



Glossary

A

Abba An informal name for “father” in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke. It is like “papa” in English. When Jesus spoke to God the Father, he called him “Abba.”

abortion The deliberate ending of a pregnancy that results in the death of the unborn child. The Church teaches that since life begins at conception, abortion is a serious crime against life and gravely against the moral law.

Abraham The Old Testament model of faith and trust in God. God made a covenant with Abraham, promising him land and many descendants. He became the father of the Chosen People.

absolution The forgiveness of sin by God that we receive through the priest in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

abstain The choice to avoid certain foods or activities. Abstaining is a form of fasting that helps remind us that God comes first in our lives and that we are dependent on God for everything.

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.

Advocate A title of the Holy Spirit that Jesus used. The Holy Spirit comforts us, speaks for us in difficult times, and makes Jesus present to us.

Alleluia A prayer of praise to God. It is usually sung as the Gospel Acclamation before the Gospel Reading at Mass, except during Lent.

altar The table in the church on which the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is made present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The altar represents two aspects of the mystery of the Eucharist. First, it is where Jesus Christ offers himself for our sins. Second, it is where he gives himself to us as our food for eternal life.

ambo A raised stand from which the Word of God is proclaimed during Mass

Amen The Hebrew word used to conclude Jewish and Christian prayers. It means “This is true,” “So be it,” or “Let it be so.” We end prayers with “Amen” to show that we mean what we have just said.

angel A spiritual creature who brings a message from God. Angels serve God as messengers and tell us of God’s plans for our salvation.

Angelus A Catholic devotion recited three times a day—morning, noon, and evening. The devotion recalls the mystery of the Incarnation, beginning with the coming of the angel to Mary, her acceptance of the invitation to be the mother of Jesus, Word made flesh.

Annunciation The announcement to Mary by the angel Gabriel that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus. When Mary agreed, the Son of God became man in her. The Feast of the Annunciation is celebrated on March 25, nine months before Christmas, except in years when that date falls on a Sunday or holy day during Lent. Then the feast is celebrated at a slightly later date.

anoint To apply oil on a person or thing to dedicate them to the service of God. The anointing of the kings of Israel was a sign that they were chosen to rule God’s people.

Anointing of the Sick The sacrament in which a person is anointed with holy oil and receives the strength, peace, and courage to overcome the difficulties that come with illness. Through this sacrament, Jesus brings the sick person spiritual healing and forgiveness of sins. 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, developed out of a creed used during Baptism in Rome, 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.

ark of the covenant A portable box that held the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The ark was the most important item in the shrine that was carried by the people of Israel through the desert and then placed in the holiest part of the Temple in Jerusalem. Two angels are depicted on the cover of the ark of the covenant. The wings of the angels curve upward, representing the place where God came close to Israel and revealed his will.

Ascension The entry of the humanity of Jesus into God the Father's presence in heaven. In the Acts of the Apostles, it is written that Jesus, after his Resurrection, spent 40 days on earth instructing his followers. He then returned to his Father in heaven before sending the Holy Spirit.

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 and is necessary for salvation. The celebration of Baptism consists of immersing a person in water or pouring water on his or her head while declaring that the person is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Beatitudes The teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. The Beatitudes are the eight ways taught by Jesus by which we can think and act as his followers in order to have true happiness and to live in God's kingdom. The Beatitudes are the fulfillment of the commandments given to Moses.

benediction A prayer service in which we honor Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and receive his blessing

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. As a successor to the original Apostles, the bishop takes care of the Church in his diocese and is a principal teacher in it.

blasphemy Any word, thought, or action done in hatred or defiance against God. It extends to 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 upon 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 of the Bible

C

catechumen A person being formed in the Christian life through instruction and by the example of the parish community. Through conversion and maturity of faith, a catechumen prepares to be welcomed into the Church at Easter through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.

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. The Church is universal.

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

chastity One of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and a human virtue. It is the integration of our physical sexuality with our spiritual nature. Chastity helps us be completely human, able to give to others our whole life and love. All people, married and single, are called to practice chastity.

Chrism A perfumed oil, consecrated by a bishop, that is used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. Anointing with Chrism signifies the call of the baptized to the threefold ministry of priest, prophet, and king.

Christ A title that means “anointed one.” The word *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 and Ascension when he completed his mission as priest, prophet, and king.

