

The Sacraments of the Law and the Law of the Sacraments

‘Sacramentality’ can serve as a category that helps to understand the performative power of religious and legal rituals. Through the analysis of ‘sacraments’, we can observe how law uses sacramentality to change reality through performative action, and how religion uses law to organise religious rituals, including sacraments. The study of sacramental action thus shows how law and religion intertwine to produce legal, spiritual, and other social effects. In this volume, Judith Hahn explores this interplay by interpreting the Catholic sacraments as examples of sacro-legal symbols that draw on the sacramental functioning of the law to provide both spiritual and legal goods to church members. By focusing on sacro-legal symbols from the perspective of sacramental theology, legal studies, ritual theory, symbol theory, and speech act theory, Hahn’s study reveals how law and religion work hand in hand to shape our social reality.

Judith Hahn is Professor of Canon Law in the Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Bonn. A theologian and canonist, she is the author of *Church Law in Modernity* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), *Foundations of a Sociology of Canon Law* (Springer, 2022), and *The Language of Canon Law* (Oxford University Press, 2023).

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JUDITH HAHN
University of Bonn



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 Judith Hahn
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 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
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The cover image shows a plate by an unknown Italian artist depicting Gaius Popilius
 Laenas before the King of Syria, dated circa 1545.

The reproduction of this image was kindly granted by the Art Gallery of
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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page vii</i>
Introduction	I
1 Sacraments in Law and Religion	14
1.1 Catholicism and Sacramentality	14
1.2 Symbols and Sacraments	30
1.3 Terminological Clarifications	51
1.4 Summary	72
2 The Ritual Frame of Sacraments	73
2.1 Understanding Ritual	73
2.2 Indexical and Canonical Rituals	91
2.3 Functioning and Effectiveness	103
2.4 The Language of Ritual	118
2.5 Summary	130
3 Sacramental Change in Status	132
3.1 Taxonomic Ambiguousness	132
3.2 Spiritual and Legal Change	136
3.3 Creating Intermediary States	152
3.4 Unmaking Personhood	158
3.5 Summary	161
4 Sacraments as Speech Acts	163
4.1 Understanding Speech Acts	163
4.2 Speech Acts of the Law	188
4.3 Catholic Sacramental Speech	205
4.4 Summary	256
Conclusion	260
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>271</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>287</i>

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¹ See James Dallen, 'The Reconciling Community: The Rite of Penance, Past and Present', in Hahn, Judith/Werner, Gunda, eds., *Mercy and Justice: A Challenge for Contemporary Theology* (Brill's Studies in Catholic Theology 9), Leiden, Brill, 2020, 27–44.

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ix

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