

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.” [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 is gravely against the moral law. [aborto]

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

absolution the forgiveness we receive from God through the priest in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Absolution places us in a state of grace and prepares us to receive other sacraments. [absolución]

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. [abstenerse]

Acts of the Apostles the second volume of Luke’s two-volume work. Written for a Greek Christian audience, it continues the story of Jesus’ Resurrection and Ascension and reports the beginnings of the Church at Pentecost. It then tells stories of the Apostles, including Paul, and how their evangelism spread the Church from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. [Hechos de los Apóstoles]

actual grace the gift of God, freely given, that unites us with the life of the Trinity. Actual grace helps us make the choices that conform our lives to God’s will. (See *grace*, *habitual grace*, and *sanctifying grace*.) [gracia actual]

adoration giving reverence to God by recognizing and worshiping the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, displayed in a monstrance. [adoración]

adultery a sin of unfaithfulness to one’s marriage vows that injures the bond of the marriage covenant. It occurs when two people have sexual relations while at least one of them is married to another person. The Sixth Commandment forbids adultery because it undermines the institution of marriage and is harmful to children, who need the stability of their parents’ marriage commitment. [adulterio]

Advent the four weeks before Christmas. It is a time of joyful preparation for the celebration of the Incarnation, Jesus’ birth as our Savior, and a time for anticipating the coming of Jesus Christ at the end of time, which is known as the second coming. [Adviento]

Advocate Jesus’ name for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comforts us and makes Jesus present to us. [Defensor]

Age of Enlightenment the shift in worldview that took place during the 1700s. The Age of Enlightenment included great advances in science and scientific understanding but also led to questions about religion, morality, and the existence of God. [Ilustración, la]

age of reason the age one must reach in order to receive Confirmation, usually around seven years old. The Church also requires that one reach the age of reason before celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. [uso de razón]

Agony in the Garden the time Jesus spent in fervent prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before his Crucifixion. Jesus’ Agony in the Garden reminds us to remain true to our identity as sons and daughters of God, especially when we are tempted to run away from God. [Oración en el Huerto]

All Saints Day November 1, the day on which the Church honors all who have died and now live with God as saints in heaven. This group includes those who are officially recognized as saints as well as people who have not been officially declared saints but now live in God’s presence in heaven. The feast celebrates our union with those who have gone before us and points to our ultimate goal of union with God. [Día de Todos los Santos]

All Souls Day November 2, the day on which the Church prays that all who have died in friendship with God may rest in peace. Those who have died may need purification in Purgatory before living fully in God’s presence. Our prayers and good works can help them in this process. Along with All Saints Day, this feast reminds us that all who love God, living and dead, are united with Jesus Christ and one another in the Communion of Saints. [Día de Todos los Fieles Difuntos]

Alleluia a prayer of praise to God. It is usually sung as the Gospel Acclamation before the proclamation of the Gospel Reading at Mass except during Lent. [Aleluya]

almsgiving the offering of money, possessions, time, or talent to those in need. Along with fasting and prayer, almsgiving is an important spiritual practice during Lent. [limosna, dar]

altar the table in the church on which the priest celebrates Mass, where 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. It is the place where Jesus Christ offers himself for our sins and where he gives us himself in the Eucharist as food for eternal life. [altar]

ambo a raised stand from which a person proclaims the Word of God during Mass. [ambón]

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. [amén]

angel a spiritual creature who worships God in heaven. Angels serve God as messengers. They tell us God’s plans for our Salvation. [ángel]

Angelus a Catholic devotion recited three times a day—morning, noon, and evening. The devotion reflects on the mystery of the Incarnation—the coming of the angel to Mary, her acceptance of the invitation to be the mother of Jesus, and the Word made flesh. [Ángelus]

anger an emotion that is not in itself wrong, but when not controlled can harden into resentment and hate, becoming one of the seven Capital Sins. (See *Capital Sins*.) [ira]

annulment a finding by a Church tribunal that at least one essential element for a marriage was not present on the day of the wedding. The Church can declare that the Sacrament of Matrimony did not take place if one of the parties did not freely choose to marry, had been married before and that marriage was not annulled, or was not open to having children. An annulment cannot be considered until after a person is divorced. Catholics who receive an annulment are free to marry in the Church. [anulación]

Annunciation the announcement to Mary by the angel Gabriel that God had chosen her to be the mother of the Messiah. She would conceive a child through the Holy Spirit and name him Jesus. The Feast of the Annunciation is celebrated on March 25, nine months before Christmas. [Anunciación]

Anointing of the Sick one of the seven sacraments. In this sacrament a seriously ill person is anointed with holy oil and receives the strength, peace, and courage to overcome the difficulties associated 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. [Unción de los Enfermos]

antiphon one or more psalm verses sung in response during the liturgy. Although the Mass also uses antiphons, they are used in the Liturgy of the Hours to pray about the central events of the Christian faith. [antífona]

apocalyptic literature a form of writing that uses symbolic language and imagery to describe the eternal struggle between good and evil. The Book of Revelation is an example of apocalyptic literature. [literatura apocalíptica]

apologist a defender of the faith. Apologists defend Christianity against critics and proclaim the truths of the faith. [apologista]

Apostle one of the twelve chosen men who accompanied Jesus in his ministry and were witnesses to the Resurrection. *Apostle* means “one sent.” These were the men sent to preach the Gospel to the whole world. [apóstol]

Apostles’ Creed a statement of Christian belief that developed out of a creed used in Baptism in Rome. The Apostles’ Creed lists simple 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 it. [Credo de los Apóstoles]

apostolic the Mark of the Church that indicates that Jesus continues to lead the Church through the pope and the bishops. The pope and the bishops are the successors of the Apostles. (See *Marks of the Church*.) [apostólica]

Ark of the Covenant the sacred box that God commanded Moses to build out of acacia wood to hold the restored tablets of the Law (Exodus 25:10–16). [Arca de la Alianza]

Ascension the entry of Jesus into God’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. [Ascensión, la]

asceticism the practice of self-denial and spiritual discipline as a way of training and forming oneself for the service of God and others. Asceticism can take many forms such as abstinence, fasting, celibacy, and prayer. [ascetismo]

Ash Wednesday the first day of Lent, on which we receive ashes on our foreheads. The ashes remind us to prepare for Easter by repenting and showing sorrow for offending God and hurting our relationships with others. [Miércoles de Ceniza]

assembly the People of God when they are gathered together to worship him. [asamblea]

Assumption when Mary was taken into heaven, body and soul. Mary had a special relationship with her Son, Jesus, from the very beginning when she conceived him. Because of this relationship, she enjoys a special participation in Jesus' Resurrection and has been taken into heaven where she now lives with him. We celebrate this event in the Feast of the Assumption on August 15. [Asunción, la]

atone to make amends for sin. Jesus' obedience to God the Father by dying on the Cross atoned for the sins of the whole world. [expiar]

B

Baptism the first of the seven sacraments. Baptism frees us from Original Sin and is necessary for Salvation. Baptism gives us new life in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The celebration of Baptism consists of immersing a person in water while declaring that the person is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. [Bautismo]

baptismal font the water vessel where the Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated. The baptismal font may be located in a separate baptistry, near the entrance of the church, or in the midst of the community. [fuente bautismal]

basic rights the human rights a government should protect, such as religious liberty, personal freedom, access to necessary information, right to life, and protection from terror and torture. [derechos básicos]

basilica a church of historical significance. Major basilicas are in Rome and are designated churches of ancient origin that serve as places of pilgrimage. Minor basilicas are designated churches that have historical or devotional importance in local areas throughout the world. [basílica]

beatified recognized by the Church as having lived a life of great Christian virtue and declared to be in heaven. Beatified persons are referred to as *Blessed* and can be publicly venerated by the Church. [beatificado]

Beatitudes the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. The Beatitudes are eight guidelines for Christlike living that lead to happiness in this life and eternal joy in the next. They are the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments given to Moses. [Bienaventuranzas]

Bible the collection of books that contains the truths of God's Revelation. These writings, inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by different authors using different styles, are the Word of God. The Bible is made up of 46 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. [Biblia]

bishop a man who has received the fullness of Holy Orders. As a successor to the original Apostles, he cares for the Church and is a principal teacher in it. [obispo]

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. It is also blasphemy to use God's name as an excuse to enslave people, to torture them, or to put them to death. Using God's name to do these things can cause others to reject religion. [blasfemia]

Blessed Sacrament the Eucharist that has been consecrated by the priest at Mass. It is kept in the tabernacle to adore and to be taken to those who are sick. [Santísimo Sacramento]

blessing a prayer that calls for God's power and care upon some person, place, thing, or special activity. [bendición]

Body and Blood of Christ Bread and Wine that have been consecrated by the priest at Mass. In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, all the risen Lord Jesus Christ—body, blood, soul, and divinity—is present under the appearance of bread and wine. [Cuerpo y Sangre de Cristo]

Bread of Life a title that Jesus gives himself in John 6:33–35. Jesus is food for the faithful. [Pan de Vida]

Buddhism a religion based on the teaching of Siddhartha Gautama, who was known as the Buddha, which means "Enlightened One." The Buddha was born to a royal family in northern India about five and a half centuries before Jesus. At age 29 he became disillusioned with life and left his comfortable home to find an answer to the question of why humans suffer. [budismo]

