To Remember

- A Sacrament is a visible action of the Church where God is at work bringing grace.
- The seven sacraments are gifts of God. They have been instituted by Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- The sacraments will always help those who use them properly.
- The seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage and Holy Orders.

The Seven Sacraments

Sacraments are sacred rituals of our Church that bring us God’s grace and help us to celebrate God’s work in us and in our community.

Our Catholic Church has seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage and Holy Orders.

Each Sacrament reflects Jesus’ own life and ministry. Each is a unique moment in Church life when we celebrate Jesus alive with us today.

Through the Sacraments, we allow Jesus to enter our lives in an extraordinary way at particular moments. The Sacraments welcome and heal us and help us to live in service to our community. So, each Sacrament focuses on important times in our lives when we celebrate our relationship with God. At these times, we open ourselves to receive God’s grace and to recognise it working within our lives.
In our celebration of the Sacraments, familiar symbols and gestures are used to help us to understand more about ourselves, other people, and our world – and to know how God is at work in all of these. Some familiar symbols and gestures are:

- Light
- Oil
- Laying on of hands
- Bread and wine
- The Sign of the Cross

Each sacrament has its own purpose. We can also think of the Seven Sacraments as being grouped in this way:

- **Sacraments of Initiation** are Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist:

  - **In Baptism**, God our Father welcomes us into the Church community.
  - **At Confirmation**, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who strengthens and guides our Christian life.
  - **In the Eucharist**, Jesus gives himself completely to his Father and to us. Jesus, the Son of God, becomes the spiritual food we need for our life’s journey.

- **Sacraments of Healing** are Penance (or Reconciliation) and the Anointing of the Sick:

  - Penance enables us to receive God’s forgiveness of our sins when we are truly sorry.
  - The Anointing of the Sick brings God’s love and care to those who are ill or dying.

- **Sacraments in the Service of Community** are Holy Orders and Marriage:

  - **Marriage** celebrates God’s uniting of a man and woman forever, forming a family and living together in faithful love.
  - **Holy Orders** celebrates God’s call to some men to be ordained deacons, priests and bishops who will lead and serve our Church.