

Sacraments of Initiation

The Hook: How can I be immersed into mystery of God’s love?

This Episode will help you:

1. Learn what the sacraments of initiation are all about
2. Understand how the sacraments of initiation graft us into Christ and bring us into the life of God
3. Understand how the sacraments of initiation are structured to help us grow in Christ, and in communion with others in Christ.

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Key Words

Baptism	Divinize	Reconciliation with God
Confirmation	Divine Life	Liturgy
Eucharist	Partakers of the Divine	Paschal Mystery
Sacrifice	Nature	Signs
Mass	Body of Christ	Symbols
Communion	Original Sin	
Trinity	Personal Sin	

I. PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

1.1. *What are the Sacraments of Initiation?*

Every sacrament is an encounter with the love of God poured forth for us in Jesus Christ.

The sacraments of initiation refer to the three sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—by which we are transposed into God’s inner life of love. Baptism grafts us on to Jesus Christ, makes us part of his very Body; Confirmation strengthens our relationship to him by giving us a fuller share in his Spirit; and in the Eucharist, we receive Jesus himself, in his gift of himself to us and to the Father.

1.2. *So, why are the sacraments necessary?*

The sacraments are like physical portals that Jesus set up so that he can extend the gift of his real flesh and real blood across time. St. Leo the Great (ca. 400-461 AD) tells us: “What was visible in our Savior has passed over into his mysteries.”¹ Without the sacraments, we have no way of encountering the real *gift* and *proof* of God’s love for us, since without them, God’s message of love just turns into some kind of post-card, sent from somewhere else and from sometime else. The sacraments mean that today, right now, I can encounter and receive the gift of God’s love just like the disciples did 2,000 years ago, because I’m encountering it right here, in front of me. God is giving himself *to me*, right here, in this water, in this bread and wine, in this ointment, and so forth.² These physical objects (e.g., water, bread, wine, oil) are little “portals” that Jesus set up so that he can speak to us and pour his whole life out to us through them. In the sacraments, people across time and space can always encounter his real love and the proof of his love, precisely because they are encountering it really poured out in front of them.

1.3. *How do sacraments work?*³

Jesus is the *original sacrament*. In Jesus, we encounter a message (the man Jesus, with his human words and actions), and *through that message*, we encounter the love of God poured out for us. During Jesus’ lifetime, he instituted several signs that would bear a message for us and through which he could continue to pour out his love to us. We will look at particular examples later in this episode, but just to offer a brief example so you can see what I’m saying, think about the Eucharist — bread and wine. Why bread? Well, as Augustine explains,⁴ bread is comprised of many grains, which have to be ground up, placed in fire, and then form a new whole together. So, the *message* in this ‘sign’ is about what it means to be a Christian, that is, we must be like grains that are ‘ground up in Christ’ and placed ‘in the fire of divine love,’ and then form a new whole together, that is the Church. But the reality that we encounter through this ‘sign’ is Christ himself, pouring himself out to us.

After Jesus’ Resurrection from the dead, his followers wanted to cling to him to stay, and he told them not to, because it is better for him to go to the right hand of the Father, so that he can send forth the Holy Spirit. And yet, although he ascended to the right hand of the Father, he said that he will be with them until the end of the world. *What does all this mean?* The best analogy here is to think of Jesus’ ascent to the right hand of the Father as a firework. He ascended into the sky, so that he can then be spread everywhere through the Holy Spirit. Since God gave his *whole body* for us on the Cross out of love, his resurrected body is transfigured by that love in such a way that he can become fully present in the sacraments in the Church. It’s in this way that he fulfills his work on the Cross: he offered himself up *for all* on the Cross, and now, through the sacraments, the love that he offers the world through the gift of his own flesh and blood, that is, his own life, is made present to all.

