

Glossary

UNIT ONE

Actual Grace: Help from God in each moment of our lives to choose the good.

Adoration: A form of prayer in which we worship God and express our love for Him.

Beatitude: Happiness or fulfillment. 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.

Chastity: A moral virtue that helps us manage or control our desires for bodily and spiritual pleasure in the way that God intended. Chastity specifically involves self-mastery of sexual feelings. It is also a virtue that helps us choose what is best for others. Jesus Christ is a model of a chaste life.

Communion: Sharing of life with one another. As one human family, we are called to imitate God who as Trinity is a communion of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by loving and serving God and by loving and serving one another.

Complementarity: The condition of completing something else, or making it whole. Made in the image and likeness of God as male and female, men and women together complete or make whole the human race as a reflection of God.

Concupiscence: A tendency, or inclination, to sin that is an effect of Original Sin. Even though Baptism erases the stain of Original Sin, the tendency to sin remains.

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.

Contrition: A form of prayer in which we have true sorrow for our sins and ask for God's mercy and forgiveness.

Counsel: A Gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us to be more open to what our conscience is saying. It helps us to know right from wrong and to judge whether things will lead us toward God or away from Him.

Dignity: Worthy of honor or respect. All human beings from unborn babies to the elderly have equal dignity as children of God.

Emotions: Feelings. 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.

Faith: The Theological Virtue by which we believe in God and all that He has revealed to us, as well as all that His Church teaches us to believe.

Fear of the Lord: A Gift of the Holy Spirit that inspires us to see God as He is, not who we think He might be, and to be in awe of His glory and might.

Fortitude: A Cardinal Virtue that helps us continue when faced with difficulty.

Free Will: One of the faculties of the human soul. It is a person's ability to choose and act based upon knowledge and understanding. Human beings have free will.

Holiness: The fullness of the Christian life and the perfection of charity. 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.

Hope: The Theological Virtue by which we desire the Kingdom of God and eternal life, and place our trust in all of God's promises to us.

Intercession: A form of prayer in which we ask for God's help for others.

Justice: A Cardinal Virtue that helps us give God and neighbor their due.

Knowledge: A Gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us to know God's plan for our lives and to act upon it. It helps us overcome our weaknesses, sins, and failures.

Love: The Theological Virtue by which we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. Also called charity.

Meditative Prayer: A form of prayer in which we engage our minds and hearts in reflection on God and the things of God, often using spiritual readings from Scripture.

Piety: A Gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us show reverence for holy things and for God. It helps us to have the right attitude toward God and to worship Him because we love Him.

Prayer: Raising one's mind and heart to God in praise of His glory, asking for some desired good, giving Him thanks, or asking for His blessing on others. Through a life of prayer we experience a relationship with God.

Prudence: A Cardinal Virtue that helps us to have right reason and put it into action. It helps us to make the right decision at the right time and to find the best way to achieve a good outcome.

Reason (Intellect): One of the faculties of the human soul. It is a person's ability to know and understand. Human beings have an intellect.

Sanctifying Grace: The free gift of God's love and life within our souls given to us by the Holy Spirit. Sanctifying grace heals us of sin and makes us holy. We receive sanctifying grace through the Sacraments, especially in Baptism and Holy Eucharist.

Self-Gift: The ability of a person to give of his time and energy to other people out of love. All human beings are capable of self-gift.

Self-Knowledge: The ability of a person to know himself and to reflect upon his memories, personality, and behavior. All human beings are capable of self-knowledge.

Self-Possession: The ability of a person to have control over what she does and to choose her actions. All human beings are capable of self-possession.

Temperance: A Cardinal Virtue that helps us avoid extremes and find the right balance between too much and too little of the good things in life.

Thanksgiving: A form of prayer in which we show gratitude to God for every gift He has given to us.

Understanding: A Gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us know and understand the truths of our Faith that are beyond our ability to know by ourselves. God's grace helps us to get to the heart of the truth and to know and follow God's will for us.

