

A Sacramental Church: More than Signs and Symbols



The Sacramental View of Reality

1. Materialism, Naturalism, or Realism

True reality is “matter in motion”

The “spiritual” world is a delusion

2. Spiritualism or Idealism

True reality is mind and spirit only

The material world is unimportant, at best a burden to be rid of, and at worse, evil

3. Sacramental View

True reality includes both material and spiritual worlds

The spiritual world “expresses itself ... acts and operates in the through the material” world

The Basis for a Sacramental View of the Universe

1. *the material world is good*: created by God in the Incarnation, God freely took on embodied existence, lived in space and time. *Chalcedon - Jesus fully God and fully human*
2. *the material world can be a door to the sacred*:
God is both: *transcendent* reality beyond the world he has made *immanent* reality who dwells in this world and is active in it.

Sacramental World

- **Space, the overlap of heaven and earth**
- Heaven and earth aren't far apart or detached in Biblical theology. They came together in Jesus' death and resurrection. We're encouraged to rework the sacraments in view of this.



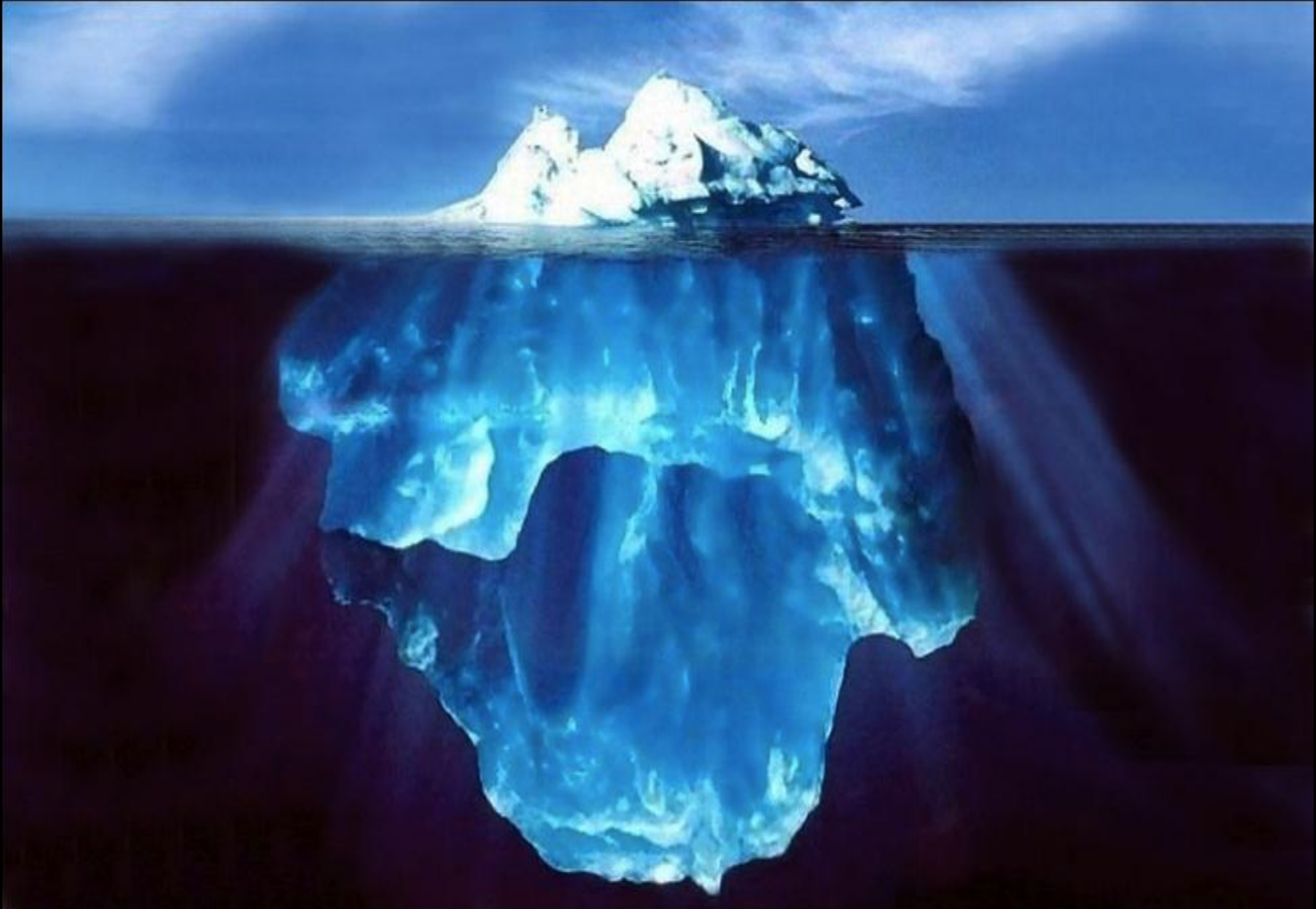
**"You have shown yourself to me,
Christ, face-to-face. I meet you in your
sacraments." -Saint Ambrose**