When a celebrant (that is, priest who is ‘celebrating’ the liturgy and/or the sacraments) administers a sacrament, if you listen carefully, you’ll realize that two things are always involved: (1) he invokes the Holy Spirit to bring about the sacrament. This takes us back to what Jesus said: it is *he* who sends forth the Holy Spirit, precisely because it is the Holy Spirit that makes God present, that effects God’s work in the world, that allows us to encounter Jesus Christ now and always. (2) Second, the priest is *never* able to bring about *any* of the sacraments by his own power. He does so “in persona Christi” (Latin for, “in the person of Christ”). Why? Because no man can make God’s love present in that way, only God can continue to give himself! That’s why we say that he is “standing in the place of Christ,” because it is *Christ* who continues to pour out

his love in that very sacrament, and it is Christ who is made present through the Holy Spirit. This is also the reason why, for example, an infant can receive the sacrament of baptism. Because the sacraments are about Jesus Christ truly giving himself, truly effecting God's love in your life, truly transporting you into the heart of the divine life.

PART II. BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, AND EUCHARIST

In light of all the above, let's turn to the sacraments of initiation themselves.

2. BAPTISM

At the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, before ascending to the right hand of the Father and sending forth his Spirit, he gave the disciples the great commission to make disciples of all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 18:19). What does baptize do?

2.1. "The Door of the Spiritual Life"

One of the earliest descriptions of baptism is as the *vitae spiritualis ianua* [pronounced: vee-tie spirit-too-aliss yan-oo-ah], which means: "door of the spiritual life." Baptism is the foundation of the spiritual life, it's the way "in." In the Gospel of John, Jesus says to Nicodemus that no one can get to heaven if he is not "born from above" through "Spirit and water," that is, baptism (cf. Jn 3). Baptism is the foundation for all the other sacraments because it is what gives us a *new life in Christ*.

2.2. Baptism "Grafts us onto Christ" and makes us part of his "Body"

To be a Christian means to be "grafted on to Christ." Other definitions such as 'believer,' follower of Jesus, etc., describe *aspects* of '*being-in-Christ*' which are insufficient by themselves. To be a Christian means '*to be in Christ*.' It means to share in his very *being*.

What does this mean? I want you to pretend that you are a plant, with roots. God alone exists of himself, but we exist from God because God sustains us in our very existence. God is our ground; he is the soil, as it were, that we sink our roots into, from which we live at each and every moment. — So, what happens in Baptism? Well, I want you to imagine that you, as a plant, were 'plucked' up from those roots, and that your roots were 'transplanted' into the very heart of God, into the very relationship of love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You see, in Baptism, we become 'inserted' into Christ, which means that our roots sink into the grave of the Lord who died for us, and we sprout up with him in his Resurrection, into the very heart of God. In the words of the Apostle Paul: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). By being baptized, my very *being* is literally taken into Christ's; my roots that sustain my existence, if I could see them with spiritual goggles, would be sunken into Jesus Christ, who gave his life for me; we are *inserted* into his death and his Resurrection.

So, where is a Christian? "*In Christ!*" The roots that sink into Christ nourish our plant to grow *in him* and *through him*, into eternal life.⁵ Christians therefore begin a *new life* in Jesus Christ, through baptism. The Bible refers to this as being part of the "body of Christ" (cf. 1 Cor 12:27 and many others), since now you are intimately related to everyone else who is likewise transplanted into him. Paul tells us: "Therefore if anyone is *in Christ*, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17).

2.3. Baptism Draws us into the Divine Life of Love and Divinizes Us

Now you can see why it's so important that someone is baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." From all eternity, the Father loves the Son, and the Son returns his love to the Father, and together, they breathe forth the Holy Spirit out of their mutual love. To be baptized is to be 'grafted onto Christ' and therefore to share in the love between the Father and the Son in the Spirit who makes that mutual love present to us. Since we are "in Christ" as a result of our baptism, when we look up to the heavens, we are no longer just looking up at "God," but at *Our Father*, since we are "*in his Son*." We become adopted sons and daughters of God, precisely because we are "in Christ."⁶ And when God the Father looks at us, we are not just his creation, but he sees us *in his Son*.⁷

