

Three Ways to Participate in the Life of the Church

I. Getting to Know Sacred Scripture

“Therefore, take these words of mine into your heart and soul. Bind them on your arm as a sign, and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. Teach them to your children, speaking of them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up.” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19)

We call Sacred Scripture the Word of God. What do we mean when we call Scripture God’s Word?

What are some common misconceptions about Scripture?

What are some of the greatest challenges to reading and studying the Sacred Scripture?

Many people have experienced God’s call through Scripture. Do you use biblical passages for prayer or study? Explain why or why not.

Do you have a favorite Scripture story or passage? What is it, and why do you like it?

If you were able to get a text from God today, what do you think God’s Word would be to you?

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II. Participating in the Sacraments of the Church

At every Sunday Eucharist, we proclaim “the mystery of faith” (*Roman Missal*): Christ’s death and Resurrection. In Baptism we celebrate the reality that Christ has died for us and offered us salvation once and for all. In Confirmation we celebrate Christ’s presence with us through the Holy Spirit (Christ is risen!), who continues saving us day by day. And in the Eucharist we celebrate the heavenly banquet by remembering God’s promise and anticipating eternal life in Heaven—“Until you come again” (*Roman Missal*). These three Sacraments of Christian Initiation are at the heart of our participation in the life of the Church.

What is a Sacrament?

What is meant when we say that the Sacrament of Baptism celebrates salvation through Christ once and for all?

How can the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Gift of the Holy Spirit provide us with strength and help in our faith journey?

In what sense is the Sacrament of the Eucharist a participation in eternal life?
Why have Christians throughout the ages continued to celebrate the Eucharist?

What graces do the Sacraments of Healing offer?

What graces do the Sacraments at the Service of Communion offer?

(The quotations in section II on this handout are from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation [ICEL] [Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011]. Copyright © 2011, USCCB, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. Used by permission of the ICEL. Texts contained in this work derived whole or in part from liturgical texts copyrighted by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy [ICEL] have been published here with the confirmation of the Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. No other texts in this work have been formally reviewed or approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)



III. Participating in the Life of the Church through Prayer

Begin this experience by offering the following prayer to God in silence: “God, come to my assistance. Lord, make haste to help me” (Liturgy of the Hours).

How is prayer a “door to Christ”? Why can only you open that door?

Name and describe several different forms of prayer.

Why are there different forms of prayer?

Why is prayer more about listening than talking?

For someone to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ, how necessary is prayer?

Do you believe that God is speaking in our time? Explain your response.

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