C

calumny (slander) a false statement about someone's reputation that makes others think bad of that person. Calumny is a sin against the Eighth Commandment. [calumnia]

Canaan the name of the land between Syria and Egypt in which the Israelites settled. [Canaán]

canon the official list of the 73 books that make up the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. [canon]

canonization the process by which someone is declared a saint. The process ensures that the person who is a candidate for canonization lived an exemplary Christian life and can serve as a model for Christians around the world. [canonización]

canonize to declare that a Christian who has died is already a saint in heaven and may be looked to as a model of Christian life who may intercede for us. [canonizar]

Capital Sins sins that can lead to more serious sins. The Capital Sins are pride, covetousness, envy, anger, gluttony, lust, and sloth. [pecados capitales]

Cardinal Virtues the four virtues that lead a person to live in relationship with God and with others. Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance can be acquired by education and good actions. (See *fortitude, justice, prudence, and temperance.*) [virtudes cardinales]

cast lots to throw down small stones or pebbles called lots to help determine a decision needing divine guidance. Lots were cast to choose the disciple to replace Judas in the Acts of the Apostles 1:23–26. Roman soldiers also cast lots to divide Jesus' clothing among them as in John 19:24. [echar a suertes]

catechism a collection or summary of Church teachings for the education of the faithful. The current *Catechism of the Catholic Church* provides a contemporary summary and explanation of the Catholic faith. [catecismo]

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

catechumenate the process of becoming a Christian. In the early Church, the process took several years. [catecumenado]

cathedral the main church in a diocese where a bishop presides and where the bishop's *cathedra*, or chair, is located. The *cathedra* represents the bishop's authority as the main teacher of the faith in the diocese. [catedral]

Catholic one of the four Marks of the Church. The Church is catholic because Jesus is fully present in it, because it proclaims the fullness of faith, and because Jesus has given the Church to the whole world. The Church is universal. (See *Marks of the Church.*) [católica]

Catholic social teaching the body of teaching on social justice issues, action on behalf of justice, and work toward a more just world. The Church makes judgments about economic and social matters that relate to the basic rights of individuals and communities. The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about how to build a just society. [enseñanza social católica]

celebrant a bishop or priest who leads the people in praying the Mass. A deacon who baptizes or witnesses a marriage is also a celebrant. [celebrante]

celebrate to worship, praise, and thank God for what he has done for us with prayers and songs, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. [celebrar]

census a systematic counting of the citizens of a particular place. In addition to the census taking place when Jesus was born, the Bible records several censuses, including two in the Book of Numbers and one by King David. [censo]

character a permanent spiritual mark. Character shows that a person has a new relationship with Jesus and a special standing in the Church. Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders each have a specific permanent character and therefore may be received only once. [carácter]

charism a special gift of the Holy Spirit given for the service of others, the good of the world, and particularly for the building up of the Church. [carisma]

charity a virtue given to us by God that helps us love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. (See *Theological Virtues.*) [caridad]

chastity 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. [castidad]

chasuble the visible liturgical vestment worn by the bishop or priest at Mass. A newly ordained priest receives a chasuble as part of the ordination ritual. [casulla]

Chosen People the people set apart by God to have a special relationship with him. God first formed a Chosen People when he made a covenant, or solemn agreement, with Abraham. He reaffirmed the covenant through Moses at Mount Sinai. The covenant is fulfilled in Jesus and his Church. [Pueblo Elegido]

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. [crisma]

Christ a Greek version of the Hebrew word *Messiah*, or “anointed one.” It is another name for Jesus as priest, prophet, and king. [Cristo]

Christian the name given to all those who have been anointed through the gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism and have become followers of Jesus Christ. [cristiano]

Christmas the feast of the birth of Jesus (December 25). [Navidad]

Church the people of God throughout the whole world, or diocese (the local Church), or the assembly of those called together to worship God. The Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. [Iglesia]

clergy those men who are set apart as sacred ministers to serve the Church through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. [clero]

commandment a standard, or rule, for living as God wants us to live. Jesus summarized all the commandments into two: love God and love your neighbor. [mandamiento]

common good the sum total of the social conditions that allow people, individually and as a group, to reach their full potential. The common good requires peace, security, respecting everyone’s rights, and meeting everyone’s spiritual and worldly needs. People have a responsibility to contribute to the good of the entire society. It is one of the basic principles at the center of Catholic social teaching. [bien común]

communal prayer the worship of God together with others. The Liturgy of the Hours and the Mass are the main forms of communal prayer. [oración comunitaria]

Communion of Saints the unity of all, dead or living, who have been saved in Jesus Christ. The Communion of Saints is based on our one faith, and it is nourished by our participation in the Eucharist. [Comunión de los Santos]

community Christians who are gathered in the name of Jesus Christ to receive his grace and live according to his values. [comunidad]

compassion God’s fundamental attitude toward his people. This is best seen in Jesus’ reaching out to heal those in need. Acting with compassion and mercy toward those in need identifies a person as belonging to God. [compasión]

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. [confesión]

Confirmation the sacrament that completes the grace we receive in Baptism. It 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. [Confirmación]

conscience the inner voice that helps each of us judge the morality of our own actions. It guides us to follow God’s Law by doing good and avoiding evil. [conciencia]

consecrate to make a thing or a person to be special to God through a prayer or blessing. At Mass the priest’s words at the consecration transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. People or objects set apart for God in a special way can also be consecrated. For example, men or women living in religious communities consecrate themselves to God through the evangelical counsels. [consagrar]

consubstantial the doctrine affirming that Jesus, the Son of God, assumed human nature while maintaining the same divine nature as God the Father. The Nicene Creed was written in part to make clear that Jesus is consubstantial with the Father. [consubstancial]

consumerism giving undue value to the acquisition of material goods, acting in a way that puts things at the center of one’s life where God alone should be. [consumismo]

contemplate to focus on God while quieting and emptying our minds of all other distractions. [contemplar]

contemplation the act of prayerfully and continuously focusing on God. Many religious communities and spiritualities in the Church are devoted to contemplation. [contemplación]

contemplative the character of an activity or a way of life that is prayerful and continuously focused on God. Many religious communities in the Church are devoted to contemplative life. [contemplativo]

contrition the sorrow we feel when we know that we have sinned, followed by the decision not to sin again. Contrition is the most important act of the penitent preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. (See *imperfect contrition* and *perfect contrition*.) [contrición]

conversion a radical or serious change of the whole life, a turning away from sin and toward God. The call to change of heart is a key part of the preaching of Jesus. Throughout our entire lives, Jesus calls us to change in this way. [conversión]

convert one who embraces a new faith or religion. At the beginning of the Church, whether Gentile converts needed to observe Jewish law was a major controversy resolved at the Council of Jerusalem. [converso]

convocation a gathering of people called together. We are called together in the Church as an assembly to work for the Salvation of all people. [convocatoria]

corporal works of mercy kind 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 imprisoned, giving alms to the poor, and burying the dead. [obras de misericordia corporales]

Council of Jerusalem the name of the meeting around A.D. 50 that is described in Acts of the Apostles. The meeting was the result of a disagreement between Paul and his followers and the Jewish Christian followers of James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church. James felt that those who became Christians should also observe Jewish customs. Paul said that there should be no such necessity. [Concilio de Jerusalén]

counsel one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Counsel helps us make correct choices in life through reflection, discernment, consultation, and advisement. (See *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.) [consejo]

covenant, the in the Old Testament, the solemn agreement between God and the Chosen People, Israel, that involved mutual commitments. God made

covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses and prepared his people for Salvation. In the New Testament, God's new and final covenant was established through Jesus' life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. *Testament* is another word for *covenant*. [Alianza, la]

covet to desire something belonging to someone else out of envy or jealousy. Coveting is desiring something in an impure way. We are forbidden by the Ninth and Tenth Commandments from coveting others' spouses or possessions. [codiciar]

covetousness a craving for wealth or for another's possessions. (See *Capital Sins*.) [avaricia]

creation everything that God created outside himself. Creation also refers to everything that exists. God said that all of creation is good. [creación]

Creator God, who made everything that is and whom we can come to know through everything he created. [Creador]

crèche a Nativity scene depicting the birth of Christ. Crèches are popular ways to observe Advent and Christmas, and they can be found in homes, churches, and public places. [pesebre]

creed a brief statement of faith. The word *creed* comes from the Latin *credo*, meaning "I believe." The Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed are the most important summaries of Christian beliefs. [credo]

crozier the staff carried by a bishop that shows he cares for us in the same way that a shepherd cares for his sheep. It also reminds us that a bishop represents Jesus, the Good Shepherd. [báculo]

crucified the way in which Jesus was put to death, nailed to a cross. As the crucified one, Jesus died for the sake of the world. [crucificado]

Crucifixion refers to Jesus' Death on the Cross. In the ancient method of crucifixion used by the Romans, the victim was tied or nailed to a wooden cross and left to hang until dead, usually from suffocation. The cross with an image of the crucified Jesus on it is called a crucifix. [Crucifixión]

culture the activity of a group of people that includes their music, art, language, and celebrations. Culture is one of the ways people experience God in their lives. [cultura]