2.4. Baptism washes away Original Sin and Personal Sin

As a derivation of this, we can say that baptism washes away original and personal sin and reconciles us with God.⁸ — As Fr. Robert Barron puts it, original sin is something like a deeply dysfunctional environment produced by millennia and eons of human dysfunction and bad behavior.^{9,10} We cannot solve our problem. Through God's grace and love, we are 'lifted out of' this situation, we are 'plucked up' from these roots, and grafted onto the divine life. That's why we say that baptism saves us and redeems us.¹¹

2.5. Baptism gives us a name in God

What is the name of your great-grandfather's great-grandfather? The names that we have in this world are swept away in the current of time. When we are baptized and grafted into the very life of God, we receive a name in God. In baptism, God tells us: "I have called you by name, you are mine" (Is 43:1). God gives me the gift of being a real me! I am *not* just a moment in the march of time, I am not just a drop in the river of history, I am a *person*. *God himself calls me by name* (John 10:3; Is 43:1), a name that no one can ever take from me, a name that lasts for eternity (CCC, 2158) and is sacred (CCC, 2159) — a name that is given by God in the intimacy of God's love (Rev 2:17; CCC 2159).

3. CONFIRMATION:

As 'newborns'—babies in Christ, through God's grace!—Christians must learn to grow in this new life. They must nourish this new life in him. They must dig their roots deeper into the soil of his Cross, so that they can sprout more boldly into his Resurrection.

3.1. The 'Strengthening' and 'Confirming' of the Spiritual Life

The sacrament of Confirmation is the *strengthening*, the *confirming* of spiritual life — specifically, that means the stirring up of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which equip someone to witness more boldly to the love of Jesus Christ and to bear that witness to others. In the Acts of the Apostles, written a few decades after the death of Jesus, we see Peter and John traveling about to *confirm* new Christians by imposing hands on those who previously 'had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,' so that their hearts might be filled with the Holy Spirit (See Acts 8:14-16).¹²

Why do we seek the full outpour of the Holy Spirit? As we mentioned above, the Holy Spirit is the mutual love between the Father and the Son. In this sacrament, hands are laid upon us, and we receive a greater outpour of the Holy Spirit, which is a greater share in God's own love, a greater share in the reality of the divine life. We are anointed with perfumed oil, called *chrism*, from which the name "Christ" comes. Jesus was called Christ, "the anointed one," because he was "anointed with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:38). The anointing with oil tells us that we, too, are being anointed with the Holy Spirit and therefore deepening our relationship with God. Our roots dig deeper "in Christ," and through the Holy Spirit, we drink up more from those roots so that Christ dwells more fully in us, and we dwell more fully in him, and so that we bear more fruit in the Church.¹³

3.2. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

So, how are we strengthened in the Christian life? We receive a fuller outpour of the Holy Spirit and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. These seven gifts are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of God.¹⁴ These gifts build us up in our life in God.

3.3. The Power of Evangelization

Although we received the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit in baptism, they were planted in us like seeds. Through confirmation, the fuller outpour of the Holy Spirit helps these gifts of the Holy Spirit to grow in the Christian so that he or she can be "true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed" (CCC, 1285).

4. THE EUCHARIST: THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Holy Eucharist is the sacrament in which Jesus Christ gives his Body and Blood—himself—for us in the form of bread and wine, so that we too might give ourselves to him in love and be united with him in Holy

Communion. In this way, we are joined with the one Body of Christ, the Church. The Eucharist completes the sacraments of initiation and brings them to fulfillment. Whereas Christ worked *through* the other sacraments, in the Eucharist you encounter Jesus Christ himself, truly and substantially present. For this reason, the Eucharist is “the *source* and the *summit* of the Christian life” (*Lumen Gentium*), since Christ, who is offered to us in the Eucharist, is the beginning and end of our faith. St. John Vianney (1789-1859 AD) said that “God would have given us something greater if he had had something greater than himself.”

The mystery of the Eucharist can be described in three main ways: (1) as the encounter with Jesus Christ truly, really, and wholly present, (2) as the sharing in Jesus’ sacrifice of love to the Father on behalf of us all, and (3) as a communion in his love, which was poured out for us.

