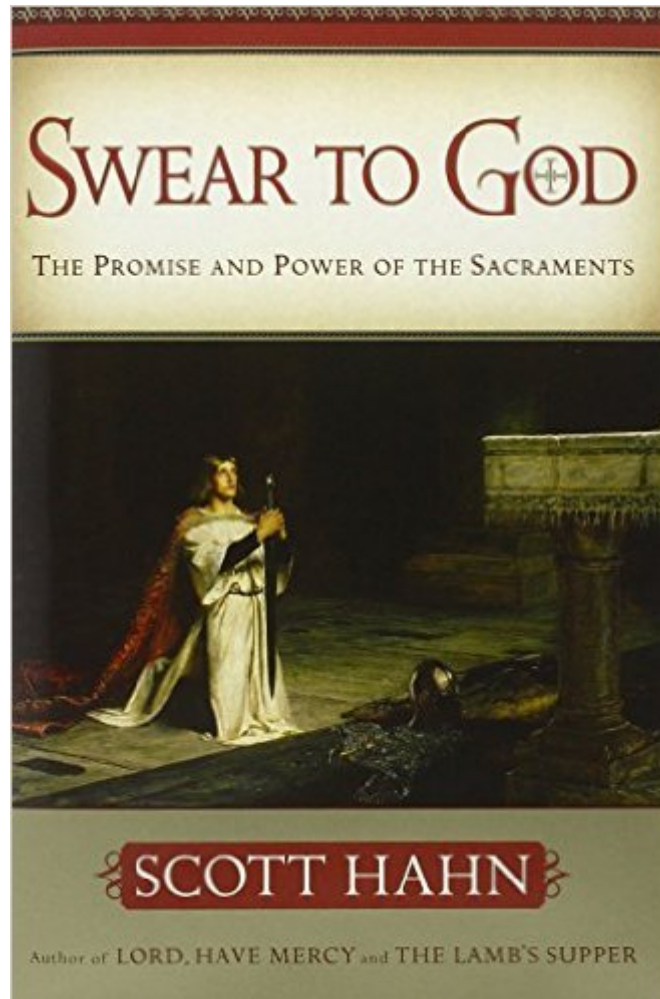


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Swear To God: The Promise And Power Of The Sacraments



Synopsis

The most solemn, majestic, and beautiful gifts that Jesus Christ gave to the world are His sacraments. He endowed them with unprecedented and unparalleled powerâpower to change lives, save souls, and share Godâs very life. The sacraments are the ordinary means by which God directs the course of each human life and all of world history. The Church celebrates seven sacraments: baptism, Eucharist, confirmation, matrimony, holy orders, confession, and anointing of the sick. Each was established by Jesus for the sake of salvation. When Jesus spoke of the sacraments, He made clear that they were essential: Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (Jn 3:5) . . . unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you (Jn 6: 53). In *Swear to God*, Dr. Scott Hahn explores the richness of Christâs sacramentsâtheir doctrine, history, symbols, and rituals. Drawing upon the Bible and the Churchâs tradition, he shows how Godâs covenantsâwith Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Davidâbecame the driving forces in history. When Jesus came to fulfill all these covenants, He established a new covenant, with greater power than ever before. Christians are Godâs children now. Joined to Christ by baptism, we can already share in the eternal life of the Trinity, a life we hope to know fully in heaven. But heaven is with us, even now, in the sacraments.

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Customer Reviews

As a former evangelical Protestant, I can readily identify with Scott Hahn's admission that prior to becoming Catholic, he had little use for sacraments and ritual. As he writes, "I saw rituals as

mechanical procedures people used to manipulate God." The problem with that perspective, Hahn explains, is that everyone relies on ritual, even if they're not aware of it. "I came to recognize," he continues, " that those who try to do away with the Church's sacraments inevitably end up replacing them with rituals of their own making." "Swear to God" is specifically concerned with explaining the covenantal nature and meaning of the seven sacraments. The essence of this accessible and often enlightening excursion into sacramental theology is captured in a quote from St. Augustine, referenced by Hahn: "There can be no religious society, whether the religion be true or false, without some sacrament or visible symbol to serve as a bond of union. The importance of the sacraments cannot be overstated, and only scoffers will treat them lightly." Drawing from a mixture of Scripture, well-selected quotes from Church Fathers and the Catechism, historical references and personal anecdotes, Hahn reveals the covenantal, familial and juridical dimensions of the sacraments. For those not familiar with the concept of the covenant, Hahn provides ample explanations in both the main text and in the endnotes. (Although written for a popular audience, it's got more than 30 pages of detailed citations and references.) Hahn's interest is in the reality of the sacrament as a sacred oath, and the key role it plays in God's plan of salvation, the work of Christ, and the mission of the Church.

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