

# Glossary

## A

**Abba** The Aramaic word for “father” but more like the informal “papa” or “daddy.” When Jesus spoke to God the Father, he called him “Abba.”

**absolution** The forgiveness of sin by God. In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we say that we are sorry for our sins. Then the priest offers us God’s absolution.

**adore** To worship God above all else because he is our Creator. The First Commandment tells us to adore God alone.

**adultery** A sin of unfaithfulness to one’s marriage vows that injures the bond of the marriage covenant. The Sixth Commandment forbids adultery.

**altar** The table in the church on which the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is made present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist

**ambo** A raised stand from which a person reads the Word of God during Mass

**angel** A spiritual creature who brings a message from God

**Angelus** A Catholic devotion prayed three times a day—morning, noon, and evening. The devotion recalls the angel Gabriel’s Annunciation to Mary, her acceptance of the invitation to be Jesus’ mother, the Word made flesh.

**Annunciation** The announcement to Mary by the angel Gabriel that God the Father had chosen her to be the mother of his Son, Jesus

**Anointing of the Sick** The sacrament in which a person is anointed with the oil of the sick and receives the strength, peace, and courage to overcome the difficulties that come with illness. If it is God’s will, healing of the body is given as well.

**Apostle** One of the 12 men chosen by Jesus to join him in preaching and healing and to continue his work after he returned to his Father in heaven

**Apostles’ Creed** A summary of Christian beliefs. The Apostles’ Creed lists statements of belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The profession of faith used in Baptism today is based on the Apostles’ Creed.

**Ascension** The entry of Jesus into God the Father’s presence in heaven

**Assumption** The act of Mary being taken, body and soul, into heaven. Mary had a close relationship with the mysteries of Jesus’ life, from the very beginning when she became the mother of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Because of this, she has been taken into heaven where she now lives with her son. We celebrate this event in the Feast of the Assumption on August 15.

## B

**Baptism** The first of the three Sacraments of Initiation. Baptism frees us from Original Sin. It gives us new life in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

**Beatitudes** The eight ways taught by Jesus by which we can think and act as his followers in order to have true happiness and live in God’s kingdom

**Bible** The collection of books containing the truths of God’s Revelation to us. These writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by human beings. The Bible is made up of the 46 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament.

**bishop** A man who has received the fullness of Holy Orders. He is a successor to the original Apostles. The bishops teach and lead us as followers of Jesus.

**blasphemy** Any disrespectful or negative word, thought, or action against God. This includes using language that disrespects the Church, the saints, or holy things.

**Blessed Sacrament** The Eucharist that has been consecrated by the priest at Mass. It is kept in the tabernacle for adoration and for people to take Holy Communion to those who are sick.

**blessing** A prayer that calls for God's power and care for some person, place, thing, or special activity

**Body and Blood of Christ** What is sacramentally present after the priest prays the consecration of the bread and wine at Mass. In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, all of the risen Lord Jesus Christ—Body, Blood, soul, and divinity—is present under the appearances of bread and wine.

**Book of Revelation** The last book in the Bible

## C

**catholic** One of the four Marks of the Church. The word *catholic* means “all over the world.” The Church is catholic because Jesus is fully present in it and has given the Church to the whole world.

**charity** The Theological Virtue of love given to us by God. Charity helps us love God above all else and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

**Christ** A title that means “anointed one.” *Christ* is from a Greek word that means the same thing as the Hebrew word *Messiah*, or “anointed.” *Christ* is the name given to Jesus after the Resurrection.

**Christian** The baptized who follow Christ and live as he taught us to live

**Christmas** December 25, the day on which we celebrate the birth of Jesus

**Church** The name given to the People of God, all baptized members throughout the world who believe in and follow Jesus. When spelled with a lowercase *c*, church is the name of the building in which we gather to pray to God.

**commandment** A law, or rule, for living as God wants us to live. Jesus summarized all the commandments into two: love God and love your neighbor.

**Communion of Saints** The union of all, dead or living, who have been saved through the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ

**confession** The act of telling our sins to a priest in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. The sacrament itself is sometimes referred to as confession.

**Confirmation** The sacrament that completes the grace we receive in Baptism. Confirmation seals, or confirms, this grace through the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit that we receive as part of Confirmation. This sacrament also unites us more closely with Jesus Christ.

