latin Church.
Chaldean / East Syriac	Chaldean Catholic Church	Inherited C with B and E as soon as possible	B–C–E together	Documented U.S. Chaldean eparchial practice gives B+C in infancy and first E after reason; do not universalize that local timetable to the entire patriarchal Church.
	Syro-Malabar Catholic Church	Restored / normative B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Synodal restoration rejects Latinized delay; a later “solemn first Communion” may be catechetical rather than literally first reception, subject to current particular law.
Constantinopolitan / Byzantine	Albanian Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Priest ordinarily baptizes and chrismates; infant E is given according to the Byzantine liturgical books.
	Belarusian Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Same inherited order; pastoral availability of a proper hierarchy does not alter sacramental identity.
	Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Same inherited order.
	Greek Catholic Church of Croatia and Serbia	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	One Church <i>sui iuris</i> in the standard twenty-four-Church enumeration; jurisdictional titles should not be counted as extra Churches.
	Greek Byzantine Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Same inherited order.
	Hungarian Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Same inherited order; local catechetical solemnities need not mark first reception.
	Italo-Albanian Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Byzantine patrimony in full communion without a historical separation from Rome; distinct from the Albanian Greek Catholic Church.
	Macedonian Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Same inherited order.
	Melkite Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Infant Communion is preserved / restored; a later solemn Communion is catechetical.
	Romanian Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Same inherited order; verify local remnants of delayed E against present particular law.
	Russian Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Same inherited order even where faithful temporarily depend upon other Catholic hierarchs.
	Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Commonly styled the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States; that regional usage is not a twenty-fifth Church.
	Slovak Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Same inherited order; local catechetical age customs do not redefine common-law sequence.
	Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church	B–C–E in infancy	B–C–E together	Infant Communion is normative; later solemn reception / profession may remain pastorally useful.

Controlling norm. CCEO 694–696 joins Chrismation to Baptism except in true necessity and assigns ordinary Eastern administration to the presbyter using holy myron according to law; CCEO 697 directs E “as soon as possible” after B and C according to each Church's particular law; CCEO 710 remits infant Eucharistic participation to its liturgical books with due safeguards. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 12–14 confirms the ancient Eastern discipline. The Congregation for the Eastern Churches' 1996 *Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the CCEO*, 50–51, identifies school-age postponement of E in some Eastern Catholic Churches as a comparatively recent Latinizing practice and calls competent authorities back to ancestral initiation. Adult Latin sequence: CIC 866; already validly baptized Christians are never baptized again.

Scope of variation. “Inherited” gives the family / common-law trajectory; where no current particular source is cited, it is not a verified local timetable. Named examples use Chaldean 2023 diocesan policy, Maronite eparchial history and parish curriculum, and the Syro-Malabar Synodal Commission's ritual. Current patriarchal, synodal, eparchial, and liturgical law controls; check a later solemn-Communion ceremony before calling it first reception.

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