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

Wisdom: A Gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us respect and love God. It perfects our faith, because it helps us to see God for who He is.

UNIT TWO

Annunciation: The Gospel story of the Angel Gabriel appearing to Mary to announce that she would be the Mother of God, Jesus Christ. The Church celebrates this feast every year on March 25th. The Gospel story of the Annunciation can be found in Luke 1:26-38.

Apostle: A person who is sent out as a representative of someone else. Jesus chose twelve men to be His Apostles. They preached Jesus' message of salvation and worked miracles in His name. Jesus gave the Apostles special authority and made them the first leaders (bishops) of the Church.

Apostolic Succession: The handing on of apostolic preaching and authority from the Apostles to their successors the bishops through the laying on of hands, as a permanent office in the Church. The fourth mark of the Church is that the Church is apostolic, which means that the Church is built on the lasting foundation of the Apostles.

Canon of Scripture: The official list of inspired books that appear in the Bible. The Catholic canon of Scripture includes 46 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books.

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

Divine Revelation: The body of truths revealed to us by God throughout Salvation History.

Evangelist: One of the four Gospel writers, who wrote with the purpose of evangelizing, or to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the world.

Exorcism: One of the types of miracles that Jesus performed, in which He cast out demons that had possessed people. Jesus gave to His Apostles the authority to cast out demons in His name.

Gentiles: People of non-Jewish ethnicity.

Gospel: “Good News.” The four Gospels are the heart of the Scriptures and proclaim the Good News of salvation won for us by the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Gospels are our primary source of knowledge of the life of Jesus Christ.

Hanukkah: Jewish holiday that celebrates the purification of the Jerusalem Temple at the end of the Maccabean Revolt, around 150 years before the birth of Christ. The ancient Greeks had taken over Jerusalem, forcibly made the Jewish people adopt Greek customs, and rededicated the Temple to Zeus. A group of Jewish rebels known as the Maccabees successfully defeated the Greeks and reclaimed Jerusalem and the Temple.

Hasmonean Dynasty: A new line of Jewish kings established to rule Israel after the Maccabean revolt. The Hasmonean kings were not descended from David and thus were not the heirs to God’s Old Testament promises. The Hasmoneans ruled Israel until 63 BC when the Romans took over.

Incarnation: The Christian belief that the second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, assumed a human nature in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Inerrant: Without error. Scripture teaches solidly, faithfully, and without error the truth God wanted known for the sake of our salvation.

Inspiration: The human authors of Scripture were guided by God through the Holy Spirit in their writing. God’s Spirit was present with them when they chose the words to write and how to write them. The Holy Spirit moved within them to write the truth God wanted written for the sake of our salvation.

Kingdom of God: God’s reign or rule over all things. During His public ministry, Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The Church is the seed, or beginning, of the Kingdom here on earth. The Kingdom will be fulfilled in Heaven.

Literary Genres of the Bible: The various writing styles that appear in Scripture. These include narrative, law, prophecy, poetry, wisdom writings or proverbs, parables, genealogy or ancestries, epistles or letters, and apocalyptic writing.

Magisterium: The teaching authority of the Church and those who exercise that authority, the pope and all of the world’s bishops in union with the pope. The Magisterium of the Church authentically teaches and interprets the Word of God so that the faithful might be saved.

Messiah: The Hebrew word for “anointed one.” All of the kings descended from David were anointed as a sign of their kingship. This made all of the kings in the line of David “messiahs.” God promised the Chosen People that He would send the Messiah to free them from sin. Jesus is the Son of David and God’s promised Messiah and Savior.

Miracle: A supernatural act of God that demonstrates His power over all things. Jesus performed many miracles because He is God. Jesus’ miracles invited people to believe in Him and showed the power of God. Jesus’ miracles were also signs of the Kingdom of God.

Mystery: A truth about God that we can come to know only with God’s help.

Paschal Mystery: Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection which saved us from sin and death for new life as sons and daughters of God.

Pentateuch: The Greek name for the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Also known as the Books of Moses.