Christian Those who have been anointed through the gift of the Holy Spirit at Baptism who follow Christ and live as he taught us to live

Christmas December 25, the feast of the birth of Jesus. The liturgical season of Christmas begins on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Church The People of God throughout the whole world, the diocese (the local Church), or the assembly of those called together to worship God. The Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. When spelled with a lowercase *c*, church is the name of the building in which we gather to pray to God.

clergy Men who are set apart as ordained ministers to serve the Church through Holy Orders

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. The Communion of Saints is based on our one faith, and it is nourished by our participation in the Eucharist.

concupiscence The spiritual condition that is the result of Original Sin. It remains even after Baptism and draws us to sin even though we love God and want to serve him. Because of concupiscence, we struggle with our freedom.

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 makes us better able to participate in worship and the apostolic life of the Church.

conscience The inner voice that helps each of us know the law 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. Consecration can also mean setting people or things apart for God in a sacred way. For example, churches and altars are consecrated for use in liturgy, and bishops are consecrated as they receive the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

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. Perfect contrition arises from a love of God above all else. Imperfect contrition arises from other motives, such as the fear of being punished by God. Contrition is the most important act of the penitent preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

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. *Testament* is another word for *covenant*.

covet The excessive desire to possess something of value belonging to another person, to the point of letting envy destroy the relationship

creation Everything that God has made. Creation is everything 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 word *creed* comes from the Latin *credo*, meaning “I believe.” The Nicene Creed is the most important summary of Christian beliefs.

D

deacon A man ordained through the Sacrament of Holy Orders to the ministry of service in the Church. Deacons participate with bishops and priests in the work of the Church by serving in the various charitable practices of the Church. Deacons proclaim the Gospel, preach, and assist at the Liturgy of the Eucharist. They also celebrate Baptism, bless marriages, and preside at funerals.

detraction The act of talking to someone about the faults and sins of another person without an objectively valid reason with the intention of damaging that person's reputation

Devil The evil one, Satan, who opposes God. The Devil is a fallen angel and the enemy of anyone attempting to follow God's will. Satan tempts Jesus in the Gospels and opposes his ministry. In Jewish, Christian, and Muslim thought, Satan is associated with those angels who refused to bow down before human beings and serve them as God commanded. They refused to serve God and were thrown out of heaven as punishment. Satan and the other demons tempt human beings to join them in their revolt against God.

diocese The members of the Church in a given area, united in faith and the sacraments, and gathered under the leadership of a bishop

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 Providence The guidance of God over all he has created. Divine Providence exercises care for all creation and guides it toward its final perfection.

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.

domestic church The Christian home, which is a community of grace and prayer

E

Easter The celebration of the bodily raising of Jesus Christ from the dead. Easter is the festival of our redemption and the central Christian feast, the one from which other feasts arise.

Eastern Catholic Churches A group of churches that developed in the Near East (in countries such as Lebanon) that are in union with the Roman Catholic Church but have their own liturgical, theological, and administrative traditions. Eastern Catholic Churches show the truly catholic nature of the Church, which takes root in many cultures.

Emmanuel A Hebrew name from the Old Testament that means "God with us." In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is called Emmanuel.

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 of the New Testament. The Second Reading at Mass on Sundays and holy days is usually from one of these Epistles.

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.

Eucharistic liturgy The public worship, held by the Church, in which the bread and wine are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The Sunday celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy is at the heart of church life.

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.

Exile The period in the history of Israel between the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and the return to Jerusalem in 537 B.C. During this time, many of the Jewish people were forced to live in Babylon, far from home.

Exodus God's liberation of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt and his leading them to the Promised Land

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 relationships with God and others, and express it in prayer.

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 God's actions in our lives. Adults 18 years old and older fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The practice is also encouraged as a private devotion at other times of penitence.

free will Our ability to choose to do good because God has made us in his image. Our free will is part of what makes us truly human. Our exercise of free will to do good increases our freedom. Using free will to choose sin makes us slaves to sin.

G

Gifts of the Holy Spirit Abilities or capacities given to us by the Holy Spirit that make it possible for us to do what God asks of us. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

Gospel The Good News of God's saving mercy and love made known in Jesus' life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The Good News is presented to us in four books found in the New Testament: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The Gospel is also passed on in the teaching ministry of the Church as the source of all truth and right living.

grace The gift of a relationship with God, given to us by God without our deserving it. Grace cannot be earned. 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 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 God, unending and full of joy, after this life; the union with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in life and love that never ends. Heaven is a state of complete joyfulness and the goal of the deepest wishes of the human heart.