D

Daily Examen a prayer from the Spiritual Exercises that helps us become aware of God's presence, give thanks for the day we are given, pay attention to how we feel about our actions, and resolve to act more intentionally in the future. [Examen Diario]

deacon a man ordained through the Sacrament of Holy Orders to the ministry of service in the Church. Deacons help the bishops and priests by serving the various charitable ministries of the Church. They help by proclaiming the Gospel, preaching, and assisting at the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Deacons can also celebrate Baptisms, witness marriages, and preside at funerals. [diácono]

detraction the act of talking about the faults and sins of another person to someone who has no reason to hear this and who cannot help the person. Detraction damages the reputation of another person without any intent to help that person. [detracción]

dignity of the human person a basic principle at the center of Catholic social teaching. It is the starting point of a moral vision for society because human life is sacred and should be treated with great respect. The human person is the clearest reflection of God among us. (See *Catholic social teaching*.) [dignidad de la persona humana]

dignity of work a basic principle at the center of Catholic social teaching. Since work is done by people created in the image of God, it is not only a way to make a living but also an important way we participate in God's creation. In work, people fulfill part of their potential given to them by God. All workers have a right to productive work, decent and fair wages, and safe working conditions. (See *Catholic social teaching*.) [dignidad del trabajo]

diocese the members of the Church in a particular area, united in faith and the sacraments, and gathered under the leadership of a bishop. [diócesis]

disciple a person who has accepted Jesus' message and tries to live as he did, sharing his mission, suffering, and joys. [discípulo]

discipleship for Christians, the willingness to answer the call to follow Jesus. The call is received in Baptism, nourished in the Eucharist, strengthened in Confirmation, and practiced in service to the world. [discipulado]

discrimination the act of mistreating other people because of how they look or act or because they are different. [discriminación]

Dismissal the part of the Concluding Rites of the Mass in which the people are sent forth by the priest or deacon to do good works and praise and bless God. (See *The Order of Mass*.) [despedida]

divine law the moral law as revealed by God in the Bible. [ley divina]

Divine Praises a series of praises beginning with "Blessed be God," traditionally prayed at the end of the worship of the Blessed Sacrament in Benediction. [Divinas alabanzas]

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. [Divina Providencia]

Doctor of the Church a man or a woman recognized as a model teacher of the Christian faith. [doctor(a) de la Iglesia]

doctrine the teachings that help us understand and accept the truths of our faith as revealed by Jesus and taught by the Church. [doctrina]

dogma a teaching that the Church assures Catholics is true and that Catholics are obliged to believe. Papal infallibility, the Assumption, and the Immaculate Conception are all dogmas of the Church. [dogma]

domestic church the Christian home, which is a community of grace and prayer and a school of human virtues and Christian charity. [iglesia doméstica]

doxology a Christian prayer praising and giving glory to God, often referencing the three divine Persons of the Trinity. The Glory Be to the Father and the *Gloria* at Mass are two common doxologies. [doxología]

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. [Pascua de Resurrección]

Easter Vigil the celebration of the first and greatest Christian feast, the Resurrection of Jesus. It occurs on the first Saturday evening after the first full moon of spring. During this night watch before Easter morning, catechumens are baptized, confirmed, and receive the Eucharist for the first time. [Vigilia Pascual]

Eastern Catholic Churches a group of Churches that developed in the Near East in countries such as Lebanon and are in union with the Roman Catholic Church. These Churches have their own liturgical, theological, and administrative traditions. They show the truly catholic nature of the Church, which takes root in many cultures. [[iglesias católicas orientales](#)]

Ecumenical Council a gathering of Catholic bishops from the entire world, meeting under the leadership of the pope or his delegates. Ecumenical councils discuss pastoral, legal, and doctrinal issues. There have been 21 Ecumenical Councils recognized by the Catholic Church. The first was the First Council of Nicaea in 325. The most recent was the Second Vatican Council, which took place between 1962 and 1965. [[concilio ecuménico](#)]

ecumenism the movement to bring unity among Christians. Christ gave the Church the gift of unity from the beginning, but over the centuries, that unity has been broken. All Christians are called by their common Baptism to pray and to work to maintain, reinforce, and perfect the unity Christ wants for the Church. [[ecumenismo](#)]

Emmanuel a Hebrew name from the Old Testament that means “God with us.” In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is called Emmanuel. [[Emanuel](#)]

encyclical a letter written by the pope and sent to the whole Church and sometimes to the whole world. It expresses Church teaching on some specific and important issue. [[encíclica](#)]

envy a feeling of resentment or sadness because someone has a quality, a talent, or a possession that we want. Envy is one of the seven Capital Sins, and it is contrary to the Eighth Commandment. (See *Capital Sins*.) [[envidia](#)]

epiphany an event in the life of Christ when Jesus’ divinity revealed itself. The Church recognizes four epiphanies: the Nativity, the adoration of the Magi, Jesus’ baptism, and Jesus’ sign at the wedding feast at Cana. [[epifanía](#)]

Epistle a letter written by Saint Paul to a group of Christians in the early Church. Twenty-one books of the New Testament are letters written by Paul or other leaders. The second reading at Mass on Sundays and holy days is usually from one of these books. [[epístola](#)]

eternal life living happily with God in heaven when we die in grace and friendship with him. Jesus calls all people to eternal life. [[vida eterna](#)]

Eucharist the sacrament in which we give thanks to God for the Body and Blood of Christ. The Eucharist nourishes our life of faith. We receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the consecrated Bread and Wine. [[Eucaristía](#)]

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 Catholic life. [[Liturgia Eucarística](#)]

Eucharistic Prayer during the Mass the liturgical expression of praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done in creation and in the Paschal Mystery (Christ’s dying and rising from the dead) and through the Holy Spirit. (See *The Order of Mass*.) [[Plegaria Eucarística](#)]

euthanasia an act with the intent to cause the death of a person who is handicapped, sick, or dying. Euthanasia is considered murder and is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, our Creator. [[eutanasia](#)]

evangelical counsels the virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience that help men and women live holy lives in accordance with the Gospel. All Christians are called to live the evangelical counsels, although members of religious communities consecrate themselves by making vows to live according to the evangelical counsels. [[consejos evangélicos](#)]

Evangelist one of the writers of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The term is also used to describe anyone engaged in spreading the Gospel. Letters in the New Testament and in the Acts of the Apostles list Evangelists, along with Apostles and prophets, as ministers of the Church. [[evangelista](#)]

evangelization the declaration by word and example of the Good News of Salvation we have received in Jesus Christ. It is directed both to those who do not know Jesus and to those who have become indifferent about him. Those who have become indifferent are the focus of what is called the New Evangelization. [[evangelización](#)]

examination of conscience the act of prayerfully thinking about what we have said or done in light of what the Gospel asks of us. We also think about how our actions may have hurt our relationship with God and with others. An examination of conscience is an important part of our preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. [[examen de conciencia](#)]

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. [Exilio]

Exodus God's liberation of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt and his leading them to the Promised Land. It is also one of the first five books in the Bible. [Éxodo]

Exultet an Easter hymn of praise sung during the Service of Light that begins the Easter Vigil. [Exultet]

F

faith a gift of God that helps us believe in him. We profess our faith in the Creed, celebrate it in the sacraments, live by it through our good conduct of loving God and our neighbor, and express it in prayer. It is a personal adherence of the whole person to God, who has revealed himself to us through words and actions throughout history. (See *Theological Virtues*.) [fe]

fasting a spiritual practice 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 action in our lives. Adults ages 18–59 fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The practice is also encouraged as a private devotion at other times of penitence. [ayunar]

fear of the Lord one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. This gift leads us to a sense of wonder and awe in the presence of God because we recognize his greatness. (See *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.) [temor de Dios]

feast day important liturgical celebrations in the life of the Church that mark an event in the life of Jesus or the life of a particular saint. [día de fiesta]

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe feast day during the Advent season that celebrates Mary's appearance to Juan Diego. Widely celebrated on December 12, this feast is an important religious day for Catholics, especially those from Mexico and other parts of Latin America. [Solemnidad de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe]

Feast of the Holy Family celebrated on the Sunday that falls within the octave of Christmas or, if no Sunday falls within the octave, on December 30. The feast celebrates the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as a model for all Catholic families. [Fiesta de la Sagrada Familia]

forgiveness the willingness to pardon those who have hurt us but have then shown that they are sorry.

