

Faith Loops

Faith Loops are PowerPoint presentations with images and information that will help us grow in the understanding of our Catholic faith. They will be projected on the screens during the twenty minutes prior to each weekend mass.

During that time, the slides will loop, or repeat, themselves. Thus, the name: Faith Loops.



Test Your Knowledge:

The New Testament

The gospel that opens with the genealogy of Jesus is:

- a. Matthew
- b. Mark
- c. Luke
- d. John



Test Your Knowledge:

The New Testament

The gospel that opens with the genealogy of Jesus, and is often read at Masses on Christmas Eve, is:

a. Matthew

Matthew's account begins with the declaration, "This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). This introduction establishes Jesus' legal right to the throne of David and His connection to the Abrahamic covenant. Matthew traces Jesus' lineage through Joseph, His legal father, emphasizing Jesus' royal descent.

Word of the Week: **Covenant**

The word *covenant* derives from an Old French word that means ‘agreement’ and, before that, a Latin word, *covenir*, meaning to ‘come together’.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines covenant as “a formal, solemn, and binding agreement; a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties.”



It refers to a specific type of relationship. Marriage, for example, is a covenant relationship.

Word of the Week: **Covenant**

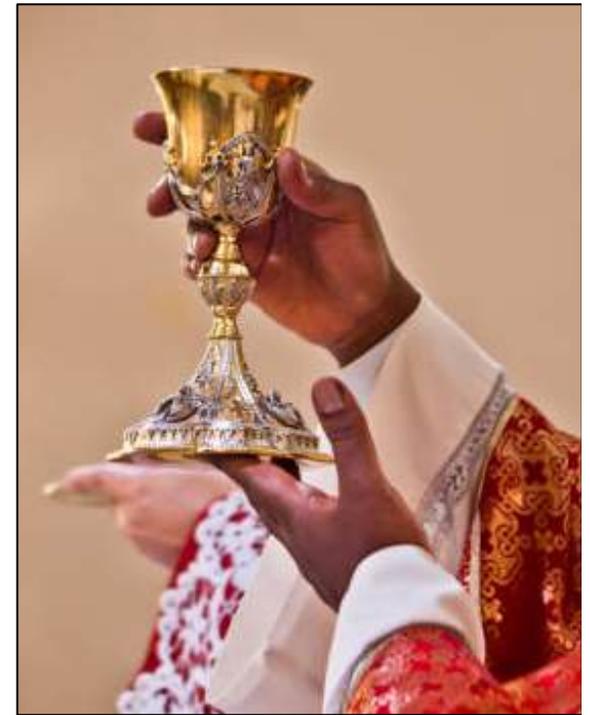
In ancient times, covenants brought others into a kinship relationship. Kinship was a blood relationship, characterized by mutual obligations toward each other. There was a strong and intimate bond that held them together.

In the Old Testament, there are several covenants between God and God's people. The first was with **Noah**. The next was the **Abrahamic covenant**, in which God promised land, prosperity, and blessings to Abraham and his descendants. Later, the covenant between God and His people was renewed with **Moses on Mount Sinai**. Finally, God established a covenant relationship with **King David**.

Word of the Week:

Covenant

Jesus is the New and Everlasting Covenant. The covenant relationship, characterized by love and fidelity, was fully realized in the death and resurrection of Christ, who loved us faithfully until death.



We acknowledge this at Mass in the Eucharistic Prayer, when the priest holds the chalice and recites: “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. Do this in memory of me.”

What Do You Know About Sacraments?