Hebrews The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were enslaved in Egypt. God helped Moses lead the Hebrews out of slavery. Hebrews are also called Israelites because God changed Jacob's name to Israel.

hell An existence of total separation from God forever. In his infinite love for us, God can only desire our salvation. Hell is the result of a person's free choice to reject God's love and forgiveness once and for all.

holiness A resemblance of divine traits; a reflection of the image of God. All people are called to holiness, which is made possible by cooperating with God's grace to do his will. As we do God's will, we are transformed more and more into the image of the Son, Jesus Christ.

holy A description of something or someone set aside for God's purposes. It is one of the four Marks of the Church. The Church is holy because of her union with Jesus Christ.

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 Communion is also brought to those who are sick or elderly and cannot participate in Mass.

holy days of obligation The principal feast days, other than Sundays, on which Catholics are committed to celebrate the great things God has done for us through Jesus Christ. Six holy days of obligation are celebrated in the United States. Catholics are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on these days, just as we are on Sundays.

Holy Family The family of Jesus as he grew up in Nazareth. It included 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, both for their own good and for raising children. Matrimony is a sign of the unity between Jesus and his Church and is one of the two Sacraments at the Service of Communion—the other being Holy Orders.

Holy Orders The sacrament through which the mission given by Jesus to his Apostles continues in the Church. The sacrament has three degrees: deacon, priest, and bishop. Through the laying on of hands in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, baptized men receive a permanent sacramental mark that gives them the grace to minister to the Church.

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. Together with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit brings the divine plan of salvation to completion.

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.

idolatry The act of giving undue attention to power, pleasure, wealth, or the state, rather than giving God the honor owed to him. In biblical times, it was the false pagan worship of physical images given adoration as gods. For Christians today, idolatry occurs whenever someone gives undue attention to something in place of God.

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.

imperfect contrition Participation in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation solely because we fear punishment

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.

intercession A form of prayer on behalf of others. We can also ask the saints to pray to God for us and others. We ask for the intercession of those in heaven, such as Mary and the saints, or those still with us here on earth.

interpretation An explanation of the words of Scripture, combining human knowledge and the teaching office of the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit

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. He was crucified and was raised from the dead for our salvation. He returned to God the Father and will come again to judge the living and the dead. The name *Jesus* means "God saves."

Jews The name given to the Hebrew people from the time of the Exile to the present. The name means "the people who live in the territory of Judah," the area of Palestine surrounding Jerusalem.

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. In the Old Testament, Joseph was Jacob's son, who was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers and then saved them from starvation when the famine came.

Judaism The name of the religion of Jesus and all the people of Israel after they returned from exile in Babylon and built the second Temple

judges Leaders of Israel, before the period of the kingdom, who protected and delivered the people from their enemies

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

justification The action of the Holy Spirit that cleanses us from sin in Baptism and that continually gives us the grace to walk in right relationship with God. Justification is the saving action of God that restores the right relationship between God and an individual.

K

Kingdom of God God's rule over us, announced in the Gospels and present in the Eucharist. The beginning of the kingdom here on earth is mysteriously present in the Church, and it will come in completeness at the end of time.

L

laity Those who have been made members of Christ in Baptism and who participate in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ in his mission to the whole world. The laity is distinct from the clergy, whose members are set apart as ministers to serve the Church.

Last Supper The last meal, a Passover supper, that 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. Jesus' Death and Resurrection, which we celebrate in the Eucharist, was anticipated in this meal. Every Mass is a remembrance of that last meal.

Law The first five books of the Old Testament, known as the *Torah* in Hebrew. The Law is summarized in the Ten Commandments.

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

liturgical year The celebration throughout the year of the events in the lives of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. The cycle of the liturgical year, organized on a liturgical calendar, constitutes the basic rhythm of the Christian's life of prayer. The Resurrection of Jesus is the center and high point of the liturgical calendar.

liturgy The public prayer of the Church that celebrates the wonderful things God has done for us in Jesus Christ, our High Priest, and the way in which he continues the work of our salvation. The original meaning of *liturgy* was "a public work or service done for the people."

