

# Glossary

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## UNIT ONE

**Cardinal Virtues:** Virtues acquired by human effort. They are the key moral virtues which all other moral virtues are grouped around. They are the fruit and seed of morally good acts and help prepare the powers of human beings for communion with God's love. They are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

**Creation:** Everything that God made, the heavens and the earth, all things visible and invisible. God created all things out of nothing. Everything that God makes is good. Therefore, all of creation is fundamentally good.

**Ex nihilo:** Latin for "out of nothing." This is the doctrine of creation, that God created all things out of nothing with only His Word. This fact teaches us that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and goes beyond His creation.

**Holiness:** Becoming more like God and sharing in His goodness. To be holy is to be set apart by God. We do not make ourselves holy; rather, holiness comes from God's initiative. We are holy because God is holy and he calls us to Himself. We become more holy by responding to His love by the way we live, especially by the love we show our neighbor, the poor, the needy, and even our enemies. Also called "sanctity."

**Intellect:** One of the faculties of the human soul. It is a person's ability to know and understand.

**King:** One of the original roles God gave to Adam in the Garden of Eden. A king has dominion, or rules over, his kingdom and its subjects. God gave Adam dominion over all of creation. Adam, then, was the first king.

**Marriage:** A lifelong commitment of one man and one woman who promise to love and be faithful to each other, and to raise children in the Christian faith. Marriage is one of the seven Sacraments.

**Mercy:** Compassion, kindness, and forgiveness shown to others. God has infinite mercy for us. Jesus taught us to show mercy to others.

**Priest:** One of the original roles God gave to Adam in the Garden of Eden. The task of a priest in the Old Testament was to guard and protect God's dwelling place, the tabernacle, and to serve Him. This involved making sacrifices, even of their own life if necessary. Adam's job, then, was to guard and protect the Garden of Eden, God's dwelling place with His creation, and to serve God by offering all of creation back to Him as a sacrifice. Adam was the first priest.

**Prophet:** One of the original roles God gave to Adam in the Garden of Eden. The task of a prophet in the Old Testament was to speak on God's behalf and be His spokesperson. Adam was given the job of naming all of the animals, a right reserved for their creator. Adam, then, was God's spokesperson and acted as the first prophet.

**Sanctus:** Latin for “holy.” Refers to a prayer of praise to God said or sung at Mass, sometimes called the “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

**Soul:** The spiritual principle which animates or gives life to a body. In human beings, the soul is the innermost aspect of the person, that which is of greatest value in him, and by which he is most especially in God’s image. It is created by God at the moment of conception and is immortal. God intended for the human body and the human soul to be united in one human nature.

**Theological Virtues:** Virtues infused directly into the human soul by God that help human beings relate to God. They are the foundation of Christian moral activity by animating it and giving it its special character. They inform and give life to all other virtues. They are faith, hope, and love (charity).

**Theology:** The study of God and the things of God. The study of God is different than the study of other things. Rather than learning a list of facts about God, theology is about learning to know, trust, and love God in order to grow in relationship with Him.

**Virtue:** A habit of doing what is good. We build virtues through our own efforts and with God’s grace.

**Will:** One of the faculties of the human soul. It is a person’s ability to choose and act based upon knowledge and understanding.

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## UNIT TWO

**Charity:** The Theological Virtue by which we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. Also called “love.”

**Conscience:** The gift God gave human beings to be able to use reason in order to judge right from wrong. Conscience is God’s voice in our hearts. We have a responsibility to educate ourselves and inform our conscience with prayer and God’s word, about what is truly good. A poorly-formed conscience will lead us to sin.

**Habit:** A repeated behavior that becomes part of our nature, often repeated without thinking about it.

**Passions:** Feelings, or emotions. They are responses of the body and soul to some experience of the senses. They are neither morally good nor morally bad. They only take on a moral quality when we use our intellect and will to direct them for some morally good or morally bad purpose.

**Responsibility:** Being accountable for one’s choices and actions. Because we have free will, we are morally accountable for our actions.

**Temptation:** Something that attracts or lures a person to sin.

## UNIT THREE

**Absolution:** The prayer of forgiveness prayed by the priest in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation by which we are welcomed back into our full relationship with Christ. We are made new, and our heavenly Father celebrates our return.

**Contrition:** Sorrow. We must be truly sorry for our sins in order to be forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. The priest will ask us to pray an act of contrition after we confess our sins as a sign of our sorrow.

**Covenant:** A sacred permanent bond of family relationship. God entered in a series of covenants with mankind throughout Salvation History to invite us to be part of His divine family and to prepare us gradually and in stages and in words and deeds to receive the gift of salvation.

**Mortal sin:** Serious sin that we choose to commit even though we know it is wrong. Mortal sin separates us from God and completely rejects His love for us.