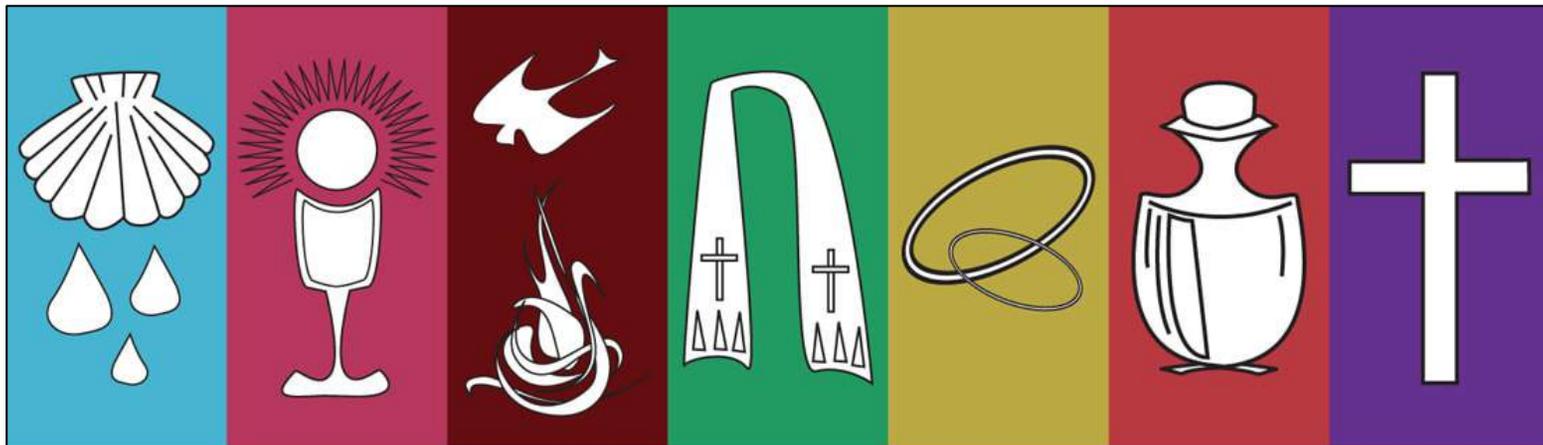
This Sacrament is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation and is often associated with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

a) Matrimony

b) Holy Orders

c) Confirmation

d) Reconciliation



What Do You Know About Sacraments?

c) Confirmation

“Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it ... gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds” (CCC, n. 1316).

Learning About Liturgy

Why does the priest place his hands over the chalice and make the sign of the cross during the Eucharistic Prayer?

The priest makes the sign of the cross because he is calling on the Holy Spirit as he prays to the Father to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. All three members of the Trinity are involved during the consecration.



Did You Know ...?

February 2 is the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. This day, which comes forty days after Christmas, is also known as **Candlemas**. It is a turning point for us in that we look back to Christmas and look forward to Lent and Easter.

When Jesus was presented in the temple, Simeon called him “a light to the nations and the glory of Israel.” So Christians celebrate Candlemas as a festival of light, and it is customary to have your candles blessed by your priest on this day.