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. It begins with the Preparation of the Gifts and the Altar and ends with the Prayer after Communion. We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.

Liturgy of the Hours The public prayer of the Church to praise God and sanctify the day. It includes an office of readings before sunrise, morning prayer at dawn, evening prayer at sunset, and prayer before going to bed. The chanting of psalms makes up a major portion of each of these services.

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. The Liturgy of the Word can also be a public prayer and proclamation of God's Word that is not followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Lord A title that indicates the divinity of God. *Lord* was said instead of *Yahweh*, the name God revealed to Moses and was considered too sacred to pronounce. The New Testament uses the title *Lord* for both the Father and 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.

M

Magnificat Mary's song of praise to God. She praises God for the great things he has done for her and for his plans for us through Jesus.

martyr One who has given his or her life for the faith. *Martyr* comes from the Greek word for "witness." A martyr is the supreme witness to the truth of the faith and to Christ to whom he or she is united. In chapter 7 of Acts of the Apostles, the death of the first martyr, the deacon Stephen, is recounted.

Mary The mother of Jesus. She is called blessed and "full of grace" because God chose her to be the mother of the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity.

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 memorial 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." It is from a Hebrew word that means the same thing as the Greek word *Christ*. "Messiah" is the title that was given to Jesus after the Resurrection, when he had completed his mission as priest, prophet, and king.

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 Jesus' life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

missionary A person sent by church authority to spread the Gospel through evangelization and catechesis. Missionaries may serve in areas where few people have heard about Jesus or in small, underserved communities of isolated believers.

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. Some moral laws are "written" in the human heart and can be known through our own reasoning. Other moral laws have been revealed to us by God in the Old Testament and in the new Law given by Jesus.

mortal sin A decision to turn away from God by doing something that we know is seriously wrong. For a sin to be mortal, it must be a very serious offense. The person must know how serious the sin is, and the person must freely choose to do it anyway.

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

natural law The moral law that is "written" in the human heart. We can know natural law through our own reason because the Creator has placed the knowledge of it in our hearts. It can provide the solid foundation on which we can make rules to guide our choices in life. Natural law forms the basis of our fundamental rights and duties and is the foundation for the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding our moral choices.

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. The four Gospels present Jesus' life, Death, and Resurrection. The Acts of the Apostles tells the story of Jesus' Ascension into heaven. It also shows how Jesus' message of salvation spread through the growth of the Church. Various letters instruct us in how to live as followers of Jesus Christ. The Book of Revelation offers encouragement to Christians enduring persecution.

Nicene Creed The summary of Christian beliefs developed by the bishops at the first two Ecumenical Councils of the Church, held in A.D. 325 and 381. It is the Creed shared by most Christians in the East and the West.

O

obedience The act of willingly following what God asks us to do for our salvation. The Fourth Commandment requires children to obey their parents, and all people are required to obey civil authority when it acts for the good of all. Members of religious communities make a special vow of obedience to imitate the obedience of Jesus.

Old Testament The first 46 books of the Bible, which tell of God's covenant with the people of Israel and his plan for the salvation of all people. It is fulfilled in the New Testament, but God's covenant has permanent value and has never been revoked or set aside.

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) The process through which unbaptized adults join the Church. Over a period of time, which may last one or two years, catechumens are formed in the life of discipleship in preparation for their initiation into the Church. When they are ready to enter into their final period of preparation, the catechumens participate in the Rite of Election near the beginning of Lent.

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. The first period focuses on Jesus' childhood and the beginning of his public ministry. The second period focuses on discipleship and Christ's reign as King of Kings.

ordination The rite of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, by which a bishop gives to baptized men, through the laying on of hands, the ability to minister to the Church as bishops, priests, and deacons

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 intended, and we became subject to sin and death. In Baptism, we are restored to life with God through Jesus Christ, although we still experience the effects of Original Sin.

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. These images show us the radical choice we make when we respond to the invitation to enter the Kingdom of God.

parish A community of Catholics who meet regularly under the leadership of a pastor to worship God together and 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. The Paschal Mystery is celebrated in the liturgy of the Church. We experience its saving effects in the sacraments.