Sacra Mentum

- In Latin, the word "sacrament" literally means "to make holy; to set apart"

What's Beneath the Iceberg?



Sacramental Rites in the Church

Church has defined seven “Sacraments”

Two Sacraments of the Gospel:

Baptism

Holy Eucharist

Other Sacramental Rites that evolved under guidance of the Holy Spirit:

Confirmation

Ordination

Holy Matrimony

Reconciliation of a Penitent (Confession)

Unction (Anointing of the Sick)

The Outward Parts and Inward Spiritual Reality of a Sacrament

1. **outward or visible part** = “matter” and/or “form.”

the material object and/or physical action that is the “door” or “portal” to the sacred

Catechism: “the outward and visible sign”

2. **inward spiritual reality** = “*res*”

heart of the sacrament

the action of God on the human spirit

Catechism: “the inward and spiritual grace”

The Outward and Visible Sign

The “**Outward and Visible Sign**” consists of two parts: **matter**, and **form**:

1. **Matter** -- the material substance used

For example, water in Baptism

For example, Bread and Wine in the Eucharist

2. **Form** -- ritual action, formula of words

For example, Washing in Baptism

For example, Breaking, Pouring, Eating, Drinking
in the Eucharist

The Inward and Spiritual Grace or Res

•The **“Inward and Spiritual Grace”** = **“res”** refers to the presence of God. The grace imparted in a sacrament is sometimes spoken of as having two facets:

1. The **“symbolic reality”** or “paschal mystery:” a description of the recipient’s “participation” in the divine

For example, in the Eucharist: the partaking of the body and blood of Christ

2. The benefits of this participation

For example, in the Eucharist, strengthening of our bond to God, a foretaste of the heavenly banquet to come

Ex Opere Operato

- The imparting of grace is said to be *ex opere operato*, meaning:
- It depends only on the “proper performance” of the sacrament
- It does not depend on the godliness of the minister or the faith of the recipient. All that is required of the minister and the recipient is:
 - the minister must have the proper intention
 - Recipient must set up no obstacles to receiving grace (such as contempt or gross disbelief)

Confirmation

- What is confirmation?
- Confirmation is the rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a Bishop.

Confirmation

- What is required of those to be confirmed?
- It is required of those to be confirmed that they have been baptized, are sufficiently instructed in the Christian Faith, are penitent for their sins, and are ready to affirm their confession of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord

Ordination

- What is Ordination?
- Ordination is the rite in which God gives authority and the grace of the Holy Spirit to those *being made* Bishops, priests, and deacons, through prayer and the laying on of hands by a Bishop.

Holy Matrimony

- What is Holy Matrimony?
- Holy Matrimony is Christian marriage, in which a woman and a man enter into a life-long union, make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows.

Reconciliation of a Penitent

- What is Reconciliation of a Penitent?
- Reconciliation is the rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest, and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution.

Unction of the Sick: Healing

Unction is the rite of anointing the sick with oil, or the laying on of hands, by which God's grace is given for the healing of spirit, mind and body.