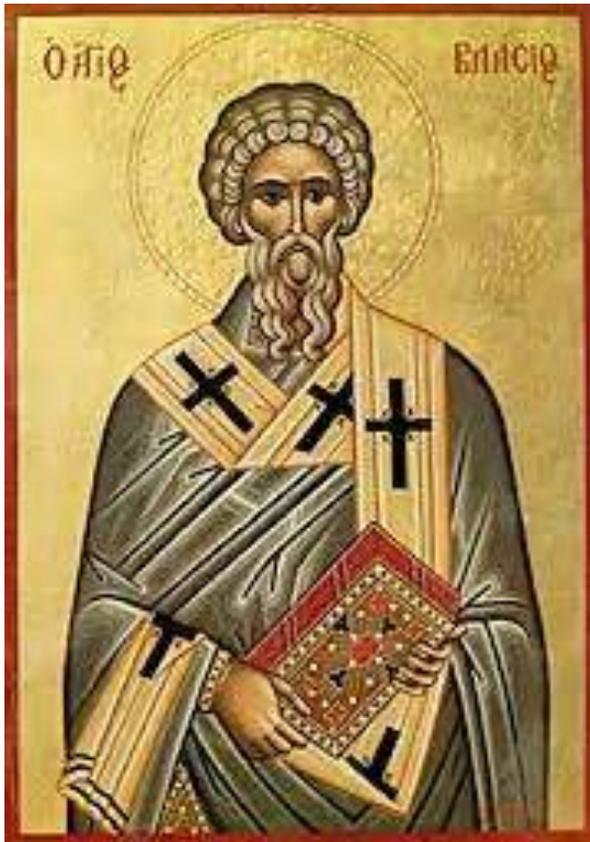
Blessing for Candles

God of power, who enlightens the world and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin, as we remember the virgin Mother of your Son, let the light of these candles illuminate our hearts and minds, that they may reflect always the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever.
Amen.



Saint of the Week: **St. Blaise**

St. Blaise lived in Armenia in the 4th century. He was a doctor, who cared a lot for his patients. As a young man, he often thought about the sufferings of others.



Although he enjoyed being a doctor, he realized that, in order to be ‘well’, people needed spiritual joy in their lives. He became a priest to teach others about God’s love. He later became a bishop. Blaise worked to make his people happy and holy, preaching to and praying for them.

Saint of the Week: **St. Blaise**

When the governor of that time began to persecute Christians, Blaise was captured and sent to prison. On the way to prison, a crowd gathered to see their beloved bishop one more time. A woman brought her young son to Blaise. The child was choking to death on a fishbone. Blaise whispered a prayer and blessed the boy. The child's life was miraculously saved. St. Blaise was beheaded in 316 A.D.



Saint of the Week: **St. Blaise**

Today, St. Blaise is called upon by all who have throat diseases. We still have the “blessing of the throats” on the feast of St. Blaise, which is February 3. The priest uses two crossed candles, as in the photo, and prays that we may be protected from sicknesses of the throat.



From the Suggestion Box ...

Why are girls not able to be priests?



Jesus chose twelve men – and not women – to be His apostles. The apostles maintained this tradition, and for the last 1700 years, it has been the Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church to ordain only baptized men. Because the priesthood was instituted by Christ – and he chose only men for this ministry – the Magisterium of the Church believes that it is not a practice that humans should change. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible.

From the Suggestion Box ...



There are two types of priesthood. While only men are called to the **ministerial priesthood**, the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that “by Baptism, (the baptized) share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission” (CCC, 1268). By virtue of our Baptism, each of us is called to be *priest*, prophet, and king. We refer to this as the **baptismal or common priesthood**.

The priest, acting in the person of Christ, offers the sacrifice at Mass. We too offer our day-to-day lives to the mission of Jesus and, in that way, share in the one priesthood of Christ.

You Were Wondering ...

What are stigmata?

