

## TREASURES of OUR FAITH

by: Deacon Ryan Adams

Greetings brothers and sisters. As we go through this 'Year of Faith', each week we will take a journey together to deepen and rediscover our faith as Catholic Christians. We will take time to look at the rich traditions of our Church, we'll look at what certain things signify and their symbolism, take time to answer some frequently asked questions and look at why we do certain things as Catholics. This week we'll look at the question, What is a Sacrament?

**Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist** – these 3 sacraments are looked at as being sacraments of initiation, these are about being initiated into the Catholic Church, becoming personally responsible for your faith and expressing unity with the Church.

**Holy Orders and Marriage** – these 2 sacraments are looked at as Sacraments of Community, they involve uniting and ministering.

**Reconciliation (aka confession or penance) and Anointing of the sick**, these are the Sacraments of Mercy, they involve healing and strengthening.

Originally the word sacrament referred to the old Roman custom of making an oath of allegiance. A soldier made his 'sacrament' or oath to pledge his service to the empire. In scripture the word sacrament translates more closely to mystery, or God's plan. The Sacraments are not inventions, but are actually conclusions from what was found in the Church's tradition and scriptures. The Sacraments are foreshadowed and given content in the Old Testament themes, which are then brought to fulfillment in Jesus, which are then effected here and now in the present, in the Church. Every sacrament is foreshadowed by something in the Old Testament. We need to overcome the idea that we meet Christ in moments of isolation, we need to come to Christ in community more. The sacraments are living signs of an invisible grace; they are community celebrations of the mystery of salvation. Sacraments not only praise God for his love and care in past experiences; they also praise and adore God's presence, love and mercy here in the moment. Sacraments bring about the activity of God and us humans; it is in these moments that lives Grace. As we've been taught throughout our lives, the sacraments are truly outward signs of God's grace. They are signs that point us to the forgiveness and mercy of God. Sacraments bring us into fellowship with each other, they offer us healing and forgiveness and they join us to each other in love and service.