**conscience** The inner voice that helps each of us know the law of love that God has placed in our hearts. It guides us to do good and avoid evil.

**consecration** The action by the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of the priest through which the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ

**contrition** The true sadness we feel when we know that we have sinned, followed by the decision not to sin again because it offends God

**corporal works of mercy** Selfless acts by which we help our neighbors with their everyday material needs. Corporal works of mercy include feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick and the imprisoned, and burying the dead.

**covenant** A solemn agreement between people or between people and God. God made covenants with humanity through agreements with Noah, Abraham, and Moses. These covenants offered salvation. God the Father's new and final covenant was established through the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of his Son, Jesus.

**creation** Everything that God has made. Creation is everything other than God that exists. God said that all creation is good.

**Creator** God, who made everything that is and whom we can come to know through everything he created

**creed** A summary of what people believe. The Apostles' Creed is a summary of Christian beliefs.

**D**

**deacon** A man ordained through the Sacrament of Holy Orders to serve the Church. Deacons participate with the bishop and priests in the work of the Church

**Devil** The evil one, Satan, who opposes God. The Devil is the enemy of anyone attempting to follow God's will.

**disciple** A person who knows, loves, and follows Jesus Christ, lives according to his teaching, and participates in his mission, his suffering, and his joys

**Divine Revelation** God the Father's communication of himself to us through the words and deeds he has used throughout history. Divine Revelation shows us the mystery of God's plan for our salvation in his Son, Jesus Christ.

**E**

**Easter** The celebration of the bodily raising of Jesus Christ from the dead. Easter is the most important Christian feast.

**Emmanuel** A name from the Old Testament that means "God with us." Because Jesus is always with us, we sometimes call him Emmanuel.

**envy** A feeling of sadness or resentment from wanting what others have

**Epistles** Letters written by Saint Paul and other leaders to communities of Christians in the early Church. The Epistles make up 21 of the 27 books in the New Testament.

**Eucharist** The sacrament in which we give thanks to God the Father for his gifts, most especially for the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus, which is made present in this sacrament. The Body and Blood of Christ that we receive at Mass brings us into union with Jesus and his saving Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. All of the risen Lord Jesus Christ—Body, Blood, soul, and divinity—is present under the appearances of bread and wine.

**evangelization** The proclamation, or declaration by word and example, of the good news of salvation we have received in Jesus Christ. Evangelization is the sharing of our faith with others, both those who do not know Jesus and those who are called to follow Jesus more closely.

**examination of conscience** The act of thinking prayerfully about whether we have lived faithfully according to the Gospel. We examine what we have said or done that may have hurt our relationship with God or with others. An examination of conscience is an important part of preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

**F**

**faith** The Theological Virtue that makes it possible for us to believe in God and all that he has made known. Faith is both a gift from God and a free, human choice. With the help of the Holy Spirit and the Church, we freely profess the gift of faith in the Creed, celebrate it in the sacraments, live it through our relationship with God and others, and express it in prayer.

**faithful** A characteristic of God and description of someone who keeps promises and remains forever loyal and true. We are faithful to God when we follow his commandments and live according to the Gospel.

**fasting** The act of limiting the amount we eat for a period of time to express sorrow for sin and to make ourselves more aware of our reliance on God

**free will** Our ability to choose to do good because God has made us in his image

**G**

**Gospel** The Good News of God's saving mercy and love. The Good News is made known in Jesus' life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The story is presented to us in four books in the New Testament: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

**grace** The gift of a relationship with God, given to us by God without our deserving it. Through sanctifying grace, God shares his friendship with us, heals our sins, and continues the work of making us holy. Actual grace is the help that God gives us every day to live as he wants us to live.

**Great Commandment** Jesus' important teaching that love of God and love of neighbor must never be separated. Jesus tells us that this commandment sums up everything taught in the Old Testament.

## H

**heaven** Our eternal life with the risen Lord, unending and full of joy, after this life. In our liturgy, the Church participates in the heavenly liturgy.

**Hebrews** The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were enslaved in Egypt. God helped Moses lead the Hebrews out of slavery.