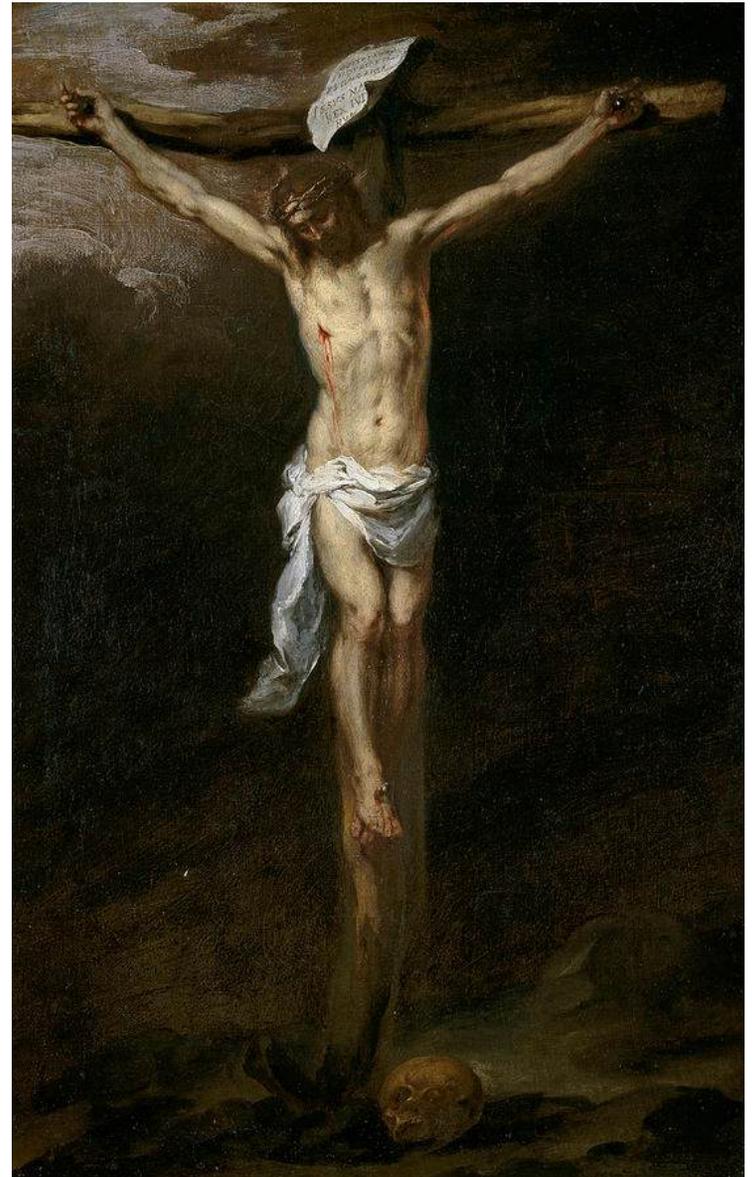


The word, *stigmata*, comes from the Latin word *stigma*, which refers to the brand on a criminal or a slave. Stigmata are the wounds of Christ appearing mysteriously on holy people, such as Saint Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), the first known stigmatic, Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), and, more recently, Saint Padre Pio (1887-1968).

You Were Wondering ... **About Stigmata**

Corresponding with the wounds that Christ suffered during his passion and crucifixion, the stigmata may appear on the hands or feet, or, in some cases, imitate the mark of the spear or the wounds caused by the crown of thorns.

Christ Crucified by
17th century Spanish painter,
Bartolomé Esteban Murillo



You Were Wondering ... **About Stigmata**

The stigmata unite the individual with the suffering of Christ on the cross.

In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul made reference to what may be stigmata: “From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body” (Gal. 6: 17).



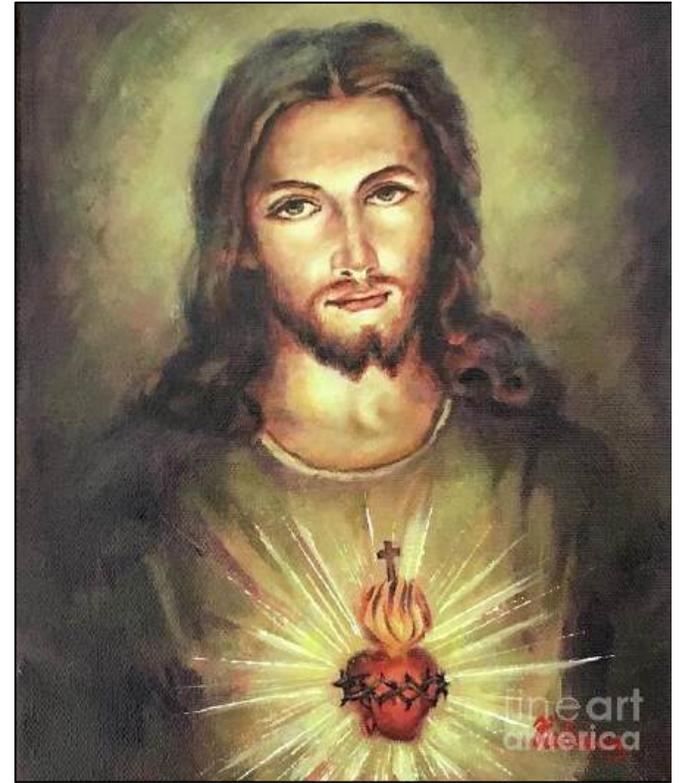
Photo: Stigmata on
St. Padre Pio

From the Suggestion Box

Why does Jesus love us?

