

# TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 19  
May 8, 2022

## Some thoughts on the Sacraments

*The* Sacraments -what they are, what they mean and how they work, - have been a point of contention among different Christian traditions since the Middle Ages. The principal argument divides Christians into two groups: those who believe that the Sacraments actually effect a change of some sort in us, and those who believe they are simply rites in which we remember or call to mind or celebrate certain events. I'll be looking at this more closely when I discuss the individual sacraments later on.

Traditional Anglican teaching places us squarely in the first group. Most of you will no doubt be familiar with the definition of a sacrament as it appears in our Catechism: "The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace given by Christ as a sure and certain means by which we receive that grace." In other words, the ritual sign, rather than merely symbolizing or commemorating a grace already received, is the means through which that grace is given and received. This is in keeping in our teaching about the Incarnation; that God worked our salvation through the physical reality we inhabit, in the person – the real, live, flesh-and-blood person – of Jesus Christ. In Jesus the spiritual and the physical are united, and that is the underlying source of the sacraments, which all involve physical signs.

Heavy stuff, but important!

Another source of disagreement is the number of Sacraments. Until the Reformation the number was universally 7: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Marriage, Ordination, and Unction. At the Reformation the Protestants reduced that number to two: Baptism and Eucharist. The other five were regarded as 'ordinances.' The rationale is that only the first two are directly instituted by Christ (tech. term: Dominical Sacraments), and are thus required of all Christians; the other five are not. In our Book of Common Prayer these are called 'Sacramental Rites' so their sacramental nature is recognized, but they don't quite have the status of the Dominical Sacraments.

In other news, this morning we will be saying goodbye to our retiring Senior Warden, Romeo dela Cruz, so all are invited to join us for the despedida, which begins right after this Eucharist. Romeo's service to this parish, especially through Covid, has been outstanding and we thank God that he was here to help steer us through these troubling times. He will be sorely missed.

**TO ALL PARISHIONERS, FRIENDS & COLUMBARIUM/**

**CHAPEL USERS:** This is to inform you that the exterior works has now started. The interior works will start by June 10. May we request that all flowers and adornments of the niches be removed before June 10th. Work will be carried out Monday to Friday and during this time, no access will be provided. Access will be provided on Saturday and Sunday only. Thank you.

**SAINTS:**

**Julian of Norwich. 8 May .** On this day in the year 1373, when Julian of Norwich was thirty years old and suffering from what was considered to be a terminal illness, she experienced a series of sixteen visions, which revealed aspects of the love of God. Following her recovery, she spent the next twenty years of her life pondering their meaning and recorded her conclusions in what became the first book written by a woman in English, *The Revelations of Divine Love*. At an unknown point in her life, she became an anchoress attached to the Church of St Julian in Norwich. She died around the year 1417.

**Matthias the Apostle. 14 May.** After the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot, the apostles brought their number back to twelve by choosing Matthias to replace him. He was chosen by lot from amongst the disciples. The author of the Acts of the Apostles sees apostleship differently from Paul's interpretation of the rôle and seems to reflect the understanding of the gospel of Luke. The number had to be restored so that they might "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel". It was conditional that they had to have been with Jesus during his earthly ministry and witnesses to the resurrection. The point of being chosen by lot, rather than by some democratic method, indicated the election or choosing by God, rather than by mortals.