

Sacramentality, Mediation, and Communion

The concepts of sacramentality, mediation, and communion are essential to the Catholic faith. Besides providing guideposts for the faithful in their response to the Lord, these concepts illustrate how Catholics see themselves in relation to the Divine.

1. *Sacramentality*: Sacramentality is the principle that says everything in creation — people, movements, places, the environment, and the cosmos itself — can reveal God. Under this principle, the division between sacred and secular is erased: Everything is sacred, because all comes from the Lord.

Beyond sacramentality as a general concept, Catholicism recognizes seven specific sacraments that confer grace (The seven sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion, Confession, Marriage, Holy Orders, and the Anointing of the Sick—are the life of the Catholic Church.). Additionally, objects, words, or ceremonies used in conjunction with the sacraments and which confer holiness are known as the sacramentals. When a priest blesses an object — such as giving a blessing upon the dedication of a church or upon holy oils and vestments — the blessed object is sanctified and becomes a sacramental.

2. *Mediation*: Intercession Between Man and God

Catholics believe that God and man can be brought to a greater common awareness through the power of certain intercessors that are venerated by the Catholic Church. An angel, saint, holy person, or a priest can plead a believer's cause to God or, in other words, be a mediator between the believer and the Lord.

Mediation is a process that bridges the divide between the human and the divine. The saints, especially the Virgin Mary, take their spiritual power from Christ, the ultimate mediator, and can intercede with God to confer his grace on man.

In the very essence of his being, Christ conjoins the human and the divine, and is therefore considered to be the most effective mediator. The second most perfect advocate for us is the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was born without original sin and was never estranged from God.

3. *Communion*: A Communal Faith

The principle of communion stresses the communal aspect of Catholic life. Regardless of one's personal relationship to God, the only way to him is through the community of the faithful, especially as it is embodied in the sacraments of the Church.