What a great question! In order to answer it, we must know who God is. God is love: pure, perfect love. Love, by its very nature, wants to be shared with others. Quite simply, Jesus can't help but love us. Nothing we do can change how much God loves us. God's love is unconditional.

We just can't imagine how much God loves us. It is higher than the highest mountain and deeper than the deepest sea.



From the Suggestion Box

Why does Jesus love us?

Jesus – God – is the Creator of heaven and earth, and He loves everything He made. He created each one of us out of love and for love. The bible is the story of God’s love for us.

Jesus gave us two commandments. He said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). The love we share with others is God’s abundant love just brimming over from us.



2025 is a Jubilee Year!



During Jubilee Years, **Holy Doors** on major Catholic churches around the world are opened. The opening of the Holy Door symbolizes the passage that every Christian must make from sin to grace.

Pope Francis explains, “The Holy Door represents the passage to salvation — the path to a new and eternal life, which was opened to humanity by Jesus.”

Tradition holds that crossing the Holy Door during a holy year grants a **plenary indulgence**, meaning “the remission of temporal punishment for sins already forgiven” (CCC 1471). The practice of the Holy Door dates back to the Middle Ages, and it is an important tradition of the Roman Catholic Church.

2025: A Jubilee Year!



In this photo Pope Francis opens the Holy Doors at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome on December 24, 2024. It will remain open until the Feast of Epiphany on January 6, 2026. It was last opened in 2015, for the Holy Year of Mercy.

On December 29, 2024 Archbishop Richard Smith opened the Holy Door at St. Joseph's Basilica. The faithful are encouraged to visit and pass through the Holy Door during this Jubilee Year.

Prayer Before Mass

Dear God, help me to be open to all that you want to give me at Mass today.

My heart is open. I come in hope.

I come empty and unsure and troubled.

I come in need to be loved by you,
united with this faith community,
strengthened by your word,
and nourished by the Bread of Life.

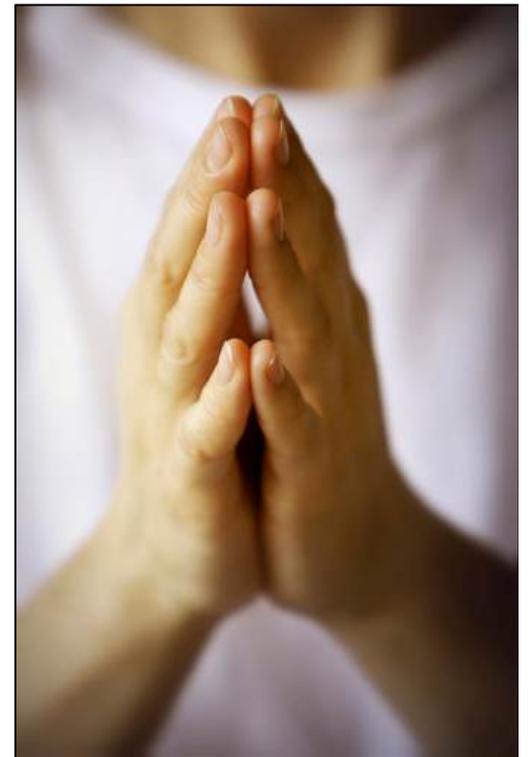
Cleanse me. Refresh me.

Strengthen me for the journey ahead.

Lead me to heaven.

Thank you, God, for this time together.

Thank you, God, for everything. Amen.



Questions???

Do you have a question about the Catholic faith or about the celebration of the Mass? If so, write it on a piece of paper and drop it into the marked shoebox on the table at the back of the church. We will try to answer it in a Faith Loop at a later date.

Thank you.

