

John 1 – Prologue of John

¹In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God.

³All things came to be through him,
and without him nothing came to be.

What came to be ⁴through him was life,
and this life was the light of the human race;

⁵the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it...

14 And the Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory as of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth.

- Why have the sacraments?
 - “The Incarnation is the center of all God’s plans for mankind.”
God created people with the ultimate aim that they would go to heaven.
 - The Incarnation of Jesus Christ shows the depths of the shocking love that God has for his creatures.
 - Through the Incarnation and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, man’s ultimate end is possible for every human being to achieve.
 - Perhaps most wonderfully and spectacularly, the Incarnation of Jesus has been prolonged from that day until the last day through the sacramental economy that he instituted.
 - “I will be with you always, until the end of the age, (Mt. 28:20)”
 - New Covenant: Man stands in need of redemption from sin, man was made for relationship with God, God made the world in view of becoming man. Through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus initiated the sacramental economy, the normal means of achieving salvation for members of the Church.
 - How would he fulfill this promise of remaining with us to the end of the age?
 - Dr. Lawrence Feingold wrote that “He still wished to remain among us so that we could enter Him in His humanity with its life-giving and medicinal power, and therefore he established the sacraments of the Church to be the principal means of encounter with His humanity.”

- Dr. Feingold - Scriptural basis for the sacramental economy: Good Samaritan and the Blood and Water which flowed forth from the side of Christ.
 - Again, Jesus sought to remain amongst his people until the end of the age and instituted the sacraments to that end.
 - By means of sacred signs, Jesus gave the Church the principal means of graced contact with Him until the Last Day.
 - Regarding the Good Samaritan, Feingold sees that “the man who is robbed on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho represents Adam... the Good Samaritan represents Jesus Christ, whose saving work is indicated when the Samaritan anoints the wounds of the victim. The Church is the inn to which Jesus entrusts the wounded man until his return.”
 - In this relationship between the sinner, Jesus, and the Church, the Church is entrusted with the means of healing the souls entrusted to her by means of the sacraments.
 - She can do nothing on her own, but the Lord has actually and really entrusted her with keeping the soul of the wounded “alive” spiritually until the return of the Lord.
 - Feingold continues the analogy by saying that “Christ came to restore to us what had been lost through original and personal sin and to give us renewed access to the tree of life, which He is, as the Word, Author, and Bread of Life.”
 - Feingold goes on to make an even deeper and stronger connection between the newly inaugurated sacramental economy of salvation and the blood and water which flowed forth from the side of Christ crucified.
 - He noted that the blood and water surely represent the two “symbols of the principal sacraments – Baptism and the Eucharist.” He is drawing on such figures as Quodvultdeus, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Pope Pius XII.
 - Quodvultdeus beautifully connected the opening of the sacramental economy with the cross of Christ by affirming the following:

- “for his side was pierced, as the gospel says, and immediately there flowed out blood and water, which are the twin sacraments of the Church: the water, which became her [baptismal] bath, and the [eucharistic] blood which became her dowry.”
- Theodore expressed many of the same sentiments when he wrote that:
 - “his side was pierced as Adam’s was; yet there came forth... a fountain of life that regenerates the world by its two streams: the one to renew us in the baptismal font... and the other to feed us, the reborn, at the table of God.”
- In more recent years, Pope Pius XII saw that when Jesus was
 - “lifted up between heaven and earth, He offers the saving sacrifice of His life, and pours forth, as it were, from his pierced heart, the sacraments...”
- **The principal idea which the Fathers and Feingold are keen to connect between the blood and water which flowed out of the side of Jesus and the sacramental economy is this: God instituted a system in which grace is communicated to the faithful through rites and rituals which involve sensible signs.**
- **This system has been initiated and sustained for the renewal of life from the baptismal font as well as the sustained nourishment by feeding on the Bread of Life.**

BREAK

- What is a sacrament?
 - CCC 1131 The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. **The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament.**
 - Sacraments are effective. Christ instituted each sacrament and entrusted them to his Church.
 - Thru the minister, he confers his life and grace to us thru the sacraments. Jesus is the one at work thru the sacraments.
 - **Jesus gave us the sacraments for two primary reasons: to call us to worship God, and to make us holy.**
 - Form & Matter: bread / wine & words of institution; oil & formula; confession of sins / contrition / penance & words of absolution; water & baptismal formula.
 - Why so many rituals??
 - B-2 in Bible: God's plan from the beginning included religious rituals. Jesus partook of these rituals. The early church continued worshipping by use of rituals. (Acts 2:42)
 - God chose the simplest things imaginable as the means to communicate his grace to us!
 - We are such a tactile people that it is a benefit to us to have sensible signs & rites to go along with audible words so that we come to a greater understanding of the grace being communicated to us.
- **Confession as example...**

- What are the sacraments?
 - Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist
 - Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick
 - Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Holy Order and Matrimony

- What do the sacraments accomplish?
 - Each sacrament brings with it a particular grace and communicates divine life to our souls. As we cover each sacrament later, we'll cover their particular graces in more detail. For now, their groupings and a short overview will suffice.
 - St. Thomas Aquinas taught that five of the sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation, the Eucharist, and Anointing of the sick are “intended to bring about the perfection of the individual man in himself.”
 - The other two, matrimony and Order, are “so constituted that they perfect and multiply the entire Church.”
 - His rationale for the sacramental system in general is worth quoting at length:
 - “The spiritual life conforms to the physical life. In the physical life man is perfected in three chief ways: first, by generation, in that he is born into this world; secondly, by growth, through which he is brought up into stature and perfect strength; thirdly, by food which sustains man's life and powers. This would suffice were it not that man is attacked by illnesses, and hence, fourthly, he needs something which will bring him back to health. This also holds true in the spiritual life.”