4.1. As the encounter with Jesus Christ truly, really, and wholly present

Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist on the evening before his death, “on the night when he was betrayed” (1 Cor 11:23), when he gathered the apostles around him in the Upper Room in Jerusalem and celebrated the Last Supper with them. It was there that Christ took bread, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: “*Take this, all of you, and eat of it: this is my body which will be given up for you*” (cf. Mk 26:26; Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24). Then he took the cup of wine and said to them: “*Take this, all of you and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all, so that sins may be forgiven*” (cf. Mt. 14:24; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25).

During the Last Supper, Jesus made the bread and wine into little ‘portals’ into which he could pour out the full depths of his love, the very love that he poured out in his flesh and blood on the Cross. By instituting the Eucharist in anticipation of his self-sacrifice on the Cross, Jesus shows the depths of his love. His body and blood is not poured out just for those living there, around him, at that time. Nor do we miss out on sharing in the gift of his flesh and blood, only receiving it as a message or account of something that happened in the past. Rather, the very gift of himself, in which he offers up his own flesh and blood, is offered in the Eucharist to all, across the world and across time. It is only in the Eucharist that we can see the depths of God’s love. You see, if the Cross and Resurrection is not made fully present in the Eucharist, then God’s love is limited to the time and space in which Christ died 2,000 years ago, or God’s love is limited to a message about what God did 2,000 years ago. It is only in the Eucharist that I can encounter God’s love poured out in the Cross present *right here, right now*. For this reason, the Eucharist shows me the true extent of God’s love: it’s a love which goes “to the end” (Jn 13:1), a love which knows no measure, a love that extends everywhere, and across all time.

Now, there are many people who find it hard to believe that lying beneath what appears to be bread and wine, we encounter the Lord of the Universe. But we must never forget that this is the same God who was found in a little baby, in a manger, in the backwaters of Palestine. This is the same Almighty God who emptied himself to the point of being despised and rejected, and dying on the Cross for us. The Eucharist is the *fulfillment* of the Incarnation; it’s the depths to which God *poured himself out* on the Cross, in order to reach each and every one of us. The fact that people find this hard to accept is nothing new. We see this in a special case in John 6, where Jesus says: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51). The Jews, of course, were shocked to hear this. They had all sorts of laws against eating raw animal flesh, let alone eating the flesh of a man! And Jesus saw how hard his saying was on them. How in the world is this guy’s *flesh* the bread from heaven?! No, no, no, he *must* be talking symbolically. There’s no way... What do we hear Jesus say next? As the people started leaving, as he started losing disciples that very day because they couldn’t accept this teaching, do we see Jesus saying “Jk! Jk! C’mon, even the Son of God can joke! It’s just a symbol, don’t be so serious!” ... Actually, quite the opposite. You see, you can’t see this in the translation because you lose the nuance of the Greek text, but Jesus actually *intensifies* his claim. Jesus says to them: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat (*phagētē*) the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (Jn 6:53).

But wait, that’s not enough. He actually changes the word for “eating.” So far, the word used in John 6 is *phagein* in Greek, which is normal eating; but now, he uses a more vivid, unmistakably literal word, *trōgō*, which means “to gnaw,” and is typically used for the ways that animals eat. Jesus says: “he who *gnaws* (*trōgōn*) my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food

and my blood is real drink. He who *gnaws* (*trōgōn*) on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because the Father, so he who *gnaws* (*trōgōn*) me will live because of me” (Jn 6:54-55).

We encounter Jesus Christ himself in the form of bread and wine. The Lord offers himself to us, offers each and everyone one of us his very own flesh and blood, as the gift and proof of his love for us. It is for this reason that everyone at Mass gets on their knees during the prayer of consecration: *now, right before me, the Lord of the Universe, who loves me and who gave his life for me, is offering himself to me under the veil of bread and wine.*