**holy** A description of something or someone set aside for God's purposes

**Holy Communion** The reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ during Mass. It brings us into union with Jesus Christ and his saving Death and Resurrection.

**Holy Family** The family made up of Jesus; his mother, Mary; and his foster father, Joseph

**Holy Matrimony** The sacrament that unites a baptized man and baptized woman with each other for life as a sign of the unity between Jesus and his Church

**Holy Orders** The sacrament through which the mission, or task, given by Jesus to his Apostles continues in the Church. A baptized man receives the Sacrament of Holy Orders and serves the Church as a deacon, priest, or bishop.

**Holy Spirit** The Third Person of the Trinity, who is sent to us as our Advocate, and who, through Baptism and Confirmation, fills us with God's life and brings us peace

**Homily** A talk by a priest or deacon after the Gospel to help us understand God's Word. The Homily deepens our understanding of the Word of God that we hear in the Scripture readings at Mass.

**hope** The Theological Virtue that helps us have confidence that God will always be with us. We also hope and trust that he will share his joy now and help us live in a way that keeps us with him forever.

**human dignity** The worth and value that all people share because each is made in God's image and likeness

## I

**Immaculate Conception** The church teaching that Mary was free from Original Sin from the first moment of her conception. She was preserved through the merits of her Son, Jesus, the Savior of the human race. Declared a dogma of the Catholic Church by Pope Pius IX in 1854, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated on December 8.

**Incarnation** The Son of God becoming man in order to save us. In assuming a human nature, Jesus did not lose his divine nature. Jesus is both true God and true man.

**inspired** influenced by the Holy Spirit. The human authors of Scripture were influenced by the Holy Spirit. The creative inspiration of the Holy Spirit made sure that the Scripture was written according to the truth God wants us to know for our salvation.

**Israelites** Term used for the descendants of Jacob, whom God renamed Israel. Jacob's 12 sons and their children became the leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel. Israelites is the name for the Hebrews used especially when referring to times after the Exodus and before the Exile.

## J

**Jesus** The Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and saves us so that we can live with God forever. The name *Jesus* means "God saves."

**Joseph** The foster father of Jesus, who was engaged to Mary when the angel announced that Mary would have a child through the power of the Holy Spirit

**justice** The strong desire to give to God and others what is due them. Justice is one of the four central human virtues, called Cardinal Virtues, by which we guide our Christian life.

## K

**Kingdom of God** God’s rule over us. We experience the Kingdom of God in part now, and we will experience it fully in heaven. The Kingdom of God was announced in the Gospels and is present in the Eucharist.

## L

**Last Supper** The last meal Jesus ate with his Apostles on the night before he died. At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread and wine, blessed them, and said that they were his Body and Blood. Every Mass is a remembrance of that last meal.

**Lectionary for Mass** The official book that contains all the Scripture readings used in the Liturgy of the Word

**Liturgy of the Eucharist** A major part of the Mass in which the bread and wine are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.

**Liturgy of the Word** A major part of the Mass in which we listen to readings of God’s Word from Scripture and consider what they mean for us today

**Lord** The title for God that was used in place of the name he revealed to Moses, *Yahweh*, which was considered too sacred to pronounce. The New Testament also uses the title *Lord* for Jesus, recognizing him as God himself.

**Lord’s Day** Sunday, the day set aside to commemorate and celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. Christians keep this day holy by worshiping God at Mass, relaxing the mind and body, and performing works of mercy.

**Lord’s Prayer** The prayer Jesus gave his Apostles and the Church. The Lord’s Prayer is addressed to the Father and is sometimes called the Our Father. It summarizes the gospel message and is a model for our prayer.

## M

**martyr** One who has given his or her life for the faith. *Martyr* comes from the Greek word for “witness.”

**Marks of the Church** The four most important characteristics of the Church. According to the Nicene Creed, the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

**Mary** The mother of Jesus. She is called blessed and “full of grace” because God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God. Mary is the Mother of the Church.

**Mass** The most important act of worship in our Catholic faith. The celebration of the Mass was established by Jesus at the Last Supper as a remembrance of his Death and Resurrection. At Mass, we listen to God’s Word from Scripture and receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

**Messiah** A title that means “anointed one.” *Messiah* means the same thing as *Christ*.

**miracle** An act of God that cannot be explained by natural causes. In the Gospels, Jesus works miracles as a sign that the Kingdom of God is present in his ministry.

