

Glossary

Abba: An affectionate Hebrew word for Father some scholars suggest was similar to “daddy.” Jesus taught us to call God “Abba, Father” when we pray.

Agapē: The unconditional sacrificial love of God for human beings. It is the highest form of love. Also called charity. Greek for “good will.”

Agnosticism: The view that we do not know whether God exists. From the Greek prefix “a-” meaning “without” or “absence of” and gnosis, meaning “knowledge.”

Atheism: The belief that God does not exist.

Big Bang Theory: Theory developed by physicist Fr. Georges Lemaître, Ph.D. in 1927, that the universe was expanding outward from a specific point in the past. Galaxies were not moving through a fixed empty space, but rather the space between the galaxies was itself stretching and growing.

Borde-Vilenkin-Guth Proof: Proof concluding that any universe with an expansion rate greater than zero must have a beginning, meaning it could not have existed eternally into the past.

Communion of Saints: The unity in Christ of all the redeemed, those souls in Heaven who enjoy the Beatific Vision, those souls in Purgatory enduring purification, and those souls on earth still working out their salvation.

Conscience: A judgment of practical reason (the intellect) about the goodness or evil of a particular action in light of the moral law. It is the voice of God speaking to us in our hearts. We have a responsibility to educate ourselves and inform our conscience about what is truly good.

Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation: A special form of heat radiation that originated at the Big Bang and is evenly distributed through the entire universe.

Denomination: An ecclesiastical community or distinct sub-group within a Protestant tradition or other world religion.

Efficient Cause: In philosophy, the agent who brings a thing into being or initiates a change.

Empathy: The act of understanding and sharing in the feelings, particularly sadness and suffering, of others.

Enduring: How long something lasts.

Entropy: The principle that systems always move from order to disorder.

Ethos: In public speaking, the character and credibility of the speaker. Greek for “character.”

Evolution: Theory proposed by Charles Darwin on how species are thought to have developed and diversified over time, moving from simple to more complex.

Extemporaneous Speeches: Short speeches that are delivered with limited preparation time, often using note cards.

Facecloth of Oviedo: The bloodstained cloth that, according to tradition, is the burial cloth mentioned in Scripture that was laid over the face of Christ after His Death. Analysis of blood, pollen, and other evidence on the facecloth strongly suggests that it touched the same face as the Shroud of Turin.

First Mover: The necessary, uncaused being, or God, who first set everything in motion.

Five Ways: Five arguments developed by St. Thomas Aquinas that use human reason and observation of the created world to conclude that God exists. Also called the “five proofs for the existence of God.”

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.

Gravitational Constant: Physical constant that determines how strongly physical bodies in the universe are attracted to each other through gravity.

Impromptu Speeches: Brief speeches delivered on the spur of the moment.

Justice (Transcendental): Perfect giving and receiving of what is due. Perfect justice is God Himself.

Kerygmas: Brief Christian texts that express simple credal teachings. These were the first proclamations of the Early Church, written within a decade of Jesus’ Death and Resurrection, and preserved in the New Testament within the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters of St. Paul.

Logos: In public speaking, the speaker’s use of (or what seems to be) logic. Greek for “word,” or “reason.”

Love (Transcendental): Perfect willing of the good of the other. Perfect Love is God Himself.

Manuscript Speeches: Speeches where the speaker reads aloud or delivers from memory a longer speech written ahead of time.

Marian Apparitions: Places and times when Mary appeared to bring the message of her Son, Jesus, after she was assumed into Heaven.

Miracle: A supernatural act of God that demonstrates His power over all things and is a sign of the Kingdom of God.

Moral Evil: An objectively evil act that a person commits. The rejection and murder of God's only Son is the greatest moral evil ever committed.

Near Death Experiences: Events where people undergo clinical death and then return to physical life, some reporting afterward that they maintained consciousness, despite the absence of brain function.

Ockham's Razor: Principle that we should prefer the explanation with the fewest assumptions, conditions, and requirements, because nature favors elegance over needless complexity.

Original Sin: The state of human nature deprived of the original holiness and justice Adam and Eve enjoyed before the Fall.

Pathos: In public speaking, the speaker's appeal to the audience's emotion. Greek for "experience," or "emotion."

Pervasive: Existing or noticeable throughout every part of something.

Philosophy: The study of ultimate reality and its causes by human reason alone. From the Greek word *philosophia*, which means "love of wisdom."

Pope: The successor of St. Peter as bishop of Rome and Supreme Pontiff of the universal Catholic Church. He exercises a primacy of authority as the vicar of Christ on earth and the shepherd of the whole Church.

Red Shift: Phenomenon observed as distant galaxies move away faster, the wavelengths of light are stretched out (from our perspective on earth), making the light shift towards the red end of the spectrum.

Redemptive Suffering: Uniting our own suffering to Jesus' Passion and offering it as a self-sacrifice for the sake of our salvation or the salvation of others, in imitation of Jesus.

Resurrection of the Dead: The raising of all the dead at the end of time to face the Last Judgment when the wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous to eternal life.

Shroud of Turin: Linen burial shroud bearing a perfect photographic negative of a crucified man, which scientific evidence strongly suggests is the burial shroud of Christ.

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. It is a failure to love God and neighbor.

Soul: That which animates or gives life to a body.

Teleology: The study of ends or final causes.

Terminal Lucidity: Phenomenon where the minds of patients with dementia or Alzheimer's Disease suddenly become clear shortly before death. Persons with terminal lucidity are aware of relatives and friends, God's presence, prayers, good and evil, and right or wrong, even though their brains had been incapable of rational thought, sometimes for many years.

Transcendental Desires: The universal human longing for perfect love, truth, beauty, goodness, and being.

Transubstantiation: The word used to describe the change of the bread and wine at Mass into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Virtue: An habitual and firm disposition to do the good. Moral virtues are acquired through human effort. The infused moral virtues and the theological virtues are gifts from God.