4.2. As the sharing in Jesus’ sacrifice of love to the Father on behalf of all

We discussed how the sacrament of baptism grafts us “onto Christ,” and therefore, brings us into the heart of the divine life. The sacrament of confirmation deepens the gift of the Holy Spirit in us and strengthens us in our life in Christ. Now, in the Eucharist, we enter into Jesus’ relationship with the Father in a deeper and more intimate way. When Jesus offered himself on the Cross as a sacrifice of love to the Father, he offered all of those grafted onto him up to the Father with him. It’s precisely this act of giving himself to the Father that we enter into in the sacrifice of the Eucharist. Church service (the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass), therefore, is not primarily about what we receive, about us “getting an insightful message,” or having a priest who always makes things cool and relevant. Today, we oftentimes see other Christian communities—such as televangelists, evangelical movements, nondenominational movements—which understand Church as primarily about having pastors who effectively communicate key teachings and lessons to their congregations so that, having received that message, they can live a better life. As important as those things may be, Catholic service—the Sacrifice of the Mass—is about entering into the Son’s sacrifice of love to the Father, and it is *in this supreme act of loving sacrifice* that we find the meaning of true worship. True worship is offering to God a love that can only come from him; it is entering into the very love that the eternal Son gives to his eternal Father. Catholics should listen carefully to the Mass, listen to the prayers, the words, everything. Is the Mass oriented towards the congregation? — No. The congregation, together with the celebrant, *are grafted into the place of Christ*, and the whole Eucharistic liturgy of the Mass is directed to the Father.¹⁵ Mass is a Trinitarian encounter that transposes us into the eternal heart of the Triune God.

4.3. As a communion in his love, which was poured out for us.

The *communion* in Christ’s body and blood is the ultimate mystery of the Eucharist. This has three aspects: (1) When we eat his flesh and drink his blood, we partake of *communion* which gives us *intimate union* with Jesus Christ. This *intimate union* refreshes our spirits and renews our hearts, and it builds up love in us precisely because we receive Jesus’ self-gift of love and we offer ourselves as a gift in return. This exchange of his body and ours, of his love poured out and ours returned to him, is an intimacy that fulfills and deepens our deepest longings and desires. (2) Each of us has been grafted onto Christ through baptism. In receiving the Eucharist, we receive Christ himself *and we receive who we are in him!* We grow into who we are by receiving him.¹⁶ Not only did God give you yourself in creating you, but he gave you yourself in your new creation in Christ. (3) By receiving Christ and ourselves in him, we are joining in *communion* with all others who are also in him. No one is a Christian alone. The Church *is* this communion, and this communion spans heaven and earth, precisely because this is a communion forged by the love of Jesus Christ, which has no measure, no limit. When I receive the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, I receive in that very gift all who are *in Christ, that is*, his whole Body; and all who are in Christ share in the life of the Trinity through him.

Thus, the Eucharist makes us simultaneously grow in communion with our brothers and sisters in Christ, deepen who are in Jesus Christ, and increase our share in God’s own heart.

[HERE ENDS THE OUTLINE]

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ St. Leo the Great, *Sermo*. 74,2:PL 54,398.

² Jesus is said to be substantially present in the Eucharist alone, whereas he is said to effect grace in all the other sacraments. Thus, I am maintaining the balance between these two by saying: offers himself (i.e., Eucharistic presence) and the gift of his love (i.e., grace). The point is that these two aspects interpenetrate so that we become the body of Christ, and therefore, we encounter not only Christ (as head) in the Eucharist but also the communion of his body, leading to the beautiful phrase by Augustine referring to the Eucharist: *Receive what you are!*

³ Note to FTP staff: a more technical and precise definition of sacraments would be: “*Sacraments are holy, visible signs instituted by Christ, in which Christians can experience the healing, forgiving, nourishing, strengthening presence of God that enables them to love in turn; this is possible because God’s grace works in the sacraments.*”

⁴ Augustine summarizes and synthesizes all these points beautifully in a sermon that he gave to a group of newly baptized Christians, sometime between 405 and 411 AD:

“If, then, you wish to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle as he says to the faithful ‘You are the body of Christ and His members’ (1 Corinthians 12:27). If, therefore you are the body of Christ and His members, *your mystery has been placed on the Lord’s table, you receive your mystery*. You reply ‘Amen’ to that which you are, and by replying you consent. ...

