

Glossary

A

Abba an informal word for *Father* in the language Jesus spoke. Jesus called God the Father “Abba.”

absolution the forgiveness God offers us in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. After we say that we are sorry for our sins, we receive God’s absolution from the priest.

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

adultery being unfaithful to one’s husband or wife. A person who commits adultery breaks his or her marriage promises.

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

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

angel a spiritual creature who brings a message from God

Angelus a prayer honoring the Incarnation of Jesus. The Angelus is prayed in the morning, at noon, and in the evening.

Annunciation the announcement to Mary by the angel Gabriel that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus

Anointing of the Sick a sacrament of healing that unites a sick person’s suffering with that of Christ and brings comfort, forgiveness of sins, and, if God wills, physical healing. The signs of the sacrament are holy oil, called chrism, and the priest’s laying on of hands.

Apostle one of twelve special men who accompanied Jesus in his ministry and were witnesses to the Resurrection

Apostles’ Creed a statement of Christian belief. The Apostles’ Creed, developed out of a creed used in Baptism in Rome, 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 the Apostles’ Creed.

Ascension the return of Jesus to 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.

Assumption Mary’s being taken to heaven, body and soul, by God at the end of her life. The feast of the Assumption is celebrated on August 15.

B

Baptism the first of the three sacraments by which we become members of the Church. Baptism frees us from original sin and gives us new life in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Beatitudes the eight ways we can behave to live a blessed life. Jesus teaches us that if we live according to the Beatitudes, we will live a happy Christian life.

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

Bible the collection of books that tell the history of God’s promise to care for us and his call for us to be faithful to him. God asked that people be faithful first through the beliefs of the Jewish people and then through belief in the life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

bishop a man who has received the fullness of Holy Orders. He has inherited his duties from the original apostles. He cares for the Church today and is a principal teacher in the Church.

Blessed Sacrament the consecrated host kept in the tabernacle to adore and to be taken to the sick.

blessing a prayer that calls for God’s power and care upon some person, place, thing, or special activity

Body and Blood of Christ following the prayer of consecration by the priest, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

C

catholic one of the four Marks of the Church. The Church is catholic because Jesus is fully present in it and because Jesus has given the Church to the whole world.

charity a virtue given to us by God. Charity helps us love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves.

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

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

Christmas the day on which we celebrate the birth of Jesus (December 25)

Church the name given to all the followers of Christ throughout the world. It is also the name of the building where we gather to pray to God and the name of our community as we gather to praise God.

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.

Communion of Saints the union of all who have been saved in Jesus Christ, both those who are alive and those who have died

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

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

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

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 part of our celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

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 the imprisoned, and burying the dead.

covenant a solemn agreement between people or between people and God. God made covenants with humanity through agreements with Noah, Abraham, and Moses. These covenants offered salvation. God's new and final covenant was established through Jesus' life, Death, and Resurrection.

Creation God's act of making everything that exists outside himself. Creation is everything that exists. God said that all creation is good.

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

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

D

deacon a man ordained through the Sacrament of Holy Orders to help the bishop and priests in the work of the Church

devil a spirit created good by God who became evil because of disobedience. The devil tempted Jesus in the desert.

disciple a person who has accepted Jesus' message and tries to live as he did

E

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

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

epistle a letter written by Saint Paul or another leader to a group of Christians in the early Church. Twenty-one of the 27 books of the New Testament are epistles.

Eucharist the sacrament in which we give thanks to God for giving us Jesus Christ. The Body and Blood of Christ, which we receive at Mass, brings us into union with Jesus' saving Death and Resurrection.

evangelization the sharing of the good news, by word or example, of the salvation we have received in Jesus Christ. Jesus commissioned his disciples to go forth into the world and tell the good news. Evangelization is the responsibility of every Christian. The New Evangelization calls believers to a deeper faith and invites those who have heard the Gospel but not been transformed by it to have a true encounter with Christ.

examination of conscience the act of prayerfully thinking about what we have said or done that may have hurt our relationship with God or others. An examination of conscience is an important part of preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

F

faith a gift of God that helps us believe in him and live as he wants us to live. We express our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

fasting 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

free will our ability to choose to do good because God has made us like him

G

Gospel the good news of God's mercy and love. We experience this news in the story of Jesus' life, Death, and Resurrection. The story is presented to us in four books in the New Testament: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

grace the gift of God given to us without our deserving it. Sanctifying grace fills us with his life and enables us to always be his friends. Grace also helps us live as God wants us to.

Great Commandment Jesus' essential teaching that we are to love God and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves

H

heaven the life with God that is full of happiness and never ends

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

holy one of the four Marks of the Church. It is the kind of life we live when we share in the life of God, who is all holiness. The Church is holy because of its union with Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

Holy Orders a sacrament that ordains men to serve the Church as priests, deacons, or bishops

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.

homily an explanation of God's Word. A homily explains the words of God that we hear in the Bible readings at church.

hope the trust that God will always be with us. We also trust that he will make us happy now and help us live in a way that keeps us with him forever.

I
Immaculate Conception the Church teaching that from the first moment of her conception Mary was free from Original Sin. Mary 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. Mary is the patroness of the United States under this title.

Incarnation the Son of God, Jesus, becoming human without the loss of his divinity in order to save us. The Incarnation is one of the main mysteries of our faith.

inspired influenced by the Holy Spirit. The human authors of Scripture were influenced by the Holy Spirit. The creative inspiration of the Holy Spirit makes sure that the Scripture is taught according to the truth God wants us to know for our salvation.

Israelites the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God changed Jacob's name to "Israel," and Jacob's 12 sons and their children became the leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel. (See Hebrews.)