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.

penance An action we perform to show we are turning away from sin so that we can live as God wants us to live. We express our penance externally by praying, fasting, and helping those in need. Penance is also the name of the action that the priest asks us to take or the prayers that he asks us to pray after he absolves us in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Penitential Act The part of the Mass in which we pray a formula of general confession, asking for God's mercy. The priest may lead the assembly in praying the *Confiteor* ("I confess to almighty God. . .") or a threefold invocation echoed by "Lord have mercy . . . Christ have mercy . . . Lord have mercy" in English or in Greek.

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. It is also the Jewish feast that celebrated the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai 50 days after the Exodus.

perfect contrition Participation in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation solely because of a love of God

perjury Making a promise under oath without intending to keep it

personal sin A sin we choose to commit, whether serious (mortal) or less serious (venial). Although the result of Original Sin is to leave us with a tendency to sin, God's grace, especially through the sacraments, helps us choose good over sin.

pope The Bishop of Rome, successor of Saint Peter, and leader of the entire Catholic Church. Because he has the authority to act in the name of Christ, the pope is called the Vicar of Christ. The pope and all the bishops together make up the living, teaching office of the Church, the Magisterium.

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 form of prayer asking God 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. 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 by guiding it and building it up through the ministry of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments

prophet One called by God to speak for him and call the people to be faithful to the covenant. A major section of the Old Testament presents, in 18 books, the messages and actions of the prophets.

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. Psalms were used in worship in the Temple in Jerusalem, and they have been used in the public worship of the Church since its beginning.

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 present in the Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine. Jesus Christ's presence is called real because in the Eucharist his Body and Blood, soul and divinity, are wholly and entirely present.

reconciliation The repair or renewal of a friendship that has been broken by some action or lack of action. In the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, through God's mercy and forgiveness, we are reconciled with God, the Church, and others.

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.

religious life A state of life recognized by the Church in which men and women freely respond to a call to follow Jesus by living the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in community with others

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.

rite The tradition and ritual that we follow in celebrating the liturgy and the sacraments. A rite may differ according to the culture or country where it is celebrated. *Rite* also means “the special form for celebrating each sacrament.”

Roman Missal The book containing the prayers used for the celebration of the Eucharist. It is placed on the altar for the celebrant to use during Mass.

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. In the Latin Church, praying the Rosary became a way for ordinary people to reflect on the mysteries of Christ’s life. 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

Sabbath The seventh day, when God rested after finishing the work of creation. The Third Commandment is to keep the Sabbath holy. Christians follow the Third Commandment by keeping Sunday holy because it is the day Jesus rose from the dead and the new creation in Jesus Christ began. The Sabbath is the sign of our eternal Sabbath of heaven.

sacrament A sacred sign Jesus gave the Church to help us encounter God. In the sacraments, God gives us grace, a share in his very own life. Jesus gave us three Sacraments of Initiation that bring us into the Church: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. He gave us two Sacraments of Healing that heal our soul and body: Penance and Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. He also gave us two Sacraments at the Service of Communion that help members serve the community: Matrimony and Holy Orders.

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

Sacraments at the Service of Communion The Sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony. These two sacraments contribute to the personal salvation of individuals by giving them a way to serve others.

Sacraments of Healing The Sacraments of Anointing of the Sick and Penance and Reconciliation. Through these sacraments, the Church continues the healing ministry of Jesus for soul and body.

Sacraments of Initiation The sacraments that are the foundation of our Christian life. We are born anew in Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation, and receive the food of eternal life in the Eucharist. By means of these sacraments, we receive an increasing measure of divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.

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. A sacrifice can also be a ritual offering of animals or produce made to God by the priest in the Temple in Jerusalem. Sacrifice was a sign of the people’s adoration of God, giving thanks to God, or asking for his forgiveness. The great High Priest, Christ, accomplished our redemption through the perfect sacrifice of his Death on the Cross.

Sacrifice of the New Covenant The offering of Jesus to the Father under the appearances of bread and wine. The sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is remembered and made present in the Eucharist. It is offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal blessings from God.

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. God’s Son, Jesus, died for the salvation of all humankind.

sanctifying grace The gift of God, given to us without our earning it, that unites us with the life of the Trinity and heals our human nature, wounded by sin. Sanctifying grace continues the work of making us holy that began at our Baptism.

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.

satisfaction The theory in Catholic theology that contends that human sin against infinite God could only be healed, or satisfied, by a sacrifice only God could make. Because the sin was committed by humans, the Son assumed a human nature. Christ died as man so that our sins could be forgiven.