**Repentance:** The act of turning away from sin and committing to changing one's life by avoiding future sin.

**Sin:** A deliberate offense against God. It is something we say, think, do, or fail to do that is against the eternal law of God.

**Venial sin:** Less serious sin that hurts our relationship with God, but does not destroy it.

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## UNIT FOUR

**Commandments:** The Ten Commandments, known as the Decalogue, or “ten words” from God to His Chosen People. They were written by God to be an objective moral standard for His people, an expression of the divine law of God. If one does not do evil acts as guided by the Commandments, then she is free from sin and able to grow in virtue and in freedom. We are obligated to follow the Commandments.

**Envy:** A feeling of sadness at the sight of another's possessions, qualities, or advantages and a sinful desire to have them for oneself. It is one of the seven deadly sins.

**Eucharist:** The Sacrament in which we receive the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Christian life. It is spiritual food for the soul. It is not merely a symbol, but is Jesus' true flesh and blood.

**Freedom:** The power, rooted in the intellect and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. True freedom is the ability to do what one ought to do, that which is truly good and directed toward God, our happiness and fulfillment.

**Happiness:** Fulfillment or perfection. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gave the Beatitudes as the perfection of the Ten Commandments. They teach us how to be truly happy, or reach human perfection and fulfillment which we ultimately find in Heaven.

**Mediator:** The person God chose to represent all those entering into a covenant with Him. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus Christ are the mediators of the primary covenants throughout Salvation History.

**Neighbor:** Any other human being beside ourselves, most specifically, the people around us. Jesus taught us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

**Obedience:** Respecting and following the rules of someone with authority. God calls us to be obedient to Him by hearing His Word and keeping it.

**Pure:** Clean. Jesus taught the pure of heart will “see God.” The pure of heart are those whose actions on the outside match who they are on the inside.

**Reverence:** Honor or respect given to someone or something. The Second Commandment requires us to use God’s name with reverence.

**Synoptic Gospels:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke which present the story of Christ’s life in a similar way and even borrow stories and the structure of their Gospels from each other. The word synoptic means “to see together.”

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## UNIT FIVE

**Agape:** Greek for “charity,” or “unconditional, sacrificial love.” It is the highest form of love; the love of God for man.

**Corporal Works of Mercy:** Jesus taught us that we must love our neighbor by performing Corporal (and Spiritual) Works of Mercy. Corporal means “body.” The corporal works of mercy help us meet a person’s physical needs. They are: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, ransom the captive, and bury the dead.

**Eros:** Greek for “passion” or “desire.” It is used to describe romantic or passionate love.

**Phileo:** Greek for “brotherly love.” It is the love shared between friends or family.

**Spiritual Works of Mercy:** Jesus taught us that we must love our neighbor by performing Spiritual (and Corporal) Works of Mercy. The spiritual works of mercy help us meet a person’s spiritual needs. They are: instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish sinners, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offenses willingly, comfort the afflicted, and pray for the living and the dead.

**Storge:** Greek for “affection.” It is the love of affection or enjoying someone or something.

## UNIT SIX

**Beatific:** “Bliss,” “happiness,” or “blessing.” The Beatific Vision refers to when we finally see God in Heaven face-to-face, as He is.

**Imperfect Happiness:** The temporary pleasure that comes from earthly goods, but which will never fully satisfy or fulfill us.

**Perfect Happiness:** Blessedness. The ultimate fulfillment or perfection of the human person, which will only be found when we behold the Beatific Vision in Heaven.

**Transfiguration:** The Gospel event in which Christ brought three of His disciples to a mountain top where He was revealed in all His divine glory while speaking with Moses and Elijah.

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## UNIT SEVEN

**Church:** The community of disciples founded by Jesus that will exist until the end of time. The Church is at the same time human and divine. It is the gathering of God’s people on earth and it is the mystical Body of Christ. The Church is the means by which salvation is communicated to us in this age.

**Ecclesia:** Latin word used for the Church. It is derived from the Greek word, *ekkalein*, which means “to call out of.” The Greek form of the word is used frequently in the Old Testament for the assembly of the Chosen People before God. The early Church adopted the word to describe themselves and to be connected to the assembly of God’s people from the Old Testament.

**Holiness:** Becoming more like God and sharing in His goodness. To be holy is to be set apart by God. We do not make ourselves holy; rather, holiness comes from God’s initiative. We are holy because God is holy and he calls us to Himself. We become more holy by responding to His love by the way we live, especially by the love we show our neighbor, the poor, the needy, and even our enemies. Also called “sanctity.”

**Sanctify:** To make holy.

**Vocation:** God is calling all people to love and to be holy. God also calls each person to a state of life. These states of life are marriage, religious life, or ordained priesthood. The Church offers special care to people who are single even though they may not choose to be.