But why in bread? ... ‘We, though many, are one bread, one body’ (1 Corinthians 10:7). Understand and rejoice. Unity! Truth! Piety! Love! ‘One bread.’ What is this one bread? ‘Many ... on body.’ Remember that bread is not made from one grain, but from many. When you were exorcised you were, after a fashion, milled. When you were baptized you were moistened. When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit you were baked. *Be what you see, and receive what you are.* ...

Many grapes hang in the cluster, but the liquid of the grapes is mixed in unity. So also did Christ the Lord portray us. He willed that we belong to Him. *He consecrated the mystery of our peace and unity upon His table.*” (Sermon 272, *Works of St Augustine III/7*, pp. 300-301 [slightly modified]).

⁵ In baptism, your plant, which was sustained by the pulse of life and death, has been transplanted into the Lord himself, so that now you live in him. Christ has died *my* death and *your* death, and thus, to live is to “live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20). Paul tells us: “For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God” (Col 3:3). Jesus *enfolds us* and *carries us* in himself.

⁶ St. Maximus the Confessor reminds us that calling God ‘Father’ is a grace, and not simply a human right: “through the prayer which grants us the right to address God as ‘Father,’ we learn of our very genuine adoption through the grace of the Holy Spirit” (Maximus the Confessor. *The Church, the Liturgy, and the Soul of Man: The Mystagogia of St Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Dom Julian Stead, OSB [Still River, MA: St. Bede’s, 1982], p. 103).

⁷ The Scriptures tell us: “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” The Holy Spirit, who is the mutual love between the Father and the Son, is poured into our hearts as God’s love (Rom. 5:5). This is why baptism is the *foundation* of the Christian life. You see, what’s basic in Christianity is not our ‘quest for God’ (though, there’s some of that too), but God’s search for us: God has found us and has now grafted us onto Christ so we can share in his own divine life and become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

⁸ Now, today, the word sin has a very different meaning than how it’s used here. We either use it in the sense of “sin city,” to mean something seductive, exotic, or sexy; or we use it to refer negatively to an outdated view that’s something like SNL’s Debbie Downer. *Forget about all that*. Actually, I think that original sin would help us make *the most sense* of the world. Original sin basically refers to two things: first, that God created the world out of love and that his purpose for us is to love him and one another. Second, it says that the world, as it is, has rejected God’s purposes for it, and therefore, rejected God himself. Think about it. When we see something like World War 2, etc., there must be something either seriously wrong with the world, or seriously wrong with us. How else can we explain it? — This way of looking at original sin is *brilliantly* portrayed by T. S. Eliot in *The Cocktail Party*. In the story, Cecila Coplestone says to Dr Reilly:

“... I should really like to think there’s something wrong with me -
Because, if there isn’t, there’s something wrong

Or at least, very different from what it seemed to be,
With the world itself - and that's so much more frightening!
That would be terrible. So I'd rather believe
There is something wrong with me, that could be put right."

She tries to name the disorder, and after a series of failed attempts, she finally arrives at the explanation of her dilemma:

"It sounds ridiculous—but the only word for it
That I can find, is a sense of sin."

⁹ As an historical note: in the Augustine vs Pelagius controversy, Pelagius believed that sin was just a matter of bad environmental influence, whereas Augustine argued that it's actually passed on from one generation to another. Augustine was right, and the Church affirmed such at the Council of Orange (529 AD). Today, we understand how environment and genetics cannot be separated; how these are permeating realities, and that human self-consciousness is formed in a community, and therefore, inherits in some way the collectivity of the world's disfiguration of love. So, using environmental examples are not in conflict with the Council of Orange, but rather, expand the understanding of precisely how original sin is passed on in light of what we now know about human self-consciousness.

