

Sacramental theology

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A sacrament is the encounter with God when something of the material world becomes an instrument or the gateway to eternal life. Jesus, the son of God is the unique sign of the observable form of the real life of God.

According to Edward Schillebeccks, salvation is only achieved through sacramentality.

The church is the fundamental sacrament and Christians are the living sacraments. God's design is through visible signs and symbols. The efficacious signs and symbols consist of two parts; matter and form. Matter refers to materials used in the church to symbolize the events in the life of Christ. For instance, water used in baptism symbolizes the washing away of sins and transformation into a 'new' creature.

Similarly, the bread in the sacrament of Eucharist represents the body of Jesus Christ and the wine is the blood. The other component is form which represents the rituals or actions in the church e. g. breaking of bread during Eucharist. This understanding of a sacrament as the embodiment of the personal presence of Christ leads Schillebeccks to offer a fresh interpretation of the relationship between the Eucharistic elements and symbolism of bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ. These outer efficacious signs and symbols lead to the inward and spiritual grace, what Edward Schillebeccks simply refers to as 'resrsquo;.

In simple terms spiritual grace leads to the presence of God in the lives of people. When experienced, this spiritual grace manifests itself as full of life which further strengthens of the bond between God and mankind (Wondra and Owen, 2002). The outward visible signs (in matter or form) experienced

by Christians are a 'mouthpiece' for the inward and spiritual grace. The purpose of following Christ is the hope to share a banquet with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The sacramental economy of salvation is mapped out in four components as Jesus, church, the seven sacraments and the Christians.

Jesus is regarded as the human God as he possessed a mortal quality of human beings, speaks the human language but serves the best icon as God. Christ as the sacrament has all the completeness of God in human form and we find in him the goodness and kindness of God. We lay down the sacrament as the base of our liturgical life. Jesus as the first sacrament is eternal as for this reason, he continues, and is able to save those who go to God through him as he always lives to make the intercession. The church is considered as the fundamental sacrament as it is through it that Christ's salvation comes to all believers.

It's thus the body of Christ on earth where without it there will be no gospel sharing on the earth, no baptism, communion, discipleship and the maturity of faith (Macquarie, 1998). God gives every believer something to add to the body and support their faith. The seven sacraments are; baptism, where the baptized ones are born again with water; confirmation makes them strong; reconciliation, a sacrament that makes the soul to heal the wounds of sins and have the grace of penitence; the holy Eucharist furnishes the Christians with every day sacred food; unction is the fifth sacrament that makes the soul prepared for the eternal life; the second last sacrament of Order supplies the church with workers and the last of all the sacraments is that of marriage and fills the believer with the grace of loving and being loved and <https://assignbuster.com/sacramental-theology/>

to raise children in God's love. The Christians are referred as the living sacraments because when one decides to act as Jesus, he too becomes a living sacrament in the world (Noll, 1999). When one forgives his brother, he becomes a sacrament of forgiveness as he unveils the act of forgiving as Jesus did. The relationship shows us how God's power is shared from God himself, through his son Jesus, to the church and lastly to the individual Christian.

This shows us that each and every part of the sacrament is important to one another as each qualifies the other.