

Key Concepts

Eucharist

Meaning “thanksgiving”. The real presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The Body and Blood

Sacrament

A ritual through which Christians believe they receive God’s grace

The Sacraments

- The seven sacraments: their names, meanings & effects
- The meaning and significance of sacraments
- The meaning and significance of the Eucharist as “the source and summit” of Christian life

Key Sources of Authority

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take it; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,’ he said to them.” (Mark 14)

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” (1 Corinthians: 11)

Key Beliefs

The Importance of Sacraments

While Jesus was on earth he was physically with his followers. When he left, he gave the Church to be his body and the Sacraments, so that his followers could continue to feel the presence of God. Through ordinary symbols (water, oil, bread etc.) Catholics can experience the forgiving, healing love of God throughout their lives.

Baptism

The person baptised becomes part of the family of God & the Body of Christ. The water reminds people that they have entered a new life in Christ. The new Catholic is cleansed of original sin and is given the sanctifying grace of God. The oil is a symbol that the new Catholic is given strength from the Holy Spirit to live out their vocation.

Confirmation

In Confirmation a Catholics chooses to confirm the promises made on their behalf; that they want to carry on living as a Christian. The laying on of hands and the oil of Chrism are symbols that the person is given strength from the Holy Spirit to live out their vocation. Confirmation makes a Catholic more firmly a child of God as they choose to belong to the Body of Christ. In Confirmation they are given the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Eucharist (Holy Communion)

When Catholics come together at Mass they receive the Body & Blood of Christ which reminds them that through Jesus’ death they are saved and can have a relationship with God.

Reconciliation (confession)

Where a person repents and confesses their sins to God through a priest. The priest gives the person God’s forgiveness so that they are reconciled with God and able to start afresh, living the way God wants them to.

Sacrament of the Sick

A person is anointed with oil and asks for healing (either spiritually or physically). The person receives strength from the Holy Spirit. Their sins are forgiven to prepare them for heaven (if dying). The Sacrament unites the sick person’s suffering with Jesus’ suffering.

Marriage

A man and woman unite, with a priest as God’s witness. The couple promise to stay together till death. They are given strength from the Holy Spirit to live out their vocation (to keep their marriage vows) and are reminded of God’s love for them and how their love should be a reflection of that love.

Holy Orders (Ordination)

When a Catholic becomes a nun, monk, priest, or bishop. He/ she promises to offer their whole life to serving God and others and to live without a partner, dedicating themselves 100% to their congregation or community. The person is given strength from the Holy Spirit to live out their vocation.

The Importance of the Eucharist

It reminds Catholics of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. Jesus told his followers to receive the Eucharist at the Last Supper when he said ‘Do this in memory of me’. It is the ‘source and summit of the Christian life’ and the most important Sacrament (CCC). The Eucharist unites every Catholic as they drink from the same cup. The Eucharist gives Catholics ‘strength for the journey’.

Exam Practice

What do Catholics mean by the ‘Eucharist’?

Key Connections

- What is the connection between the seven Sacraments and Catholic beliefs about salvation?
- What is the connection between the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Catholic ideas about forgiving others?