

The Living Message of Christ

The Truth of the Living Word, Jesus, the Savior of the World

What is a Sacramental?

Sacramentals are outward signs that give grace to those who receive them in a worthy manner. "Holy Mother Church has, moreover, instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects that are prayed for, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By them men are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1667)

Water, used for the sacrament of Baptism removes sin and unites the baptized person to Christ. They share in Christ's divinity as He humbled himself to share in our humanity. The outward signs of bread and wine used at Mass become the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. In Confirmation the Holy Spirit strengthens those baptized to help them live the faith devoutly. In Reconciliation, sins are absolved and divine grace restored. In the Anointing of the Sick, the sins of the penitent are absolved with spiritual and physical healing, according to God's will.

Blessings by priests and bishops have the power to turn objects such as a new rosary or statue into a sacramental by consecrating them to God.

Blessings by the laity are petitions to God. For example, the blessing at meals is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. It makes holy our need for nutrition and as a reminder of the most blessed meal....the Eucharist. Likewise, a parent's blessing for their children is a petition to God to keep them safe from all evil.

Passages of Scripture support the use of sacramentals: In the old testament, Elisha told Naaman, who had leprosy, "Go and wash seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will heal, and you will be clean." (2nd Kings 5:10)