Pharisee: A member of a powerful group of leaders in Jewish society during the time of Jesus. They believed that in order for Israel to remain faithful to God, the people must remain pure and hold strictly to the Law of Moses. They exaggerated the law and customs to the point that they became burdens and refused to associate with Gentiles. They rejected the belief that Jerusalem would be an everlasting kingdom and center of worship for all the nations. Like Jesus, they believed in the afterlife and resurrection of the body.

Roman Peace: A time of relative peace and stability throughout the Roman Empire. It was during this time that Jesus was born. Also called the “*Pax Romana*.”

Sacred Scripture: The written record of God’s revelation of Himself. It is the speech of God put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God.

Sacred Tradition: The mode of transmission of the Word of God. The Word of God was given to the Apostles by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Apostles in turn handed it on to their successors, the bishops. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the Church has kept the Word of God whole and safe over the centuries so we can know and believe in the whole Faith today. Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single deposit – or one gift – of the Word of God. We accept and honor Sacred Tradition equally with Sacred Scripture.

Sadducee: A member of a powerful group of leaders in Jewish society who believed the only way for the Jewish faith to survive was for the people to cooperate with the Gentiles. They believed that only the Pentateuch was canonical Scripture and rejected traditional interpretations and later additions to the Law and covenants contained in Scripture (specifically the covenant with David). Unlike Jesus, they did not believe in the afterlife, the resurrection of the body, or supernatural beings such as angels.

Salvation History: The story of God’s love and mercy revealed to us throughout human history, culminating in Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross and Resurrection from the dead, which won for us salvation from sin and death.

Synoptic: “To see together.” The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as the Synoptic Gospels because they 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 Senses of Scripture: The Senses of Scripture: The meanings of Scripture and the events described in it. There are two senses of Scripture: literal and spiritual. The literal sense is the meaning of the words of Scripture discovered by study of the text. The spiritual sense allows us to understand that, thanks to the unity of God’s plan, the realities and events the text describes are themselves signs of our Faith. For example, the parting of the Red Sea is a sign of Baptism. The fullness of God’s plan of revelation is revealed in Christ. All interpretation of Scripture must be guided by the judgment of the Church, which has the responsibility of protecting and interpreting the Word of God. The unity of the literal and spiritual senses allow the Church to interpret the riches of Sacred Scripture.

Typology: The study of “types.” Typology studies how one thing leaves an imprint on a later thing in Salvation History. The earlier thing is a “type.” The study of types is most often considered in relation to Jesus Christ and the events of salvation.

Visitation: The Gospel story of Mary’s visit to her cousin Elizabeth shortly after the Angel Gabriel had appeared to Mary to announce the Incarnation. At their meeting, the child in Elizabeth’s womb, John the Baptist, leapt for joy in the presence of the unborn Jesus.

Vocation: The calling or destiny of all people in this life and the next. God first calls everyone to love and serve Him and to seek the perfection of holiness. God also calls each person to a state of life: either marriage, religious life, or ordained priesthood. The Church offers special care to those single persons who find themselves in circumstances not of their own choosing.

Word of God: A title for Jesus Christ and a title for Sacred Scripture. Jesus is the Word of God become flesh in the Incarnation. In Him, God has revealed all that is necessary for the sake of our salvation. We meet Jesus in Sacred Scripture, the Word of God written down to preserve and communicate the Good News of salvation.

UNIT THREE

Anointing: Rubbing or marking with oil. Holy oil is spread on our foreheads in Baptism and Confirmation, and again in the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

Baptism of Desire: A Catechumen, or a person who is preparing to be baptized, who dies before receiving Baptism is assured salvation through her desire for Baptism, repentance for sin, and charity.

Body of Christ: The People of God make up the Body of Christ. A body has many parts, just like the People of God is made up of different people with different gifts and talents. Though we are all different, as the Body of Christ we are one body with Christ as our head. Also refers to the consecrated Communion host we receive in the Eucharist, which is the true Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ.