In the Lord's Prayer, we pray that since God will forgive us our sins, we are able to forgive those who have hurt us. [perdón]

fortitude the strength to choose to do the right thing even when that is difficult. Fortitude is one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit and one of the four central human virtues, called the Cardinal Virtues, by which we guide our conduct through faith and the use of reason. (See *Cardinal Virtues* and *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.) [fortaleza]

four last things our belief in the four realities of death, judgment, heaven, and hell. The Church invites us to think about how the choices we make each day have consequences now and in the future. [novísimos, los]

free will the ability to choose to do good because God has made us like him. Our free will is what makes us truly human. Our exercise of free will to do good increases our freedom. Freely choosing to sin makes us slaves to sin. [libre voluntad]

Fruits of the Holy Spirit the demonstration through our actions that God is alive in us. Saint Paul lists the Fruits of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity. [frutos del Espíritu Santo]

fundamentalist a person who believes the Bible is literally true, word for word. Fundamentalists fail to recognize that the inspired Word of God has been expressed in human language, under divine inspiration, in different literary forms, by human authors possessed of limited capacities and resources. [fundamentalista]

G

Garden of Eden a garden created by God, filled with trees and lush vegetation, where God first placed Adam and Eve and from which they were later expelled. [Jardín del Edén]

genealogy a listing of a person's ancestors through generations. Jesus' genealogy is listed in Matthew 1:1–17. [genealogía]

Gentile the name given by the Jews after the Exile to a foreign person. Gentiles were considered to be nonbelievers who worshiped false gods. They stand in contrast to the Jewish people who received God's Law. [gentil]

genuflect to show respect in church by touching one or both knees to the ground, especially before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. [arrodillarse]

gesture the movements we make, such as the Sign of the Cross or bowing, to show our reverence during prayer. [gestos]

gift of peace the peace that Jesus gives to us that flows from his relationship with his Father. This is the peace that the world cannot give, for it is the gift of Salvation that only Jesus can give. [don de la paz]

Gifts of the Holy Spirit the permanent willingness, given to us through the Holy Spirit, that makes it possible for us to do what God asks of us. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are drawn from Isaiah 11:1–3. They include wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. Church Tradition has added piety to make a total of seven. [dones del Espíritu Santo]

gluttony excessive indulgence in food or drink (See *Capital Sins*.) [gula]

God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God in three distinct Persons. God created all that exists. He is the source of Salvation, and he is Truth and Love. [Dios]

godparent a witness to Baptism who assumes the responsibility for helping the baptized person along the road of Christian life. [padrino/madrina]

Good News the meaning of the word *Gospel* in Greek. The spreading of the Good News began on Pentecost and continues today in the ministry of the Church. [Buena Nueva]

Gospel the Good News of God's mercy and love that we experience by hearing the story of Jesus' life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The story is passed on in the teaching ministry of the Church as the source of all truth and right living. It is presented to us in four books in the New Testament: the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. [Evangelio]

grace the gift of God, given to us without our meriting it. Grace is the Holy Spirit alive in us, helping us live our Christian vocation. Grace helps us live as God wants us to live. (See *actual grace, habitual grace, and sanctifying grace*.) [gracia]

Great Commandment Jesus' commandment that we are to love both God and our neighbor as we love ourselves. Jesus tells us that this commandment sums up everything taught in the Old Testament. [Mandamiento Mayor]

Great Commission Jesus' command to the Apostles to spread the Good News to all people. Jesus commissioned the disciples before his Ascension. [misión de los discípulos]

Great Schism a split in the Church during the Middle Ages when two and then three men all claimed to be pope. The split began because the papal court had moved between Rome and Avignon, France. The schism was resolved at the Council of Constance (1414–1418) with the election of Martin V.

[Gran Cisma de Occidente]

Gregorian chant a form of liturgical music that began its development during the time of Pope Gregory the Great. [canto gregoriano]

guardian angel the angel who has been appointed to protect, pray for, and help a person live a holy life. [ángel de la guarda]

H

habit the distinctive clothing worn by members of religious orders. It is a sign of the religious life and a witness to poverty. [hábito]

habitual grace another name for sanctifying grace, as it refers to our God-given inclination and capacity for good. Habitual grace is a participation in God's own spirituality. (See *actual grace, grace, and sanctifying grace*.) [gracia habitual]

heaven union with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in life and love that never ends. Heaven is a state of happiness and the goal of the deepest wishes of the human heart. [cielo]

Hebrew a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who was enslaved in Egypt. God helped Moses lead the Hebrews out of slavery. [hebreo]

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

herald a messenger who announces important news. Angels served as the heralds of the birth of Christ. [heraldo]

heresy a false teaching that distorts a truth of the Catholic faith. Many of the Church councils have taught against heresies about the Trinity, Jesus, or the faith of the Church. [herejía]

holiness the fullness of Christian life and love. 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. [santidad]

holy the Mark of the Church that indicates that the Church is one with Jesus Christ. Holiness is closeness to God, and therefore the Church is holy because God is present in it. (See *Marks of the Church*.) [santo]

Holy Communion the reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ during Holy Mass. It brings us into union with Jesus and his saving Death and Resurrection. [Sagrada Comuni3n]

holy day of obligation a principal feast day, other than Sundays, of the Church. On holy days of obligation, we celebrate the great things that God has done for us through Jesus and the saints. Catholics are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on these days, just as we are on Sundays. [día de precepto]

Holy Family the family of Jesus as he grew up in Nazareth. It included Jesus; his mother, Mary; and his foster father, Joseph. [Sagrada Familia]

Holy of Holies the holiest part of the Temple in Jerusalem. The High Priest entered this part of the Temple once a year to address God and ask his forgiveness for the sins of the people. [Sanctasanct6rum]

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, men receive a permanent sacramental mark that calls them to minister to the Church. [sacramento del Orden]

Holy Spirit the third Person of the Trinity, who is sent to us as our helper and, 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. [Esp3ritu Santo]

Holy Thursday the Thursday of Holy Week on which the Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated, commemorating the institution of the Eucharist. The season of Lent ends with the celebration of this Mass. [Jueves Santo]

holy water water that has been blessed and is used as a sacramental to remind us of our Baptism. [agua bendita]

Holy Week the celebration of the events surrounding Jesus' establishment of the Eucharist and his suffering, Death, and Resurrection. Holy Week commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the gift of himself in the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, his Death on Good Friday, and his

Resurrection at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. [Semana Santa]

Homily the explanation by a bishop, a priest, or a deacon of the Word of God in the liturgy. The Homily relates the Word of God to our lives as Christians today. (See *The Order of Mass*.) [homil3a]

honor giving God or a person the respect that they are owed. God is given this respect as our Creator and Redeemer. All people are worthy of respect as children of God. [honrar]

hope the confidence that God will always be with us, make us happy now and forever, and help us live so that we will be with him forever. (See *Theological Virtues*.) [esperanza]

human condition the general state of humankind. While the human family is created in the image and likeness of God, it is also wounded by sin and often rejects the grace won by Jesus Christ. So while called by God to the highest good, too often human behavior leads to personal and social destruction. [condici3n humana]

I

idolatry the act of worshiping something other than God. Originally idolatry meant the worship of statues or other images of gods, but the pursuit of money, fame, or possessions can become forms of idolatry. (See *consumerism*.) [idolatr3a]

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. [Inmaculada Concepci3n]

imperfect contrition Sorrow for sin that is motivated by reasons other than loving God above all else. Imperfect contrition comes from fear of punishment or other consequences of our sin. Contrition is the most important act of the penitent preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. (See *contrition* and *perfect contrition*.) [contrici3n imperfecta]

incarnate to take human form. The word *incarnate* comes from a Latin term meaning "to become flesh" and describes what happened in the mystery of the Incarnation when the Son of God, Jesus, became man, conceived and born of Mary. [encarnar]

Incarnation Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God made flesh. The Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, is both true God and true man. [Encarnación]

indulgence a lessening of temporal punishment gained through participation in prayer and works of charity. Indulgences move us toward our final purification, after which we will live with God forever. [indulgencia]

Industrial Revolution the rapid economic change beginning at the end of the 18th century and continuing into the 19th century that resulted in a shift away from homemade and agricultural production and toward industry and manufacturing. [Revolución Industrial]

inerrancy the absence of error in the Bible when it tells us a religious truth about God and his relationship with us. The Church teaches the inerrancy of Scripture on moral and faith matters. [inerrancia]

infallibility the inability to be in error or to teach something that is false. On matters of belief and morality, the Church is infallible because of the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. [infallibilidad]

infallible the quality of Church teachings in areas of faith and morals that have been proclaimed by the pope and the bishops, in their role as the Magisterium and guided by the Holy Spirit, to be without error. [infallible]

Infancy Narrative an account of the infancy and childhood of Jesus that appears in the first two chapters of Matthew's and Luke's Gospels. Matthew's Infancy Narrative reveals Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecies. Luke's Infancy Narrative reveals Jesus as a Savior who came for everyone, not the privileged few. The intention of these stories is to proclaim Jesus as Messiah and Savior. [narración de la infancia]

inspiration the quality that explains God as the author who, through the Holy Spirit, enlightened the minds of human authors while they were writing the books of the Bible. God blessed the writers of Scripture with inspiration that enabled them to record religious truths for our Salvation. [inspiración]

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. [inspirado]

Institution Narrative the words prayed by the priest at the Eucharist that recall Jesus' words and

actions at the Last Supper. During the Institution Narrative, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of the risen Christ. [narración de la institución]

intercession a form of prayer on behalf of others. We ask for the intercession of those in heaven, such as Mary and the saints, or those still with us here on earth. [intercesión]

intercessor a person who prays for the needs of others. An intercessor can be someone still alive on earth or a saint in heaven. [intercesor]

interpretation coming to an understanding of the words of Scripture, combining human knowledge with the wisdom and guidance of the teaching office of the Church. [interpretación]

interreligious dialogue the ongoing discussions between Christians and those of other faiths. [diálogo interreligioso]

Islam the third great religion, along with Judaism and Christianity, that professes belief in one God. *Islam* means "submission" to that one God. [islamismo]

Israelite a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God changed Jacob's name to "Israel," and Jacob's twelve sons and their children became the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel. (See *Hebrew*.) [israelita]

J

Jerusalem the city conquered by David in 1000 B.C. to serve as his capital. David also made it the center of worship by bringing in the Ark of the Covenant, which held the tablets of the Law. [Jerusalén]