Savior A title given to Jesus, the Son of God, who became man to forgive our sins and restore our friendship with God

scandal An attitude or behavior that leads another person into sin. We can give scandal either by doing or saying something wrong or by failing to do or say something we know we should.

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, in which 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.

sexuality The innermost being of the human person that unites body and soul and includes one's gender, the biological functions of reproduction, and the desire for union with another through physical intimacy that enables human beings to become co-creators of life with God. The Catholic Church teaches that such union is to be reserved for a man and a woman who are married to each other.

sin A deliberate thought, word, deed, or failure to act that offends God and hurts our relationships with other people. Some sin is mortal and needs to be confessed in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Other sin is venial, or less serious.

slander A false statement that harms the reputation of someone and makes other people think badly of that person. Slander is an offense against the Eighth Commandment.

social justice The fair and equal treatment of every member of society. It is required by the dignity and freedom of every person. The Catholic Church has developed a body of social principles and moral teachings described in papal and other official documents issued since the late 19th century. This teaching deals with the economic, political, and social order of the world. It is rooted in the Bible as well as in the traditional theological teachings of the Church.

Son of God The title used for Jesus in the Gospels that shows his unique relationship to God the Father. The revelation of Jesus' divine Sonship is the main dramatic development of the story of Jesus of Nazareth as it unfolds in the Gospels.

soul The spiritual part of us that makes us human and in the image of God. The soul is responsible for our consciousness and for our freedom. The soul does not die and will be reunited with the body in the final resurrection.

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.

stewardship The careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care, especially the goods of creation, which are intended for the whole human race

suicide The act of deliberately taking one's own life. Suicide is a sin against the Fifth Commandment because we are stewards, not owners, of the life God has given us. But serious psychological disturbances, fears, and suffering can lessen the responsibility of the person committing suicide. By ways known to him alone, God can offer salvation to people who have taken their lives. The Church encourages us to pray for those who suffer from such serious mental and emotional anguish.

synagogue The Jewish place of assembly for prayer, instruction, and study of the Torah. After the destruction of the Temple in 587 B.C., synagogues were organized as places to maintain Jewish faith and worship. Jesus attended the synagogue regularly to pray and to teach. When visiting a city, Paul would visit the synagogue first. The synagogue played an important role in the development of Christian worship and the structure of Christian communities.

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 or dying. *Tabernacle* is also the name of the tent sanctuary in which the Israelites kept the ark of the covenant from the time of the Exodus to the construction of Solomon's Temple.

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. The Temple provided a place for the priests to offer sacrifice, adore and give thanks to God, and ask for forgiveness. It was destroyed and rebuilt. The second Temple was also destroyed but was never rebuilt. Part of the outer wall of the Temple Mount remains to this day in Jerusalem.

temptation A thought or feeling that can lead us to disobey God. Temptation can come either from outside us or inside us. We are all tempted, but the Holy Spirit helps us resist temptation and choose to do good.

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. By following the Ten Commandments, the Hebrews accepted their covenant with God. The Ten Commandments are also called the Decalogue.

Torah The Hebrew word for "instruction" or "law." It is also the name of the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Tradition The beliefs and practices of the Church that are passed down from one generation to the next under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What Christ entrusted to the Apostles was handed on to others both orally and in writing. Tradition and Scripture together make up the single Deposit of Faith, which remains present and active in the Church.

transubstantiation The complete change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. When the priest speaks the words of consecration at Mass, the substance of the bread and wine changes into the substance of Christ's Body and Blood.

Trinity The mystery of one God existing in Three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each Person is God, whole and entire. Each is distinct only in the relationship of each to the others.

V

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. Through our participation in the Eucharist, venial sin is forgiven, strengthening our relationships with God and with others. The Church encourages us to confess all venial sins in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

viaticum The Eucharist that a dying person receives. It is spiritual food for the last journey we make as Christians, the journey through death to eternal life.

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

vocation The call each of us has to love and serve God and his Church in a particular way in life. Each of us can live out his or her vocation as a layperson, a member of a religious community, or a member of the clergy.

vow A deliberate and free promise made to God by people who want especially to dedicate their lives to God. Their vows give witness now to the kingdom that is to come.

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. Jesus recalls Deuteronomy when he says in Luke 4:8: "You shall worship the Lord, your God, / and him alone shall you serve."

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.