

Sponsor Meeting 5 – The Sacraments

Opening Prayer (Together): Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Activity and Discussion:

- 1) On your smart phone or tablet, go to www.blessedsacramentchurch.org/confirmation and watch the video under the post Sponsor Meeting 5 – The Sacraments.
- 2) When you have watched the video, read through the reflection on the following page, and use the discussion questions as a guide for a conversation with the confirmand on this topic.
- 3) Ask the confirmand to fill out the summary form, and then both of you should sign it.
- 4) Use the following prayer to conclude your time together. **Closing Prayer: John 6:53-58**

Sponsor says: *"Let us remember we are in God's Holy Presence."*

Sponsor and Confirmand take a moment to quiet themselves and place themselves in God's presence.

Confirmand Reads:

Jesus said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."

They pause for a brief time to listen to the Lord speak to them in the scriptures.

The sponsor continues: Lord Jesus, you desire so intensely that we should know your love that you give us sacraments through which we see you face to face and share your very life. Help us to believe more firmly in your presence in all your sacraments, and most especially the Eucharist. Pour out the gifts of your Holy Spirit on (Confirmand's Name) so that he/she can believe in your presence with true conviction of mind and heart. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

For many people, it can be so difficult to feel God's love. After all, God is so mysterious and he can be very hard to understand at times. Nevertheless, he desires that we come to know his love for us, and for this reason, God provides ways for us to experience his love and his presence, even when we do not feel it.

We can experience God in many ways. Some people find God in nature, some find him in art, and others experience him through music. Christians know that God is also present when we read the Bible, or when we pray, or when we gather together with other Christians. In all of these ways, though, our experience of God is mediated through some other experience. Another way of saying this is that we cannot point to nature, or to a painting, or to a song and say to another, "That is God." Nature, or the song, or the painting are instruments through which God can make us feel that he is present to us, but they are not really him.

As Catholics, we understand that God does not want to be present to us only through the mediation of some other created thing. Rather, he wants to be really, truly, and actively present in our lives. For this reason, God, through the Church, gives us sacraments. The sacraments are visible signs of God's invisible presence and action in our lives. They are ways in which he is really and truly present. In other words, when we receive a sacrament, we have a genuine encounter with Jesus Christ. We meet him face to face, and he bestows his love on us in a special way.

There are seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, reconciliation, anointing of the sick, holy matrimony, and holy orders. In each of these sacraments, the Holy Spirit uses ordinary things from our lives, (e.g. water, bread, wine, oil) to make himself present. In baptism, his presence washes away original sin, in confirmation he makes us strong witnesses for the faith, in the Eucharist we eat his body and blood and are made more like him, in reconciliation our sins are forgiven, in the anointing of the sick we are united with him in his suffering, in matrimony we are made special signs of his love for the world, and in holy orders we are made his special representatives on earth. None of these sacraments, however, is simply a symbol. They are real moments wherein Jesus is genuinely present and where he shares his love with us.

Of the seven sacraments, we are encouraged to receive two with great regularity. We are taught that we should confess our sins whenever we find ourselves guilty of mortal sin, and we should receive the Eucharist as often as possible, so long as we are in the state of grace (i.e. without mortal sin) when we do so. It is a grave or mortal sin to miss Mass on Sunday or a Holy Day through our own fault because the Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. We also experience Jesus in the Eucharist when we pray before him like the people in the video did. Christ is mysteriously but really present in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Christ truly give himself for us and we truly gain a share in him. The unique and unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is made present on the altar; the work of our redemption is accomplished.

It can be hard to feel God's presence, but we can know with certainty that he is there when we receive a sacrament. We truly experience a genuine encounter with Jesus. He loves us so much that he makes himself present. Even if we do not feel something when we receive a sacrament, we can be certain that Jesus really is there, because he promises that he is through the scriptures and the teachings of the Church.

Sponsor Meeting 5 – The Sacraments (Confirmand)

Reflection Questions #5 – Due February 17th (please use the resources provided):

- 1) Why do you think we need sacraments?
- 2) What are the sacraments you can only receive once? (CCC 1272; YouCat 176)
- 3) What is your favorite sacrament? Why?
- 4) How could you be more aware of God's presence when you receive the sacraments?
- 5) How can you prepare for Mass? (CCC 1389, 1417; YouCat 220)
- 6) Describe a time when you have truly known God's presence through the sacraments.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Student's Name (Print): _____ Sponsor Signature: _____