Jesse Tree an Advent activity that helps us prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth. A small or an artificial tree is decorated with images of Jesus' ancestors. The image is based on Isaiah 11:1, "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, / and from his roots a bud shall blossom." [Árbol de Jesé]

Jesus the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary and who died and was raised from the dead for our Salvation. He returned to God and will come again to judge the living and the dead. *Jesus* means "God saves." [Jesús]

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. [judíos]

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 the son of Jacob, who was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers and then saved them from starvation when famine came. [José]

Jubilee Year a holy year in which the pope calls people to witness to their faith in specific ways. Pope John Paul II announced that 1985 was a Jubilee Year. [Año Jubilar]

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. [judaísmo]

justice the virtue that guides us to give to God and others what is due them. Justice is one of the four Cardinal Virtues by which we guide our Christian life. (See *Cardinal Virtues*.) [justicia]

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. [justificación]

K

Kingdom of God God's rule over us, announced in the Gospel 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. [Reino de Dios]

Kingdom of Heaven the term for the Kingdom of God in Matthew's Gospel. The Beatitudes help us enter into the Kingdom of Heaven by guiding us in ways to live according to the values of Jesus. [Reino de los cielos]

knowledge one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. This gift helps us perceive what God asks of us and how we should respond. (See *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.) [ciencia]

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 ordained ministers to serve the Church. [laicado]

Lamb of God the title for Jesus that emphasizes his willingness to give up his life for the Salvation of the world. Jesus is the Lamb without blemish or sin who delivers us through his sacrificial Death. [Cordero de Dios]

Last Judgment the final judgment of all human beings that will occur when Christ returns in glory and all appear in their own bodies before him to give an account of all their deeds in life. In the presence of Christ, the truth of each person's relationship with God will be laid bare, as will the good each person has done or failed to do during his or her earthly life. At that time, God's kingdom will come into its fullness. [Juicio Final]

Last Supper the meal Jesus ate with his disciples on the night before he died. At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist. [Última Cena]

lectio divina a reflective way of praying with Scripture. *Lectio divina* is Latin for "sacred reading" and is an ancient form of Christian prayer. It involves four steps: sacred reading of a Scripture passage, meditation on the passage, speaking to God, and contemplation or resting in God's presence. [lectio divina]

Lectionary for Mass the official book that contains all the Scripture readings used in the Liturgy of the Word. [Leccionario]

Lent the 40 days before Easter (not counting Sundays) during which we prepare through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving to change our lives and live the Gospel more completely. [Cuaresma]

Light of the World a name that helps us see that Jesus is the light that leads us to the Father. Jesus lights up our minds and hearts, replacing sin and darkness with the knowledge of God. [Luz del Mundo]

litany a prayer that consists of a series of petitions, often including requests for the intercession of particular saints. [letanía]

literary forms the different styles of writing found in the Bible. Some forms are history, proverbs, letters, parables, Wisdom sayings, and poetry. They all have as their purpose the communication of the truth found in God's Word. [géneros literarios]

liturgical year the celebration throughout the year of the mysteries of the Lord's birth, life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The cycle of the liturgical year constitutes the basic rhythm of the Christian's life of prayer. [año litúrgico]

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.” [liturgia]

Liturgy of the Eucharist the part of the Mass in which the bread and wine are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. We then receive Christ in Holy Communion. [Liturgia de la Eucaristía]

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 this prayer. [Liturgia de las Horas]

Liturgy of the Word the part of the Mass in which we listen to God’s Word from the Bible and consider what it means for us today. The Liturgy of the Word can also be a public prayer that is not followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist. [Liturgia de la Palabra]

living wage the amount of income that is enough to support a person and a family in reasonable comfort. Pope Leo XIII defined what a living wage was in his encyclical *On the Condition of Labor*. [salario justo]

Lord a title that indicates the divinity of God. *Lord* replaced *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. (See *Yahweh*.) [Señor]

lust the excessive craving for or indulgence of bodily pleasure that makes the other a victim of our desires (See *Capital Sins*.) [lujuria]

M

Magi, the the men who came from the East to Bethlehem by following a star. They were the first Gentiles to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. [Reyes Magos]

Magisterium the living, teaching office of the Church. This office, through the bishops and with the pope, provides an authentic interpretation of God’s Revelation. It ensures faithfulness to the teaching of the Apostles in matters of faith and morals. [Magisterio de la Iglesia]

Magnificat Mary’s song of praise recorded in the Gospel of Luke. Sung before Jesus’ birth, the *Magnificat* shows Mary’s understanding of Jesus’ mission and her role as a disciple. [Magnificat]

manna the food provided by God when the Israelites were in the desert. [maná]

marginalized those who are viewed as unimportant or powerless in society. We find Jesus among the marginalized, such as people who are poor, mistreated, discriminated against, and the victims of war. [marginado]

Marks of the Church the four most important aspects of the Church found in the Nicene Creed. According to the Nicene Creed, the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. (See *apostolic, catholic, holy, and one*.) [atributos de la Iglesia]

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. [mártir]

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. [Virgen María]

Mass the most important sacramental celebration of the Church, established by Jesus at the Last Supper as a remembrance of his Death and Resurrection. At Mass we listen to God’s Word from the Bible and receive Jesus Christ under the appearance of Bread and Wine that are his Body and Blood. [misa]

Matrimony a solemn agreement between a woman and a man to be partners for life, for their own good and for bringing up children. Marriage is a sacrament when the agreement is properly made between baptized Christians. [matrimonio]

meditate to focus the mind prayerfully on an image or a word in order to experience God and understand God’s will. [meditar]

meditation a form of prayer using silence and listening. Through imagination, emotion, and desire, it is a way to understand how to adhere and respond to what God is asking. By concentrating on a word or an image, we move beyond thoughts, empty the mind of contents that get in the way of our experience of God, and rest in simple awareness of God. [meditación]

memorial a remembrance of events that have taken place in the past. We recall these events because they continue to affect us since they are part of God’s saving plan for us. Every time we remember these events, we make God’s saving action present. [memorial]

mendicant order a unique variety of religious order that developed in the 13th century. Unlike monks who remain inside a monastery, members of Mendicant Orders have ministries of preaching, teaching, and witnessing among people. They are called mendicant from the Latin word for “begging,” which is their major means of supporting themselves. The two main Mendicant Orders are the Dominicans, founded by Saint Dominic de Guzman, and the Franciscans, founded by Saint Francis of Assisi. [\[orden mendicante\]](#)

mercy the gift to be able to respond with care and compassion to those in need. The gift of mercy is a grace given to us by Jesus Christ. [\[misericordia\]](#)

Messiah a title that means “anointed one.” It is from a Hebrew word that means the same thing as the Hebrew word *Christ*. Messiah is the title given to Jesus as priest, prophet, and king. [\[Mesías\]](#)

ministry service or work done for others. All those baptized are called to a variety of ministries in the liturgy and in service to the needs of others. [\[ministerio\]](#)

miracle a sign or an act of wonder that cannot be explained by natural causes and that is the work of God. In the Gospels, Jesus works miracles as a sign that the Kingdom of God is present in his ministry. [\[milagro\]](#)

mission the work of Jesus Christ that is continued in the Church through the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Church is to proclaim Salvation through Jesus’ life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. [\[misión\]](#)

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. [\[misionero\]](#)

monastery a place where men or women live out their solemn vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a stable community. People who live in monasteries spend their days in public prayer, work, and meditation. [\[monasterio\]](#)

monasticism a form of religious life in which men and women live out their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a stable community. The goal of monasticism is to pursue a life of public prayer, work, and meditation under the guidance of a rule for the glory of God. Saint Benedict of Nursia, who died about 550, is considered the father of Western monasticism. [\[monacato\]](#)

monstrance a vessel that holds the Blessed Sacrament for adoration and Benediction. [\[custodia\]](#)

moral choice a choice to do what is right or not to do what is wrong. We make moral choices because they help us grow closer to God and because we have the freedom to choose what is right and avoid what is wrong. [\[decisión moral\]](#)

moral law a rule for living that has been established by God and people in authority who are concerned about the good of all. 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. [\[ley moral\]](#)

mortal sin a serious decision to turn away from God by doing something that we know is wrong. For a sin to be mortal, it must be a very serious offense, the person must know how serious it is, and the person must freely choose to do it anyway. [\[pecado mortal\]](#)

Mother of God the title for Mary proclaimed at the Council of Ephesus in 431. The council declared that Mary was not just the mother of Jesus, the man. She became the Mother of God by the conception of the Son of God in her womb. Because Jesus’ humanity is one with his divinity, Mary is the mother of the eternal Son of God made man, who is God himself. [\[Madre de Dios\]](#)

Muslim a follower of the religion of Islam. *Muslim* means “one who submits to God.” [\[musulmán\]](#)

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. [\[misterio\]](#)

mystic a person who has a special understanding of God from intense, private experiences. [\[místico\]](#)

Mystical Body of Christ the members of the Church formed into a spiritual body and bound together by the life communicated by Jesus Christ through the sacraments. Christ is the center and source of the life of this body. In it, we are all united. Each member of the body receives from Christ gifts fitting for him or her. [\[Cuerpo Místico de Cristo\]](#)

N

Nativity the mystery of Jesus' birth as told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Although the two Nativity stories focus on different details, they relate the same truth that Jesus is the promised Savior.

