

The Sacraments

Sacrament comes from the Latin *Sacramentum*. When sacramentum was adopted as an ordinance by the early Christian Church in the 3rd century, the Latin word sacer (“holy”) was brought into conjunction with the Greek word mystērion (“secret rite”). Sacramentum was thus given a sacred mysterious significance that indicated a spiritual potency. The power was transmitted through material instruments and vehicles viewed as channels of divine grace and as benefits in ritual observances instituted by Christ. St. Augustine defined sacrament as “the visible form of an invisible grace” or “a sign of a sacred thing.”

In short, a Sacrament is a means of grace, which has been instituted by Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It is accomplished when the Word of God is added to an element, water or bread and wine, and these elements are received in faith.

By this definition, there are two Sacraments: (1) Holy Baptism, where the Word is added to water for the forgiveness of sin, as instituted by Christ in **Matthew 28:19**. And (2) Holy Communion, where the Word of God is added to bread and wine, for the forgiveness of sins as instituted by Christ at the last supper (**Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26**).