

DOES GRACE COME THROUGH THE SACRAMENTS? DO WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH SACRAMENTS?

A Biblical Study of The Catechism of the Catholic Church:

*Bible Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions
about Catholic Beliefs and Practices*

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Passages of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to Consider:

- “The whole liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and sacraments....Baptism, Confirmation or Chrismation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony” (CCC 1113)
- **“Through the Church’s sacraments, Christ communicates his Holy and sanctifying Spirit to the members of his Body.” (CCC 739)**
- **“The communion of the sacraments...unite us to God” (CCC 951)**
- “Sacraments are ‘powers that come forth’ from the Body of Christ” (CCC 1116)
- “The ordained priesthood guarantees that it really is Christ who acts in the sacraments” (CCC 1120)
- “The three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders confer, in addition to grace, a sacramental character or ‘seal’ by which the Christian shares in Christ’s priesthood and is made a member of the Church” (CCC 1121)
- **“the sacraments confers the grace they signify. They are efficacious” (CCC 1127)**
- **“The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation.” (CCC 1129)**
- “The fruit of the sacramental life is that the Spirit of adoption makes the faithful the partakers in the divine nature by uniting them in loving union with the only Son, the Savior” (CCC 1129) [Council of Trent in 1547]
- “The New Law ... uses the sacraments to communicate grace to us” (CCC 1983)

Scriptures to Consider:

- **Ephesians 2:8–9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (ESV)**
- Galatians 2:16–21 “yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. ... And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. [21] I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.” (ESV)
- Galatians 3:2–3 “Let me ask you only this: **Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?** [3] Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” (ESV)
- Romans 5:15 “But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.” (ESV)

- Jude 4 “For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.” (ESV)
- Colossians 1:5–6 “you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, [6] which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth” (ESV)
- Titus 2:11 “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people” (ESV)
- Romans 8:15 “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (ESV)
- Ephesians 1:5 “In love, he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will” (ESV)
- **John 1:12–13 “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (ESV)**
- John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (ESV)
- John 5:24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (ESV)
- John 6:47 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.” (ESV)
- John 20:31 “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (ESV)
- Acts 10:43 “To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” (ESV)
- Acts 13:39 “by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses” (ESV)
- Acts 16:31 “And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’” (ESV)

Questions to Consider:

- If we are saved “by grace” and “it’s not our doing” according to the Bible (Ephesians 2:8-9), then why do we need to be conferred grace by the sacraments (CCC 1127 and 1983)?
- **If we are “not justified by works” (Galatians 2:16) then why are the works of the sacraments “necessary for salvation” (CCC 1129)?**
- Why would the whole “life of the Church” (CCC 1113) revolve around rituals and ceremonies to receive grace? Does the New Testament say that’s the primary task of the Church?
- **If Romans 8:15 and Ephesians 1:5 explain that we have already been adopted, then why do we need sacraments to “unite us to God” (CCC 951 and 1129)?**
- Is it biblical that the Holy Spirit is communicated to us through the sacraments (CCC 739)?
- Is it not true that the Bible describes all of the blessings of salvation as occurring at the point of faith? (See: John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; 6:47; 20:31; Acts 10:43; 13:39; 16:31)