[Natividad]

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.

[ley natural]

neighbor according to Jesus, this includes everyone, as each person is made in God's image. We are all meant to develop mutually supportive relationships.

[prójimo]

neophyte a person who has recently been initiated into the Church through the Sacraments of Initiation.

[neófito]

New Evangelization the work of missionaries in traditionally Christian areas with people who may already know about Jesus and the Gospel.

[nueva evangelización]

New Testament the 27 books of the Bible that tell of the teaching, ministry, and saving events of the life of Jesus. The four Gospels present Jesus' life, Death, and Resurrection. 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 living through persecution.

[Nuevo Testamento]

Nicene Creed the summary of Christian beliefs developed by the bishops at the first two 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.

[Credo Niceno]

novena a Catholic tradition repeated over a set number of days, usually nine, in devotion to a particular mystery or saint.

[novena]

novice a monk or nun who has not yet taken vows. Novices deepen their faith and learn about the customs, practices, and obligations of the religious life.

[novicio(a)]

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. To imitate the obedience of Jesus, members of religious communities make a special vow of obedience.

[obediencia]

obey to follow the teachings or directions given by God or by someone who has authority over us.

[obedecer]

oil of catechumens the oil blessed by the bishop during Holy Week and used to anoint catechumens. This anointing strengthens them on their path to initiation into the Church. Infants are anointed with this oil right before they are baptized.

[óleo de los catecúmenos]

oil of the sick the oil blessed by the bishop during Holy Week and used in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, which brings spiritual and, if it is God's will, physical healing.

[óleo de los enfermos]

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. The first five books are known as the Torah or Pentateuch. The Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament, but God's covenant presented in the Old Testament has permanent value and has never been revoked.

[Antiguo Testamento]

one the Mark of the Church that indicates the unity of the Church as a community of Christian believers as well as the unity of all the members with Christ. (See *Marks of the Church*.)

[una]

option for the poor the principle of Catholic social teaching that holds that Christians must promote social justice and serve those who are poor (See *Catholic social teaching*.)

[opción por los pobres]

ordained men who have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders so that they may preside at the celebration of the Eucharist and serve as leaders and teachers of the Church.

[ordenado]

Order of Mass the sequence of the prayers, gestures, readings and eucharistic rites of the Mass.

[Ordinario de la Misa]

order of penitents a group of people within the Church, practicing intense repentance. The order of penitents first began in the early centuries of the Church, and many of the practices of Lent, including the use of ashes, come from the penitents.

[Orden de Penitentes]

Ordinary Time the longest liturgical season of the Church. 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 public ministry. The second period focuses on Christ’s reign as King of Kings. [Tiempo Ordinario]

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

Original Sin the consequence of the disobedience of the first human beings. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and chose to follow their own will rather than God’s will. As a result, human beings lost the original blessing God had intended and 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. [pecado original]

Orthodox Church the Eastern Churches that split with the Roman Catholic Church in 1054. These Churches are distinct from the Roman Catholic Church in their liturgy and some of their traditions. [Iglesia Ortodoxa]

P

Palm Sunday the celebration of Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before Easter. Today it begins a week-long commemoration of the saving events of Holy Week. [Domingo de Ramos]

pantheism the belief that rejects a personal God and instead considers that God and the universe are identical. Pantheism was condemned in the *Syllabus of Errors*. [panteísmo]

parable one of the stories that Jesus told to show us what the Kingdom of God is like. Parables present images 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. [parábola]

Paraclete another name for the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised to send a Consoler and Advocate who would help the Apostles continue his mission. [Paráclito]

parish a stable community of believers in Jesus Christ who meet regularly in a specific area to worship God under the leadership of a pastor. [parroquia]

participation one of the seven principles of Catholic social teaching. All people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society. It is a requirement for human dignity and a demand of justice

that all people have a minimum level of participation in the community. (See *Catholic social teaching*.) [participación]

particular judgment Christ’s judgment made of every person at the moment of death that offers either entrance into heaven (after a period of purification in Purgatory if needed) or immediate and eternal separation from God in hell. At the moment of death, each person is rewarded by Christ in accordance with his or her works and faith. [juicio particular]

Paschal Mystery the work of Salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ through his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The Paschal Mystery is celebrated in the liturgy of the Church, and we experience its saving effects in the sacraments. In every liturgy of the Church, God the Father is blessed and adored as the source of all blessings we have received through his Son in order to make us his children through the Holy Spirit. [Misterio Pascual]

Passion the suffering and Death of Jesus. The Passion is part of the Paschal Mystery that accomplished Jesus Christ’s saving work and that we celebrate and remember in the Eucharist. [Pasión]

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. [pascua judía]

pastor a priest who is responsible for the spiritual care of the members of the parish community. It is the job of the pastor to see that the Word of God is preached, the faith is taught, and the sacraments are celebrated. [párroco]

patriarch, Catholic the title used by leaders of certain Eastern Catholic Churches. [patriarca católico]

patriarch, Old Testament a leader of a family or clan within ancient Israel. More specifically, in biblical studies, the patriarchs are the founders of the Hebrew people described in Genesis 12—50. Prominent among the patriarchs are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s twelve sons. [patriarca del Antiguo Testamento]

patriarch, Orthodox the title used by leaders of Orthodox Churches. The bishop of Constantinople is known as the Ecumenical Patriarch. [patriarca ortodoxo]

peacemaker a person who teaches us to be respectful in our words and actions toward one another. [paz, trabajador por la]

penance the turning away from sin with a desire to change our life and live more closely the way God wants us to live. We express our penance externally by praying, fasting, and helping those who are poor. 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. (See *Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation*.) [penitencia]

Penance and Reconciliation, Sacrament of the sacrament in which we celebrate God's forgiveness of sin and our reconciliation with God and the Church. This sacrament includes sorrow for the sins we have committed, confession of sins, absolution by the priest, and doing the penance that shows our willingness to amend our ways. [sacramento de la Penitencia y la Reconciliación]

Penitential Act a formula of general confession asking for God's mercy at Mass. 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. (See *The Order of Mass*.) [Acto Penitencial]

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 born. It is also the Jewish feast, called *Shavuot* in Hebrew, that celebrated the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai 50 days after the Exodus. [Pentecostés]

People of God another name for the Church. In the same way that the people of Israel were God's people through the covenant he made with them, the Church is a priestly, prophetic, and royal people through the new and eternal covenant with Jesus Christ. [Pueblo de Dios]

perfect contrition the sorrow for sin that arises from a love of God above all else. Perfect contrition is the ideal act of the penitent preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. (See *contrition* and *imperfect contrition*.) [contrición perfecta]

personal prayer the kind of prayer that rises up in us in everyday life. We pray with others in the liturgy, but also we can listen and respond to God through personal prayer every moment of our lives. [oración personal]

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

petition a request to God, asking him to fulfill a need. When we share in God's saving love, we understand that every need is one that we can ask God to help us with through petition. [petición]

Pharaoh the Egyptian word for "Great House," referring to the royal palace of the king of Egypt. The reference to Pharaoh became known for the king himself, just as "White House" might refer to the president. Pharaoh was both the political and religious leader of Egypt. [faraón]

Pharisee a member of a party or sect in Judaism that began more than 100 years before Jesus. Pharisees saw Judaism as a religion centered on the observance of the Law. The Gospels depict tension between Jesus and the Pharisees. Pharisees were later found in the Christian community in Jerusalem. (Acts of the Apostles 15:5) Before his conversion, Paul was proud to call himself a Pharisee. [fariseo]

piety one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. It calls us to be faithful in our relationships both with God and with others. Piety helps us to love God and to behave responsibly and with generosity and affection toward others. (See *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.) [piedad]

plague a natural calamity or disease that is seen as being inflicted by God as a remedial event to make people more conscious of their duties toward God and one another. In the Book of Exodus, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians are seen as the means by which God convinced the Egyptians to free the Hebrew people from slavery. [plaga]

Pope the Bishop of Rome, successor of Saint Peter, and leader of the Roman 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. [Papa]

poverty the quality of living without attachment to material goods. All baptized persons, not only those called to religious life, are called to live a holy life by practicing the virtues of chastity, obedience, and poverty. [pobreza]

praise the expression of our response to God, not only for what he does, but also simply because he is. In the Eucharist, the whole Church joins with Jesus Christ in expressing praise and thanksgiving to the Father. [alabanza]

prayer the raising of our hearts and minds to God. We are able to speak to and listen to God in prayer because he teaches us how to pray. [oración]

prayer of intercession a prayer of petition in which we pray as Jesus did to the Father on behalf of people. Asking on behalf of others is a characteristic of a heart attuned to God’s mercy. Christian intercession recognizes no boundaries. Following Jesus’ example, we pray for all people—for those who are rich, for political leaders, for those in need, and even for persecutors. [[oración de intercesión](#)]

precepts of the Church those positive requirements that the pastoral authority of the Church has determined are necessary to a moral life. The precepts of the Church ensure that all Catholics move beyond the minimum by growing in the love of God and neighbor. [[mandamientos de la Iglesia](#)]

precursor a title for John the Baptist as the immediate forerunner of Jesus, the Messiah. John the Baptist is considered the last of the prophets. [[precursor](#)]

presbyter a word that originally meant “an elder or a trusted advisor to the bishop.” From this word comes the English word *priest*, one of the three degrees of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. All the priests of a diocese under the bishop form the presbyterate. [[presbítero](#)]

pride a false image of ourselves that goes beyond what we deserve as God’s creation. Pride puts us in competition with God. It is one of the seven Capital Sins. (See *Capital Sins*.) [[soberbia](#)]

priest a man who has accepted God’s call to serve the Church by guiding it and building it up through the ministry of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. [[sacerdote](#)]

priesthood all the people of God who have been given a share of the one mission of Christ through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The ministerial priesthood, which is made up of those men who have been ordained bishops and priests in Holy Orders, is essentially different from the priesthood of all the faithful because its work is to build up and guide the Church in the name of Christ. [[sacerdocio](#)]

