

1. The sacraments of the church, like any other representative form of Christian witness, do not constitute the church, but are constituted by it. This, of course, is precisely why they are rightly said to be representative rather than constitutive.

2. But the church itself, as "the primary sacrament" is analogously representative of Jesus Christ, not constitutive of him. The church in no way constitutes him, but is in every way constituted by him and, for this reason, is likewise representative, not constitutive.

3. Even Jesus Christ himself, however, is "the primal sacrament," which precisely as sacrament, is representative, not constitutive, of the saving grace of God. Jesus Christ re-presents God's saving grace, but he in no way constitutes it. On the contrary, he is in every way constituted by it, even while being himself constitutive not only of the church but also of the sacraments and all other representative means of salvation.

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