



## Growing Faith Mini-Course 6

# Catholic Liturgy & Sacraments

Booklets # 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

## 1 Description

This course asks and responds to the following questions about God and the Christian, Catholic faith to which we hold:

How does the Church pray?

What are the sacraments?

How is the liturgy the “source and summit” of life?

How do the sacraments shape our lives as Catholics?

What are the essential words and actions of the sacraments?

## 2 The flow of this mini-course...

The Growing Faith booklets used in this course include the ones listed below by number. The flow of this course is set by the *Catechism* itself, where the liturgy is presented as the visible, audible, tangible action of the community under the power of the Holy Spirit, and in order to help us deepen our intimacy and communion with Christ. We also treat each of the Sacraments in order to understand them more deeply.

#21 – The liturgy is the work of the Trinity

- In the liturgy of the church, God the Father is blessed as the source of all the blessings of creation with which he has blessed us in Christ, in order to give us the Spirit of filial adoption.
- Christ's work in the liturgy is sacramental because his Body, which is the Church, is like a sacrament (sign and instrument) in which the Holy Spirit dispenses the mystery of salvation and because through her liturgical actions the pilgrim Church already participates, as by a foretaste, in the heavenly liturgy.
- The mission of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Church is to prepare the assembly to encounter Christ.

- The sacraments are signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament.

#22 The people, places, and rites of the liturgy

- The Liturgy of the Word is an integral part of each liturgy celebrated by the church.
- Sunday is the principal day for the celebration of the Eucharist because it is the day of the Resurrection. It is the pre-eminent day of the liturgical assembly, the day of the Christian family, and the day of joy and rest from work. Sunday is "the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year."
- The Church, "in the course of the year, ...unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from his Incarnation and Nativity through his Ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord."
- The diverse liturgical traditions or rites, legitimately recognized, manifest the catholicity of the Church, because they signify and communicate the same mystery of Christ.

#23 – Baptism

- Christian initiation is accomplished in three sacraments together: Baptism which is the beginning of new life; Confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ's Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ.
- The essential rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water on his or her head, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- Those who die for the faith, those who are catechumens, and all those who, without knowing of the Church but acting under the inspiration of grace, seek God sincerely and strive to fulfill God's will, can be saved even if they have not been baptized.
- Since the earliest times, Baptism has been administered to children, for it is a grace and a gift of God that does not presuppose any human merit; children are baptized in the faith of the Church.

#24 -- Confirmation

- Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith.

- In the East Confirmation is administered immediately after Baptism and is followed by participation in the Eucharist; this tradition highlights the unity of the three sacraments of Christian initiation.
- A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs.
- The essential rite of Confirmation is anointing the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism (in the East other sense-organs as well), together with the laying on of the minister's hand and the words: Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

#### #25 -- Eucharist

- The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life.
- The Eucharistic celebration always includes: the proclamation of the Word of God; thanksgiving to God the Father for all his benefits, above all the gift of his Son; the consecration of bread and wine; and participation in the liturgical banquet by receiving the Lord's body and blood.
- Christ himself, acting through the ministry of the priests, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice.
- The essential signs of the Eucharistic sacrament are wheat bread and grape wine, on which the blessing of the Holy Spirit is invoked and the priest pronounces the words of consecration spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper: "This is my body which will be given up for you. . . . This is the cup of my blood. . . ."

#### #26 -- Reconciliation

- The forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism is conferred by a particular sacrament called the sacrament of conversion, confession, penance, or reconciliation.
- The movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future.
- The essential rite of the sacrament of Penance consists of the penitent's repentance, confession of sins to the priest, and the intention to make reparation and do works of reparation, and the priest's words of absolution and blessing.
- The spiritual effects of the sacrament of Penance are: reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace; reconciliation with the Church; peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation; an increase of spiritual strength.

#### #27 -- Anointing

- The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick confers a special grace on the Christian experiencing the difficulties inherent in the condition of grave illness or old age.
- Each time a Christian falls seriously ill, he or she may receive the Anointing of the Sick, and also when, after he or she has received it, the illness worsens.
- The celebration of the Anointing of the Sick consists essentially in the anointing of the forehead and hands of the sick person (in the Roman tradition) or of other parts of the body (in the Eastern tradition), the anointing being accompanied by the liturgical prayer of the celebrant asking for the special grace of this sacrament.
- The special grace of the Anointing of the Sick has as its effects: the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure the sufferings of illness or old age.

#### #28 -- Orders

- The whole Church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Christ. This participation is called the "common priesthood of the faithful."
- The ministerial priesthood differs in essence from the common priesthood of the faithful because it confers a sacred power for the service of the faithful. The ordained ministers exercise their service for the People of God by teaching, divine worship and pastoral governance.
- Since the beginning, the ordained ministry has been conferred and exercised in three degrees: that of bishops, that of presbyters, and that of deacons.
- The sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred by the laying on of hands followed by a solemn prayer of consecration asking God to grant the ordinand the graces of the Holy Spirit required for his ministry.

#### #29 -- Matrimony

- The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with its own special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children.
- Marriage is based on the consent of the contracting parties, that is, on their will to give themselves, each to the other, mutually and definitively, in order to live a covenant of faithful and fruitful love.

- Unity, permanence, and openness to fertility are essential to marriage.
- The Christian home is the place where children receive their first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called "the domestic church," a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity.

### 3 Procedures and Suggestions

We recommend you follow the order for this course laid out above.

- ✚ Use the individual Growing Faith booklet [STUDY GUIDES](#) for each session (they're free & available at [PastoralPlanning.com](#)).
  - Begin with the first step on the [STUDY GUIDE](#) and follow the outline provided to the end of that session.
  - Do not rush the learners. Allow ample time for questions and discussion. Allow the learners to explore the various exercises and topics thoroughly before moving on.
  - If necessary, spread the treatment of any one booklet over two sessions rather than running late and long. If you finish early in one particular session, simply move to refreshments and pick up next time at the beginning of the next booklet.
  - Have on hand a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for reference. The article numbers from the *Catechism* are given on the front cover of each Growing Faith booklet.
  
- ✚ Make ample use of the [Exercises & Reflections](#) which are given in each booklet. Use them to guide your discussions. Remember that the goal here is not so much to create “mini-theologians” among your learners as to help increase their faith and the understanding of that faith.
  
- ✚ Work in a room which is [prepared for your gathering](#). Remember that your learners are exploring the mystery of faith in these sessions, not studying theology as they would in college or religion class. You may wish to have on hand sacred music, a special copy of Sacred Scripture in an honored position in the room, and symbols of the Church’s liturgy and faith tradition.
  
- ✚ At each gathering, begin by [Breaking Open the Word](#) from the readings of the liturgy from the previous Sunday. We provide a resource for this purpose on the web site at this link: <http://store.pastoralplanning.com/quofwerere.html>. The connection to the Sunday Liturgy is essential in order to have a thoroughly Catholic understanding of faith.
  
- ✚ If you have questions or need assistance, or simply wish to talk with a specialist about your mini-course, call anytime 8 AM eastern to 5 PM pacific time, Monday thru Friday at [612-220-6943](tel:612-220-6943).