**mission** The work of Jesus Christ that is continued in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Church is to proclaim salvation through the life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

**missionary** A person sent by church authority to spread the Good News. Missionaries may serve in areas where few people have heard about Jesus or in small, underserved communities of isolated believers.

**modesty** The human (moral) virtue that helps us dress, act, and speak in appropriate ways

**moral choice** A choice to do what is right. We make moral choices because they help us grow closer to God. We also make moral choices because we have the freedom to choose what is right and avoid what is wrong.

**moral law** A rule for living that has been established by God and people in authority who are concerned about the good of all people. Moral laws are based on God's direction to us to do what is right and avoid what is wrong.

**mortal sin** A decision to turn away from God by doing something that we know is seriously wrong. This choice cuts us off from God's life.

**mystery** A religious truth that we can know only through God's Revelation and that we cannot fully understand. Our faith is a mystery that we profess in the Creed and celebrate in the liturgy and the sacraments.

## N

**New Testament** The 27 books of the second part of the Bible, which tell of the teaching, ministry, and saving events of the life of Jesus and the experience of the early Church

## O

**obedience** The act of following what God and those in authority ask us to do. The Fourth Commandment requires children obey their parents, and all people are required to obey civil authority when it acts for the good of all.

**Old Testament** The 46 books of the first part of the Bible, which tell of God the Father's covenant with the people of Israel and his plan for the salvation of all people before the birth of his Son, Jesus

**Ordinary Time** The longest liturgical season of the church year. It is divided into two periods—the first after the Christmas season and the second after Pentecost.

**Original Sin** Our human tendency to sin, which is the result of the sin of Adam and Eve. They disobeyed God and chose to follow their own will rather than God's will. Because of this act, all human beings lost the original blessing that God the Father had intended, and we became subject to sin and death. In Baptism, we are restored to life with God through his Son, Jesus Christ.

## P

**parable** One of the simple stories that Jesus told to show us what God wants for the world. Parables present images or scenes drawn from everyday life.

**parish** A community of Catholics who meet regularly under the leadership of a pastor to worship God together and to serve one another

**Paschal Mystery** The central teaching of Christian faith: that salvation is accomplished by Jesus Christ through his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension

**Passover** The Jewish festival that commemorates the delivery of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt. In the Eucharist, we celebrate our passover from death to life through Jesus' Death and Resurrection.

**peace** The calmness that comes from being in God's love and friendship

**penance** An action we perform to show we are turning away from sin so that we can live as God wants us to live

**Pentecost** The 50th day after Jesus was raised from the dead. On this day, the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven, and the Church was revealed.

**personal sin** A sin we choose to commit, whether serious (mortal) or less serious (venial)

**pope** The Bishop of Rome, successor of Saint Peter, and leader of the entire Catholic Church

**prayer** The raising of our hearts and minds to God. We can speak to and listen to God in prayer because he teaches us how to pray.

**prayer of petition** A request of God asking him to fulfill a need. Sharing in God's saving love, we recognize that every need is one that we ask God to help us with through petition. We make these requests with the understanding that it is God's will, not ours, that shall be done.

**precepts of the Church** The positive requirements that describe the minimum effort we must make in prayer and in moral life. The precepts of the Church call all Catholics to move beyond the minimum by growing in love of God and love of neighbor.

**priest** A man who is ordained to serve the Church. Priests guide the Church and lead it in the celebration of the sacraments.

**prophet** One called by God to speak to the people for him. John the Baptist was a great prophet.

**psalm** A prayer in the form of a poem. Psalms were written to be sung in public worship. Each psalm expresses an aspect, or feature, of the depth of human prayer. Over several centuries, 150 psalms were gathered to form the Book of Psalms, used in worship in the Old Testament.

**Purgatory** A state of final cleansing after death of all human imperfections to prepare one to enter into the joy of God's presence in heaven

## R

**real presence** The way in which the risen Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the Eucharist

**reconciliation** The repair or renewal of a friendship that has been broken by some action or lack of action

**Redeemer** One who saves. Jesus Christ, our Most Holy Redeemer, set us free from sin and brought us redemption through his suffering, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven.