Catechumen: A person who is preparing to receive the Sacrament of Baptism and become a member of the Catholic Church by receiving training in Christian teaching and practice.

Commemorate: To celebrate the memory of something. The Sacraments commemorate Christ's Passion.

Conversion: Turning away from sin and returning to God. It is the first step in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. We recognize all that we have done to hurt our heavenly Father and are truly sorry for our actions to hurt our heavenly Father, are truly sorry for our sins, and resolve not to sin again. The examination of conscience can aid us in recognizing our faults.

Divine Physician: A title for Jesus that describes how He came to call sinners, not the righteous. This is similar to the way a physician or doctor treats those who are sick, not those who are healthy.

Efficacious: Effective, or possessing the ability to cause an effect. The Sacraments cause the grace of God, of which they are also signs.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord. The anointing in Confirmation is a sign of receiving these gifts.

Grace: The free and undeserved gift of God's life within us. The Sacraments are efficacious signs of God's grace.

In Persona Christi Capitis: In the Person of Christ the Head. When an ordained priest performs his priestly function—for example, when consecrating the Eucharist—he is no longer working as himself, but rather, “in the person of Christ the Head.” When we say “the Head,” we mean the Head of the Church. It is not the priest who transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, but rather, Jesus Himself, working in and through the priest.

Indelible Mark: A permanent, un-removable spiritual seal or mark placed on our souls by God in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, and upon those who receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders, that set us apart as belonging to God. The baptismal seal allows us to participate in the Mass, and use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to live lives of holiness. The seal of Confirmation strengthens us to be witnesses of the Gospel in the battle between good and evil waged all around us.

Indissoluble: Incapable of being undone or broken; permanent. Because it is a total gift of self, the bond of marriage is unbreakable and permanent.

Inheritance: Gifts a person receives from someone in the family who has died, or traits received from one's parents. By our Baptism, we have an inheritance with Christ, which means that as adopted children of God, we receive gifts from Him and that we will be like Him.

Lamb of God: A title given to Jesus that describes His sacrifice to free us from sin. Just like the sacrifice of the Passover lamb freed the Israelites from slavery, Jesus' sacrifice frees us from death and sin in a new Passover.

Ministerial Priesthood: The ordained priesthood who share in the priesthood of Christ by acting *in persona Christi capitis*, that is, in the person of Christ, the head. These men do not preach, sanctify, and govern by the own authority, but rather, by the authority given them by Christ, the head of the Church, to act in His person.

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.

Original Sin: The first sin of Adam and Eve that brought pain, suffering, and death into the world. Because we are all descendants of Adam and Eve we are all born with Original Sin in our souls. We need to be baptized to remove the stain of Original Sin. The effects of Original Sin remain, however. For example, we tend to sin, we suffer, and die.

Passover: The central event of the Exodus. The final plague God sent upon Egypt was the plague of the death of the first born of every family in Egypt. By sacrificing a lamb, spreading its blood on their doorposts, and eating its roasted flesh in a sacred meal of bread and wine, the Israelite homes would be passed over by the plague of death. God also commanded that the Israelites remember this original Passover event every year with a memorial meal. The original Passover foreshadows Christ's own sacrifice on the Cross.

Primordial: Existing from the very beginning. Marriage is called the "primordial sacrament" because, though it was not a Sacrament until the age of the Church, marriage between one man and one woman has existed from the very beginning of human existence.

Redemptive: Acting to save or free someone. Christ's Suffering and Death on the Cross saved us from sin and freed us from death.

Sacrament: A sign of God's grace that gives the grace that it signifies. Jesus founded seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Holy Matrimony.

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

Witness: Someone who sees something happen and tells others about what he saw. We are called to be witnesses of Christ to the world.

UNIT FOUR

Adoration: A form of prayer in which we worship God and express our love for Him. Also refers to the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This is when a consecrated host, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, is placed in a vessel called a monstrance (which means “to show”) and displayed for the faithful to worship. In this form of prayer with the Blessed Sacrament, the faithful express their love for Jesus, and contemplate the mystery of His presence.