¹⁰ Fr. Robert Barron offers a series of awesome analogies for how to think about original sin: Think of all the cruelty and hatred and violence and injustice that's happened over all of the millennia producing, as it were, poisonous air that we didn't choose to breathe in but which is literally in our bones, our blood, from the time we were born. Think of a baby that is born having inherited his mother's addiction to cocaine. Well, we're not going to blame the baby for that, but we'd be idiots to deny that the baby is really addicted, really born with a problem. The point of all these ways of thinking about it is that something has to come radically from outside to change, to lift us out, of this situation. That's a good analogy for what baptism does, he says. And he also quotes Chesterton; though, the following is a slightly corrected version of the quote: Chesterton once put it like this: "Not only are we all in the same boat, but we are all seasick" (G. K. Chesterton. *What's Wrong with the World*. Cassell, 1912), p. 115.

¹¹ St. Thomas Aquinas says: "Baptism operates by the power of Christ's passion, which is the universal remedy of all sins" (ST III, q. 69, a. 1, ad 2); "by Baptism man is incorporated into the very death of Christ," and "Christ's death satisfied sufficiently for sins" (ST III, q. 68, a. 5).

¹² You can see the sacrament of confirmation as a dialogue between the Father and our hearts. The person seeking confirmation says: "Yes, Father, I believe in you; give me your Holy Spirit, so that I might belong entirely to you and never be separated from you and may witness to you throughout my whole life, body and soul, in my words and deeds, on good days and bad." And so, we can see this sacrament as God responding to the person seeking confirmation by saying: "Yes, I believe in you, too, my child—and I will give you my Spirit, my very self, poured into your heart (Rom. 5:5). I will give myself entirely to you. I will never separate myself from you, in this life or the next. I will be in your body and your soul, in your words and deeds. You are the temple for my dwelling; may the love that I pour into you overflow into the world. Look within you, I am deeper in you than you are in yourself, and I will be the spring of living water within you (cf. Jn 4:7-14 and Jn 7:37-39; also 1 Cor 12:13). [This dialogue is adapted from the YOUCAT, #205.]

¹³ Cf. "For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people'" (2 Cor 6:16).

¹⁴ **Optional: Wisdom** is a spiritual gift that enables us to know the purpose and plan of God; to see things from the perspective of God's love and truth (See Thomas, ST I/I.1.6; I/II.69.3; II/II.8.6; II/II.45.1–5).

Understanding is the penetrating insight into the very heart of things, especially those higher things that relate to our relationship with God; it is the ability to "see" God with the eye of the mind and heart (See Thomas, ST I/I.12.5; I/II.69.2; II/II.8.1–3). **Counsel** allows us to discern where God is calling us to and how to act justly and out of the love in different situations (See Thomas, ST II/II.52.1.). **Fortitude** refers to the firmness of conviction, of perseverance in love, to do good and overcome obstacles (See Thomas, ST I/II.61.3; II/II.123.2; II/II.139.1).

Knowledge is the gift from God to judge correctly about matters of faith and morals, so as to never deviate from God's love and the truth of God's love (See Thomas, ST II/II.9.3). **Piety** is revering God with filial affection, paying worship and duty to God (See Thomas, ST I/II.68.4; II/II.121.1.). We oftentimes think of 'piety' as the virtue of old ladies; but *pietas*, in Latin, was always a very masculine virtue. A man was *pious* when he lived by justice, rendering to God what is properly due to God because of who God is. It's a very bold, masculine quality, even if it can be beautifully expressed in feminine forms. And, lastly, **fear of God** is the beautiful fear of losing the one whom we love. It's described by the Church Fathers as the fear that a wife has of losing her beloved spouse; thus, it's a fear that spring from a devout love and affection (See Thomas, ST I/II.67.4; II/II.19.9.).

¹⁵ Hans Urs von Balthasar. *Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, vol. 1: Seeing the Form*. Trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), p. 575. Also, this same point is made in John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 13, as well as John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 20.

¹⁶ St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622 AD) tells us: “In the Holy Eucharist, we become one with God like food with the body.” — Augustine (354-430 AD) tells us: “It was as though I heard a voice from on high: I am the food of the strong; eat then of me and grow. But you will not transform me into yourself life food for the body, but rather you will be transformed into me.” — Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD) says that “the actual effect of the Eucharist is the transformation of man into God.”