**Resurrection** The bodily raising of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day after he died on the Cross. The Resurrection is the crowning truth of our faith.

**righteousness** The holiness that comes from being in God's friendship and following his will.

**Rosary** A prayer in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When we pray the Rosary, we meditate on the mysteries of Jesus Christ's life while praying the Hail Mary on five sets of 10 beads and the Lord's Prayer on the beads in between. When spelled with a lowercase *r*, a rosary is a string of beads divided into decades, or groups of 10 beads, with a crucifix, used when praying the Rosary.

## S

**sacrament** A sacred sign Jesus gave the Church. In the sacraments, God gives us grace, a share in his very own life. The sacraments help us encounter God. The seven sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.

**Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation** The sacrament in which we receive God's forgiveness of sins through the priest and are reconciled with God and the Church. It includes sorrow for the sins we have committed, confession of sins, absolution by the priest, and doing the penance to show our contrition.

**sacramental** An object, a prayer, or a blessing given by the Church to help us grow in our spiritual life

**sacred** The description of a person, place, object, or action connected to God and having a religious purpose

**sacrifice** A gift given to God to give him thanks. Jesus' Death on the Cross was the greatest sacrifice.

**Sacrifice of the New Covenant** The offering of Jesus to God the Father under the appearances of bread and wine. The sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is remembered and made present in the Eucharist.

**saint** A holy person who has died as a true friend of God and now lives with God forever in heaven

**salvation** The gift of forgiveness of sin and the restoration of friendship with God. God alone can give us salvation.

**Satan** The enemy of anyone who wants to follow God's will. His name means "adversary." Satan and the other demons tempt human beings to join them against God.

**Savior** Jesus, the Son of God, who became man to forgive our sins and make us friends with God again

**Scripture** The inspired Word of God, written and collected in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, which contains the truth of God's Revelation

**Sermon on the Mount** The collection of Jesus' key teachings found in chapters 5 through 7 of the Gospel of Matthew. Here Jesus reveals his vision for the Kingdom of God. The Sermon on the Mount begins with the eight Beatitudes and includes the Lord's Prayer.

**sin** A choice we make that offends God and hurts our relationship with others. A sin is an offense against God. Some sin is mortal and needs to be confessed in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Other sin is venial, or less serious.

**Son of God** The title for Jesus that shows his special relationship to God the Father

**soul** The spiritual part of us that makes us human and in the image of God. The soul will last forever and is responsible for our consciousness and our freedom.

**Stations of the Cross** Popular devotion to prayerfully reflect on the events of Jesus' Passion, Death, and burial

**spiritual works of mercy** The selfless acts through which we help our neighbors meet their non-material needs. The spiritual works of mercy include counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing sinners, comforting the afflicted, forgiving offenses, bearing wrongs patiently, and praying for the living and the dead.

**synagogue** The Jewish place of assembly for prayer, instruction, and study of the Law. Jesus attended the synagogue regularly to pray and to teach.

**T**  
**tabernacle** The sacred box or container in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept so that Holy Communion can be taken to those who are sick

**Temple** The place of worship in Jerusalem that was built by King Solomon. The Jewish people believed that this was the place of God's presence. Jesus often came to pray in the Temple.

**temptation** A thought or feeling that can lead us to disobey God. Temptation can come either from outside us or inside us.

**Ten Commandments** The 10 rules that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments sum up God's Law of Love and show us what is required to love God and our neighbor. The Ten Commandments are also called the Decalogue.

**Trinity** The mystery of one God existing in Three Persons: the Father, the Son, and The Holy Spirit

**V**  
**virtue** A disposition of the human soul, developed by grace and practice, to do good

**venial sin** A choice we make that weakens our relationships with God and with other people. It wounds and diminishes the divine life in us.

**W**  
**witness** To express to others by our words and our actions the faith that we have been given. Every Christian has the duty to give witness to the Good News about Jesus Christ that he or she has come to know.

**worship** The adoration and honor given to God in public prayer

**Y**  
**Yahweh** The name of God in Hebrew, which God revealed to Moses from the burning bush. *Yahweh* means "I am who am" or "I cause to be all that is." It was considered too sacred to pronounce, so Israelites used *Lord* instead.