

Four Theological Mistakes of Roman Catholicism Related to the Sacraments

The word sacrament is central to the definition of Roman Catholicism. The Church is considered as a sacrament. There are seven Roman Catholic sacraments dispensing God's grace. Moreover, there is a "sacramental economy" that undergirds the Christian life. The sacraments also define the structure of the Roman Church in that only those who have received the sacrament of order can celebrate them. The workshop will highlight four mistakes related to the Roman Catholic understanding and practice of the sacraments.

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I. What is a Sacrament According to the Roman Catholic Church?

II. First Mistake:

Anathematizing all those who don't believe there are seven sacraments: "If any one shall say, that the sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ, our Lord; or, that they are more, or less than seven, to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony; or even that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament;. let him be anathema". (Council of Trent)

III. Second mistake:

Breaking the "hapax" (once and for all) of the cross with the "mallon" (ever more) of the Eucharist: "Through the Eucharist Sacrifice the work of redemption is exercised" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 2)

IV. Third mistake:

The church as “sacrament”: Sign and instrument of unity between God and mankind (*Lumen Gentium* 2) and therefore its rituals using physical objects are considered to be channels of grace.

V. Fourth Mistake:

Sacramentalizing reality. Between sacraments, sacramentals, and sacramental reality: everything is sacrament, nothing is sacrament.

Suggested Readings:

Leonardo DE CHIRICO, “The Cross and the Eucharist: the Doctrine of the Atonement According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church”, *European Journal of Theology* VIII (1999/1) 49-59.

Raymond MOLONEY SJ, *The Eucharist* (London: Geoffrey Chapman 1995)

Gerald L. BRAY, *Sacraments & Ministry in Ecumenical Perspective* (Oxford: Latimer Studies n. 18, 1984).

Hans BOERSMA, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology. A Return to Mystery*, Oxford, OUP 2009.