Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework 2007 by USCCB

Core Curriculum

**5th Semester**: Sacraments as Privileged Encounters with Jesus Christ

**Main Points:**

1. **The Sacramental Nature of the Church**
   1. A sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life of grace is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit
   2. Eastern Church call them “mysteries”
   3. Efficacious – confer the grace they signify
   4. Jesus Christ is the living, ever-present sacrament of god
   5. The Church is the universal sacrament of Jesus Christ
   6. Redemption is mediated through the seven sacraments
   7. The Church at prayer: different forms, essential, liturgical prayer, sacraments
   8. Personal prayer; Christian meditation
2. **The Sacraments of Initiation (understanding, celebration, essential elements, requirements, minister, appropriation and living each sacrament)**
   1. Baptism: birth into new life in Christ, original sin is forgiven along with personal sin
      1. adoptive children of Father, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit
      2. adult & infant baptisms; catechesis; necessity of Baptism
      3. essential elements: triple pouring of water on had with Trinitarian formula
   2. Confirmation: gift of Holy Spirit confirmed, strengthened and perfected for living and spreading the faith to others
      1. Indelible character (also with Baptism - received only once)
      2. Called to spread and to defend the faith; living in the life of the Holy Spirit
   3. Eucharist - The sacrament which re-presents in the Mass the sacrificial Death of Christ and his Resurrection – making it possible for us to eat his Body and drink his Blood
      1. Scriptural basis (p. 22), theology (signs, institution, “in memory”, thanksgiving and praise, sacrificial memorial
      2. Parts of Mass, roles of priest, deacons, and faithful; essentials (bread and wine), Eucharistic prayer,
      3. Real presence: transubstantiation, worship of Eucharist (adoration, tabernacle, reverence)
3. **Sacraments of Healing (more pp. 22-23)**
   1. Penance and Reconciliation: sins committed after Baptism are forgiven
      1. forgiveness of sin, reconciled with God and the Church; confession of mortal and venial sins
   2. Anointing of the Sick: gives spiritual healing and strength to a person seriously and sometimes also physical recovery
      1. Scriptural basis: James 5:14-15; Celebration: individual, communal, and viaticum
      2. Essential (laying on of hands, anointing on forehead and hands with oil of sick; spoken words of the formula)
      3. Effects: union of sick person to Christ in his Passion; strength, peace, and courage to endure
4. **Sacraments of the Service of Communion (more pp. 24-25)**
   1. Holy Orders – man is made a bishop, priest, or deacon
      1. Scriptural basis – Last Supper
      2. Essential elements, effects (indelible character), requirements,
   2. Matrimony – a baptized man and a baptized woman form with each other a lifelong covenantal communion of life and love that signifies the union of Christ and the Church and grace to life it
      1. Scriptural basis; Essential Elements: free consent, given in presence of Church’s minister and two witnesses; Effects; Requirements (baptism, no prior bond or impediment, free consent, celebration in accordance to the Church
      2. Requirements of marriage: unity and indissolubility, fidelity, openness to children;
      3. Divorce, declaration of nullity, remarriages

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Challenges

1. Can’t a person go directly to God without the help of the Church or a priest?
   1. We can always pray directly to God; God established His Church to teach us and to enrich us with his grace
   2. Sacraments provide an encounter with Christ which is unique and graced
   3. Sacraments celebrate and strengthen our unity and identity
2. Can God forgive us directly when we are sorry for sin?
   1. Yes, God can forgive us directly however and whenever he wants, he also knows what is best for us; he has taught us through Jesus Christ and wants to forgive us through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation
   2. Sacrament of Reconciliation is necessary to forgive grace or mortal sins, but not essential for venial sins
   3. People need to confess sins to face the reality of the wrong they have done; they are assured of forgiveness of their sins
3. Aren’t the sacraments just celebrations to mark significant moments in our life?
   1. Usually sacraments are celebrated at appropriate or significant moments or evens in their lives, they are more than celebrations
   2. Sacraments are encounters with Christ who is acting through the sacraments
   3. We are given special grace at each sacrament
4. Is there any difference between receiving Holy Communion in a Catholic church and going to communion in a Protestant worship service?
   1. Yes, there are differences
      1. Because of our Apostolic Succession and the priesthood, Holy Eucharist in the Catholic Church is the body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Churches without Apostolic Succession and the priesthood do not have that gift.
      2. Reception of Holy Communion in the Catholic Church is a statement of belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Church and of unity with all Catholics throughout the world
   2. Because of these differences, Catholics must not rake communion in Protestant worship services, and on-Catholics must not receive Holy Communion in Catholic Churches
5. How do we know that any of the sacraments really work? For example, if a person dies after receiving the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, does that mean it did not work?
   1. The effects of the graces received cannot be seen or measured.
   2. Effects of the sacraments are not dependent on feelings; sometimes looking back we recognize how Christ has touch us and helped us through the sacraments
   3. The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick can have different effects. Sometimes Christ does bring about physical healing through the sacraments; sometimes the healing is spiritual to prepare the person for death, to be at peace and to be eager to be with the Lord.