

The purpose of this folder is to introduce the man to the fact that Christ is still living among us and makes His presence and grace visible when He touches our lives through the visible means of the seven sacraments.

Pointers for Folder 10

The focus of Finding the Way in Jail and of Walking the Talk must be on Jesus the Christ who died, rose from the dead and is now present among us in various forms. He is present in the Scriptures and most men will accept this. He is present in the Community and in the person of his disciples who practice what they preach. Most men will admit that this is true in some way. But a good many will have difficulty understanding and accepting the fact that Christ is present and acting in and through the Sacraments. Their idea of what a sacrament is will be fuzzy at best.

It would be a good idea if you got some idea of what they think about the purpose of at least Baptism, Penance, Marriage and Eucharist. They may see them merely as occasions for a party at pivotal times in a person's life or as a magical ceremony of some kind. Gently lead into the idea that they are the visible means Christ uses to draw people closer to God and the Community at these pivotal times.

It is impossible in the short time you have with the man to give a thorough description and explanation of each of the sacraments or even of one of them. Stress three points:

- 1) The sacraments are the actions of Christ. He is the minister. The priest or deacon is merely his visible agent.
- 2) Human beings need visible tangible signs and words to know that Christ is present and sharing his life with us. Catholics do believe in a one on one personal spiritual contact with God, but they also believe strongly in a visible and communal contact through the sacraments of the Church.
- 3) The sacraments are not magical. Faith in the presence and action of Christ as well as trust in the Church acting as his visible agent is absolutely essential. There may be the old objections about sinning, going to confession and keeping on with the same old ways. In a very real sense each sacrament not only brings the life of God into us, but it also is a visible commitment on our part to walk the talk and live in a new way.

The section on the sacraments in the Catechism of the Catholic Church is very long. (cf 1113-1134, 1210-1666) The "In Brief" statements at the end of the various sections may be helpful in providing background for the facilitator.