J
Jesus the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary and who died and was raised from the dead so that we can live with God forever. His name means "God saves."

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

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

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

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

Lectionary for Mass the book that contains all the Bible stories we read at Mass

Liturgy of the Eucharist the second half of the Mass, in which the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, which we then receive in Holy Communion.

Liturgy of the Word the first half of the Mass, in which we listen to God's Word from the Bible and consider what it means for us today

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

Lord's Day Sunday is the day Christians set aside for special worship of God. Each Sunday mass commemorates the Resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. Besides telling us to offer God worship we all owe him, the Third Commandment says Sunday is a day to relax the mind and body and to perform works of mercy.

M
martyrs those who have given their lives for the faith. It 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. The seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles recounts the death of the first martyr, the deacon Stephen.

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.

Mass the most important sacramental celebration of the Church. The celebration of the Mass was established by Jesus at the Last Supper as a remembrance of his Death and Resurrection. At Mass we listen to God's Word from the Bible and receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.

Messiah a title that means "anointed with oil." It is from a Hebrew word that means the same as the Greek word *Christ*, the name given to Jesus after the Resurrection.

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

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

moral choice a choice to do what is right. We make moral choices because they are what we believe God wants. We can make them because we have the freedom to choose what is right and avoid what is wrong.

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

mortal sin a serious decision to turn away from God by doing something that we know is wrong and so cuts us off from God's life

mystery a truth revealed by God that we cannot completely understand. The truth that the Son of God became man is a mystery of our faith.

N

New Testament the 27 books of the second part of the Bible, which tell of the teaching, ministry, and saving events of the life of Jesus. The four Gospels present Jesus' life, Death, and Resurrection. The Acts of the Apostles tells the story of the message of salvation as it spreads through the growth of the Church. Various letters instruct us on how to live as followers of Jesus Christ. The Book of Revelation offers encouragement to Christians living through persecution.

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.

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. 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, or set aside.

Ordinary Time the part of the liturgical year outside of the seasons of feasts and the preparation for them. Ordinary means not common, but counted time, as in ordinal numbers. It is devoted to growth in understanding the mystery of Christ in its fullness. The color of Ordinary Time is green to symbolize growth.

Original Sin the result of the sin by which the first human beings disobeyed God and chose to follow their own will rather than God's will. Because of this act, all human beings lost the original blessing that God intended, and they became subject to sin and death. In Baptism we are restored to life with God through Jesus Christ.

P

parable one of the simple stories that Jesus told to show us what the Kingdom of God is like. Parables present images, or scenes, drawn from everyday life. These images show us the radical, or serious, choice we make when we respond to the invitation to enter the Kingdom of God.

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

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. Its saving effects are experienced by us in the sacraments.

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

penance the turning away from sin because we want to live as God wants us to live (*See* Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.)

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.

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

pope the Bishop of Rome, successor of Saint Peter, and leader of the 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.

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 do so.

prayer of petition a request of 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.

Precepts of the Church those positive requirements that the pastoral authority of the Church has determined as necessary. These requirements describe the minimum effort we must make in prayer and the moral life. The Precepts of the Church ensure that all Catholics move beyond the minimum by growing in love of God and love of neighbor.

priest a man who has accepted God's special call to serve the Church by guiding it and building it up through the celebration of the sacraments

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

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

purgatory 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

R

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.

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

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.

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

Rosary a prayer in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When we pray the Rosary, we meditate on the mysteries of Jesus Christ's life while praying the Hail Mary on five sets of 10 beads and the Lord's Prayer on the beads in between.

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 Sunday became the Sabbath because it was the day Jesus rose from the dead and the new creation in Jesus Christ began.

sacrament one of seven ways through which God's life enters our lives through the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus gave us three sacraments that bring us into the Church: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. He gave us two sacraments that bring us healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick. He also gave us two sacraments that help members serve the community: Matrimony and Holy Orders.

Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation the sacrament in which we celebrate God's forgiveness of our sins and our reconciliation with God and the Church. Reconciliation includes sorrow for the sins we have committed, confession of sins, absolution by the priest, and doing the penance that shows our sorrow.

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

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

Sacrifice of the Mass the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, which is remembered and made present in the Eucharist

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

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

Satan the leader of the evil spirits. His name means "adversary." God allows Satan to tempt us.

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

Scripture the holy writings of Jews and Christians collected in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible

Sermon on the Mount the words of Jesus, written in chapters 5 through 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.

sin a choice we make on purpose 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.

Son of God the title revealed by Jesus that indicates his unique relationship to God the Father

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.

Spiritual Works of Mercy the kind acts through which we help our neighbors meet the needs that are more than material. The Spiritual Works of Mercy include instructing the ignorant, admonishing sinners, comforting the afflicted, forgiving offenses, and bearing wrongs patiently, and praying for the living and the dead.

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

T

tabernacle a container in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept so that Holy Communion can be taken to the sick and the dying.

Temple the center of Jewish worship in Jerusalem where sacrifices were offered to God

temptation an attraction, from outside us or from inside us, that can lead us to not follow God's commands

Ten Commandments the 10 rules that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai that sum up God's law and show us what is required to love God and our neighbor

Trinity the mystery of one God existing in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

V

venial sin a choice we make that weakens our relationship with God or other people. It wounds and diminishes the divine life in us.

W

witness the passing on to others, by our words and actions, the faith that we have been given. Every Christian has the duty to give witness to the good news about Jesus Christ that he or she has come to know.

worship the adoration and honor given to God in public prayer

Y

Yahweh the name of God in Hebrew, which God told Moses from the burning bush. *Yahweh* means "I am who am." Out of respect for God's name, Jews never say this name but replace it with other names.