Promised Land the land first promised by God to Abraham. It was to this land that God told Moses to lead the Chosen People after they were freed from slavery in Egypt and received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. [[Tierra Prometida](#)]

prophecy a divine communication that comes through a human person. Prophecy in the Old Testament often tells of the coming of Jesus or conveys an important message to God’s people. [[profecía](#)]

prophet one called to speak for God and to call the people to be faithful to the covenant. Eighteen books of the Old Testament present the messages and actions of the prophets. [[profeta](#)]

prudence the virtue that directs us toward the good and helps us choose the correct means to achieve that good. When we act with prudence, we carefully and thoughtfully consider our actions. Prudence is one of the Cardinal Virtues that guide our conscience and influence us to live according to the Law of Christ. (See *Cardinal Virtues*.) [[prudencia](#)]

psalm a prayer in the form of a poem, written to be sung in public worship. Each psalm expresses an aspect of the depth of human prayer. Over several centuries, 150 psalms were assembled into the Book of Psalms 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. [[salmo](#)]

Purgatory a possible outcome of particular judgment following death. Purgatory is a state of final cleansing after death of all our human imperfections to prepare us to enter into the joy of God’s presence in heaven. [[purgatorio](#)]

R

racism the opinion that race determines human traits and capacities and that a particular race has an inherent, or inborn, superiority. Discrimination based on a person’s race is a violation of human dignity and a sin against justice. [[racismo](#)]

rationalist a person who regards human reason as the principal source of all knowledge. Rationalism was developed by René Descartes and dominated European thought in the 17th and 18th centuries. Rationalists recognize as true only those religious beliefs that can be explained rationally and stress confidence in the orderly character of the world and in the mind’s ability to make sense of this order. [[racionalista](#)]

real presence the way in which Christ is truly present in the Eucharist under the appearance 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. [[Presencia Real de Cristo](#)]

reconciliation the renewal of friendship after that friendship 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. [[reconciliación](#)]

Redeemer Jesus Christ, whose life, sacrificial Death on the cross, and Resurrection from the dead set us free from the slavery of sin and bring us redemption.

[Redentor]

redemption our being set free from the slavery of sin through the life, sacrificial Death on the cross, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. [redención]

reform to put an end to a wrong by introducing a better or changed course of action. The prophets called people to reform their lives and return to being faithful to their covenant with God. [reformular]

refugee a person who flees his or her home country because of a natural or a manmade disaster. Jesus was a refugee when Joseph and Mary escaped to Egypt to keep Jesus safe from King Herod. [refugiado]

relic a piece of the body of a saint, something that belonged to a saint. The first relics were from the bodies of martyrs and were enshrined in Christian basilicas and churches. [reliquia]

religious life a state of life recognized by the Church. In religious life, men and women freely respond to a call to follow Jesus by living the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in community with others. [vida religiosa]

repentance our turning away from sin, with a desire to change our lives and live more closely as God wants us to live. We express our penance by prayer, fasting, and helping those who are poor. [arrepentimiento]

Resurrection the bodily raising of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day after his Death on the cross. The Resurrection is the crowning truth of our faith. [Resurrección de Cristo]

Revelation God's communication of himself to us through the words and deeds he has used throughout history to show us the mystery of his plan for our Salvation. This Revelation reaches its completion in his sending of his Son, Jesus Christ. [Revelación]

righteousness an attribute of God used to describe his justice, his faithfulness to the covenant, and his holiness in the Old Testament. As an attribute of humans, righteousness means being in a right relationship with God through moral conduct and observance of the Law. We have merit in God's sight and are able to do this because of the work of God's grace in us. Paul speaks of righteousness in a new way that is no longer dependent on observance of the Law. It comes through the faith in Jesus and his saving Death and Resurrection. To be made righteous in Jesus is to be saved, vindicated, and put right with God through his grace. [rectitud]

rights and responsibilities an important idea within Catholic social teaching. All people have the right to the necessities for a full and decent life, such as dignified work, health care, and education. All people also have responsibilities to promote the common good and to help others. (See *Catholic social teaching*.) [derechos y deberes]

rite one of the many forms followed in celebrating liturgy in the Church. A rite may differ according to the culture or country where it is celebrated. A rite is also the special form for celebrating each sacrament. [rito]

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) the process through which unbaptized adults join the Church. Catechumens receive instruction in preparation for their initiation into the Church. Lent marks the beginning of the catechumens' final period of preparation. During Lent they participate in the Rite of Election, during which their sponsors stand as witnesses to their faith, moral character, and desire to join the Church. During the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, the Elect profess their faith in Christ and the Church, and they promise to live as Jesus' disciples in the world. They are welcomed into the Church through the Sacraments of Initiation. [Ritual de la Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos]

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 ten 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. [Rosario]

S

Sabbath the seventh day, when God rested after finishing the work of creation. The Third Commandment requires us to keep the Sabbath holy. For Christians the Sabbath became Sunday, the Lord's Day, because it was the day that Jesus rose from the dead and the new creation in Jesus Christ began. [sabbat]

sacrament holy, visible signs that signify a divine reality. Through the sacraments, Christ acts in us to save us. Grace received through the Holy Spirit enables us to carry out our mission as disciples. [sacramento]

sacramental an object, a prayer, or a blessing given by the Church to help us grow in our spiritual life. [sacramental]

sacramental seal the obligation of priests to keep absolutely secret the sins confessed during the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. [sello sacramental]

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 special way to serve others. [sacramentos al Servicio de la Comunidad]

Sacraments of Healing the Sacraments of Penance and Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, by which the Church continues Jesus' healing ministry of body and soul. [sacramentos de la Curación]

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

sacrifice 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 forgiveness. Sacrifice also showed union with God. The great High Priest, Christ, accomplished our redemption through the perfect sacrifice of his Death on the Cross. [sacrificio]

Sacrifice of the Mass the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, which 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. [sacrificio de la Misa]

saint a holy person who has died united with God. The Church has said that this person is now with God forever in heaven. [santo]

Salvation the gift, which God alone can give, of forgiveness of sin and the restoration of friendship with him. [Salvación]

sanctify to make holy. Sacramentals and other Church practices make holy the everyday events and objects in our lives. [santificar]

sanctifying grace the gift from God, given to us without our earning it, that introduces us to the intimacy of the Trinity, unites us with its life, and heals our human nature, wounded by sin. Sanctifying grace helps us respond to our vocation as God's adopted children, and it continues the work of making us holy that began at our Baptism. (See *actual grace*, *grace*, and *habitual grace*.) [gracia santificante]

sanctuary a holy place to worship God. A sanctuary in church is the place where a religious rite is celebrated. [santuario]

Sanhedrin the Jewish court that ruled on matters of faith and practice among Jews. The Sanhedrin was the only Jewish court allowed to inflict the death penalty. [Sanedrín]

Satan 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 a punishment. Satan and the other demons tempt human beings to join them in their revolt against God. [Satanás]

Savior Jesus, the Son of God, who became man to forgive our sins and restore our friendship with God. *Jesus* means "God saves." [Salvador]

scriptorium the room in a monastery in which books were copied by hand. Often beautiful art was added to the page to illustrate a story. [scriptorium]

Scriptures the holy writings of Jews and Christians, collected in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. [Sagradas Escrituras]

seal of confession also called the sacramental seal. It declares that the priest is absolutely forbidden to reveal under any circumstances any sin confessed to him in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. (See *sacramental seal*.) [sigilo sacramental]

second coming the return in glory of Jesus Christ to the world. The Church looks forward to the second coming with joy. [segunda venida]

Second Vatican Council the 21st and most recent Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church. It met from October 11, 1962, to December 8, 1965. Its purpose, according to Pope John XXIII, was to renew the Church and to help it promote peace and unity among Christians and all humanity. [Concilio Vaticano Segundo]

seminary a school for the training and spiritual formation of priests. Seminaries first became widespread in the Church during the renewals of the 1500s. [seminario]

seraphim the heavenly beings who worship before the throne of God. One of them purified the lips of Isaiah with a burning coal so that he could speak for God. (Isaiah 6:6–7) [serafín]

Sermon on the Mount the words of Jesus, written in Chapters 5–7 of the Gospel of Matthew, in which Jesus reveals how he has fulfilled God’s law given to Moses. The Sermon on the Mount begins with the eight Beatitudes and includes the Lord’s Prayer. [[Sermón de la Montaña](#)]

sexism a prejudice or discrimination based on sex, especially discrimination against women. Sexism leads to behaviors and attitudes that foster a view of social roles based only on sex. [[sexismo](#)]

