

Taking Baptism Seriously . . .

Encountering Grace in the Sacraments

What is Baptism?

- Sacrament of Initiation
 - Sacrament
 - “a visible sign of an invisible reality.” ~ Augustine
 - contains grace
 - action of God
 - Initiation
 - Of an individual
 - Into the Body of Christ – Church
 - Rite of Passage
 - Individual
 - Community
 - Ritual – Worship

What is Grace?

- A free gift from God given to us for the purpose of our salvation.
 - Classically:
 - Two kinds of Grace
 - Actual – for a specific act or action
 - Sanctifying – a quality of the soul infused at baptism and through the spirit of adoption transforms the sinner into a child of God.
 - Simply:
 - It is the Divine Connection
 - The power of the indwelling Holy Spirit
 - The action and intent of Jesus Christ to lead us to the Father

Baptism - Rite of individual passage

- From death to eternal life
- From sinfulness to holiness
- From individual to community member
- Autonomy to responsibility
- Also:
 - Act of Adoption
 - Act of Forgiveness
 - Act of the Holy Spirit

Baptism - Rite of the community

- Sign of unity
- Statement of belief
- Transcendent encounter
- Statement of responsibility for/to
- Statement of Adoption
(Water is thicker than blood!)

Baptism - Ritual – *where grace is for all of us*

- Liturgy – public worship
- Contains symbols
 - Water – death then new and eternal life
 - Chrism – Priest, Prophet, and King
 - Baptismal Garment – dignity
 - Light – faith alive in your hearts
- Ritual – repeated and reinforced identity/belief

Confirmation

- Totally Linked to Baptism
- An outpouring of the Holy Spirit
 - Strengthening
 - Witnesses of Jesus suffering, death and resurrection
 - Active members of the Church
 - Build up the Body of Christ in Faith and Love
 - Gifts *where the grace is*
 - Wisdom and Understanding
 - Judgment and Courage
 - Knowledge and Reverence
 - Wonder and awe

Communion and Eucharist

- It's a meal
- It's about presence
- It's about reality
- It's about seeing with a new set of eyes

Marriage and Holy Orders

- It's about a call to holiness
 - Recognition of gifts
 - Sharing of gifts
 - Selflessness
- It's about commitment
 - The power of love
 - The power of faith

Reconciliation and Anointing

- It's about healing
- It's about a loving and merciful God
- It's all about Grace
 - Actual grace
 - Sanctifying Grace

Encountering Grace in the Sacraments

- It's about Faith
- It's about Mystery
- It's about Community
- It's about God
- It's about You
- And It's ALL GRACE