Filial: The relationship of a son or daughter as to a parent. Jesus revealed God’s Fatherly love for us. Therefore, we can boldly approach God as our Father, as Jesus taught us.

Lectio Divina: Latin for “divine reading.” It is an ancient form of praying with Scripture that is a slow and thoughtful encounter with the Word of God.

Liturgy of the Hours: Also called the Divine Office, it is the public prayer of the Church which sanctifies the whole course of the day and night. It consists of a variety of prayers, Scripture readings, most especially the Psalms, and writings of the saints. It is divided into seven “hours” or “offices,” each to be prayed at specific times of the day. Bishops, priests, deacons, and religious are obligated to pray the full sequence of the hours, observing as closely as possible the true time of day. Lay persons are also encouraged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours so that it may be the prayer of the whole People of God.

Mediatrice of Grace: Title for Mary that describes her instrumental role in our salvation as the Mother of God. Her “yes” to God allowed God’s plan for salvation to be completed in His Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, she acted as a mediator (mediatrix), or go between, of God’s grace. As Queen of Heaven, Mary continues to mediate all graces that come to us by her son, Jesus Christ. Mary’s unique cooperation with her son in no way diminishes His own mediation, but flows from it, depends entirely on it, and draws all its power from it.

Meditation: A form of prayer in which we engage our minds and hearts in reflection on God and the things of God, often using spiritual readings from Scripture.

Novena: A nine-day prayer for a specific intention.

Pilgrimage: Prayerful journeys to holy places, such as the Holy Land, a site of an apparition of Mary, or even to a holy place in one’s own diocese.

Prayer: Raising one’s mind and heart to God in praise of His glory, asking for some desired good, giving Him thanks, or asking for His blessing on others. Through a life of prayer we experience a relationship with God.

Psalm: One of 150 songs, poems, and prayers found in the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament. They have been used in prayer since the time of the ancient Jews and continue to be prayed with at Mass, in the Liturgy of the Hours, and in other forms of prayer. It is believed that King David wrote around half of them. Many are originally songs or hymns meant to be sung in liturgical settings. There are different types of psalms, which include hymns, psalms of lament or sorrow, psalms of thanksgiving, royal psalms which praise the reigning king, and wisdom psalms which help us understand the ways of the Lord.

Relic: An artifact of the saints and their holy lives worthy of veneration, such as their bodies, something they owned, or other items closely associated with them. While a relic does not give us grace directly, we believe they can be vessels for grace that bring us closer in relationship to God.

Rosary: A special prayer in which we reflect on the Joyful, Sorrowful, Luminous, and Glorious Mysteries – important events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. Using a chain of beads, we make the Sign of the Cross and recite the Apostles' Creed while holding the crucifix; then we pray one Our Father, three Hail Mary's, and a Glory Be. Next, we recite the Our Father on each large bead, the Hail Mary on each of the ten smaller beads, and finish with the Glory Be. That completes one decade. Before we begin each decade, we say the mystery for that decade and think about it as we pray the prayers. After five decades, we pray the Hail Holy Queen and make the Sign of the Cross.

Spouse of the Holy Spirit: Title for Mary that describes her close relationship with the Holy Spirit. Mary became the Mother of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Stations of the Cross: A traditional devotional prayer that focuses on the Passion of Jesus. It follows Jesus' path as He carried His Cross and was crucified. Most parishes have a series of plaques, icons, or other works of art that present the 14 stations for devotion, meditation, and prayer.

Types of Prayer: Various forms of prayer developed in the great liturgical and spiritual traditions of the Church which include blessing and adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise.

Veneration: The act of honoring. As Catholics we honor the saints and other artifacts of their holy lives, called relics.

Visitation: The Gospel story of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth shortly after the Angel Gabriel had appeared to Mary to announce the Incarnation. At their meeting, the child in Elizabeth's womb, John the Baptist, leapt for joy in the presence of the unborn Jesus.