Sign of Peace the part of the Mass in which we offer a gesture of peace to one another as we prepare to receive Holy Communion. This signifies our willingness to be united in peace before we receive the Lord. (See *The Order of Mass*.) [[Rito de la Paz](#)]

Sign of the Cross the gesture we make that signifies our belief in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is a sign of blessing, a confession of faith, and a way that identifies us as followers of Jesus Christ. [[Señal de la Cruz](#)]

sign event in the world that point to a deeper reality. The first half of the Gospel of John presents seven signs that reveal the glory of God and give us a glimpse of what the Kingdom of God is like. [[signo](#)]

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. [[pecado](#)]

sloth a carelessness of heart that leads a person to ignore his or her development as a person, especially spiritual development and a relationship with God. Sloth is one of the seven Capital Sins, and it is contrary to the First Commandment. (See *Capital Sins*.) [[pereza](#)]

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. [[justicia social](#)]

social sin social situations and institutions that are against the will of God. Because of the personal sins of individuals, entire societies can develop structures that are sinful in and of themselves. Social sins include racism, sexism, structures that deny people access to adequate health care, and the destruction of the environment for the benefit of a few. [[pecado social](#)]

solidarity the attitude of strength and unity that leads to the sharing of spiritual and material goods. Solidarity unites rich and poor, weak and strong, to foster a society in which all give what they can and receive what they need. The idea of solidarity is based on the common origin of all humanity. (See *Catholic social teaching*.) [[solidaridad](#)]

Son of God the title revealed by Jesus that indicates 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. [[Hijo de Dios](#)]

soul the part of us that makes us human and an image of God. Body and soul together form one unique human nature. The soul is responsible for our consciousness and our freedom. The soul does not die and will be reunited with the body in the final resurrection. [[alma](#)]

Spiritual Exercises a spiritual retreat written by Ignatius of Loyola, designed to help people become aware of the presence of God in all things. The Spiritual Exercises are a major part of Ignatian spirituality. [[Ejercicios espirituales](#)]

spirituality our growing, loving relationship with God. Spirituality is our way of expressing our experience of God in both the way we pray and the way we love our neighbor. There are many different schools of spirituality. Examples of these schools are Franciscan and Jesuit. These are guides for the spiritual life and have enriched the traditions of prayer, worship, and living in Christianity. [[espiritualidad](#)]

spiritual works of mercy the kind acts through which we help our neighbors meet the needs that are more than material. They include counseling the doubtful; instructing the ignorant; admonishing sinners; comforting the afflicted; forgiving offenses; bearing wrongs patiently; and praying for the living and dead. [[obras de misericordia espirituales](#)]

Stations of the Cross a prayer for meditating on the final hours of Jesus’ life, from his condemnation by Pontius Pilate to his Death and burial. We pray the Stations by moving to each representation of 14 incidents, based on events from Jesus’ Passion and Death. [[Via Crucis](#)]

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. The sixth precept of the Church makes clear our part in stewardship by requiring us to provide for the material needs of the Church, according to our abilities. [corresponsabilidad]

subsidiarity the principle that the best institutions for responding to a particular social task are those closest to it. The responsibility of the closest political or private institution is to assist those in need. Only when issues cannot be resolved at the local level should they be resolved at a higher level. [subsidiariedad]

Summa Theologiae a work of Christian theology in five volumes written by Saint Thomas Aquinas. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas asks questions about thousands of theological topics that continue to influence Christian theology today. [Summa Theologiae]

superior the leader of a community of consecrated religious persons, usually women. [superior(a), madre]

swaddling wrapping an infant in strips of cloth for warmth and comfort. Jesus' swaddling clothes symbolized the humility and poverty of his birth and foreshadowed the shroud he would be wrapped in after his Crucifixion. [envolver en pañales]

Syllabus of Errors a document issued by Pope Pius IX condemning false claims and ideas about the nature of God and the world. The condemned views included claims related to pantheism, socialism, communism, the rights of the Church, and many other topics. [Syllabus Errorum]

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 for prayer and to teach. When visiting a city, Paul would first visit the synagogue. The synagogue played an important role in the development of Christian worship and in the structure of Christian communities. [sinagoga]

synod a meeting of bishops from all over the world to discuss doctrinal or pastoral matters. Synods offer suggestions to the pope, which may or may not become official teachings at a later time. [sínodo]

synoptic the way in which three of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—tell similar stories in similar ways about the life and Death of Jesus. The Gospel of John's structure and stories are often different from the

other three. Although none of the Gospels agree on every detail, each one conveys unique truths from their own perspectives about Jesus' life and mission. [sinóptico]

T
tabernacle the container in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept so that Holy Communion can be taken to those who are sick and dying. It 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. [sagrario]

temperance the Cardinal Virtue that helps us control our attraction to pleasure so that our natural desires are kept within proper limits. This moral virtue helps us choose to use goods in moderation. (See *Cardinal Virtues*.) [templanza]

Temple the house of worship of God, first built by Solomon. The Temple provided a place for the priests to offer sacrifice, to adore and give thanks to God, and to ask for forgiveness. It was destroyed and rebuilt. The second Temple was also destroyed and was never rebuilt. Part of the outer wall of the Temple mount remains to this day in Jerusalem. [Templo]

temptation an attraction, from outside us or inside us, that can lead us to disobey God's commands. Everyone is tempted, but the Holy Spirit helps us resist temptation and choose to do good. [tentación]

Ten Commandments the 10 rules given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai that sum up God's law and show us what is required to love God and our neighbor. By following the Ten Commandments, the Hebrews accepted their covenant with God. [Diez Mandamientos]

theologian an expert in the study of God and his Revelation to the world. [teólogo]

Theological Virtues the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity that are gifts from God and not acquired by human effort. The virtue of faith helps us believe in God, the virtue of hope helps us desire eternal life and the Kingdom of God, and the virtue of charity helps us love God and our neighbor as we should. [virtudes teologales]

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. [Torá]

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. [Tradición católica]

Transfiguration an event witnessed by the apostles Peter, James, and John that revealed Jesus' divine glory. Jesus' face shone like the sun, his clothes became dazzlingly white, and he spoke with Elijah and Moses on the mountain. [Transfiguración]

transubstantiation the unique change of the bread and wine in the Eucharist into the Body and Blood of the risen Jesus Christ, while retaining their physical appearance as bread and wine. [transubstanciación]

trespasses unlawful acts committed against the property or rights of another person or acts that physically harm a person. [ofensas]

Triduum a Latin word meaning "three days" that refers to Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. The liturgies of the Triduum are among the most solemn celebrations of the Catholic faith. [Triduo Pascual]

Trinity the mystery of the existence of God in three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Trinity is God, whole and entire. Each Person is distinct only in the relationship of each to the others. [Trinidad, Santísima]

Truce of God an act of the Church in the 11th century that banned fighting on Sundays and that was eventually extended to more than half the year. [Tregua de Dios]

U

understanding one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. This gift helps us make the right choices in life and in our relationships with God and with others. (See *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.) [entendimiento]

universal Church the entire Church as it exists throughout the world. The people of every diocese, along with their bishops and the pope, make up the universal Church. (See *catholic*.) [Iglesia universal]

V

venerate to show respect for someone or something. Although only God should be worshiped, Christians venerate the saints and objects associated with them to show respect for God's work in their lives. [venerar]

venial sin a choice we make that weakens our relationship with God or with other people. Venial sin wounds and lessens the divine life in us. If we make no effort to do better, venial sin can lead to more serious sin. Through our participation in the Eucharist, venial sin is forgiven when we are repentant, strengthening our relationship with God and with others. [pecado venial]

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. [viático]

Vicar of Christ the title given to the pope who, as the successor of Saint Peter, has the authority to act in Christ's place. A vicar is someone who stands in for and acts for another. (See *pope*.) [Vicario de Cristo]

virtue an attitude or a way of acting that enables us to do good. [virtud]

Visitation one of the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, a reference to Mary's visit to Elizabeth to share the good news that Mary is to be the mother of Jesus. Elizabeth's greeting of Mary forms part of the Hail Mary. During this visit, Mary sings the *Magnificat*, her praise of God. [Visitación, la]

vocation the call each of us has in life to be the person God wants us to be and the way we each serve the Church and the Kingdom of God. Each of us can live out his or her vocation as a layperson, as a member of a religious community, or as a member of the clergy. [vocación]

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. [voto]

Vulgate the Latin translation of the Bible by Saint Jerome from the Hebrew and Greek in which it was originally written. Most Christians of Saint Jerome's day no longer spoke Hebrew or Greek. The common language, or vulgate, was Latin. [Vulgata]

W

Way, the what Saint Paul called the early faith and those who follow Jesus. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our life is a journey of faith on "the Way" for which Jesus gives strength in the Eucharist. [Camino, el]

wisdom one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom helps us understand the purpose and plan of God and live in a way that helps bring about this plan. It begins in wonder and awe at God's greatness. (See *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.) [sabiduría]

Wisdom Literature the Old Testament books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, and Ben Sira. The purpose of these books is to give instruction on ways to live and how to understand and cope with the problems of life. [literatura sapiencial]

witness the passing on 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. [testimonio, dar]

worship the adoration and honor given to God in public prayer. [culto, rendir]

Y

Yahweh the name of God in Hebrew, which God told Moses from the burning bush. *Yahweh* means "I am who am" or "I cause to be all that is." [Yavé]