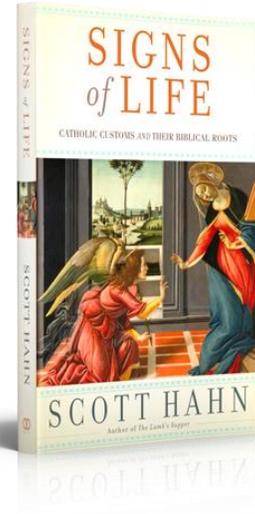


**SIGNS OF LIFE:**  
**20 Catholic Customs and**  
**their Biblical Roots**  
**by Dr. Scott Hahn**  
**Glossary**



**Absolution:** the forgiveness of your sin by a Catholic priest *in persona Christi*. The words of absolution are: “God, the Father of mercies, through the death and Resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church, may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” The penitent answers: “Amen.”

**Apocalypse:** Unveiling, revelation

**Apostasy:** the rejection by a baptized Catholic of the entirety of the Faith

**Ascetic/asceticism:** Spiritual exercise in the pursuit of virtue; ascetics tame the flesh and control their passions (temptations) to imitate Christ.

**Basilica:** a large oblong hall or building with rounded porticoes; a church granted special privileges by the Pope.

**Beatific Vision:** the joy we will experience in Heaven as we see God face to face.

**Beatitude:** the attitude of complete, deep happiness which can only be won through love of God and neighbor through the Works of Mercy.

**Blasphemy:** to speak ill against God in a contemptuous or scornful manner; you can blaspheme in thought, word, or deed. Contemptuous ridicule of the saints, of sacred objects, or of persons consecrated to God is also blasphemy because God is indirectly attacked. Blasphemy is a grave mortal sin if the blasphemer knows what he/she is doing.

**Canonization:** the process in the Church of formally recognizing a saint. A person who has exhibited sanctity during life will be recognized as a *Servant of God*. If two miracles are attributed to the intercession of the Servant of God, the person is *beatified*; now people are permitted to venerate the person. The Church exhaustively researches the life of the *blessed*, to determine if they lived a life of heroic virtue. Only the Pope can canonize a *blessed* to recognize them as saints.

**Confiteor:** the prayer at the beginning of Mass which allays the guilt of venial sins enough so that we may receive Communion. Venial sins must still be confessed as soon as possible. The prayer is: “I confess to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do: through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. I ask Blessed Mary, ever virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.”

**Contrition:** sorrow for your sins. Contrition may be *imperfect*: you are sorry for your sins because of God’s just punishment. Imperfect contrition suffices for a valid confession. *Perfect* contrition is sorrow for your sins because you have offended God, whom you love, and have impaired your relationship with Him.

**Conversion:** a turning away from sin and a turning toward God. This no longer describes one becoming Catholic; we say “come into full communion with the Church” instead.

**Discursive:** to learn in stages or steps; knowledge building upon previous knowledge.

**Docility:** willingness to listen; meekness

**Efficacious:** Something *does* what it says it does; it is effective

**Excommunication:** exclusion from the community of the faithful until such time as the apostate or heretic has repented. Excommunication is meant to be a correction for the salvation of the soul of the apostate or heretic; it is a mercy. Those who are excommunicated are forbidden to participate in Mass or other public devotions (such as public processions or rosaries); may not receive any of the sacraments; and cannot discharge any ministerial duties until they have repented.

**Fiat:** “Let it be done.”

**Heresy:** holding an opinion in opposition to Divinely-revealed Truth through Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium of the Catholic Church; outright doubt or a positive denial of any of the Church’s doctrines.

**Holy Spirit Fruits and Gifts:** See Lesson Four for the seven gifts and the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit and their definitions.

**Icon:** a sacred image rendered in a particular style: painted on wood and covered with silver, gold, and pearls. In the Eastern Church, icons are used rather than statues.

**Iconoclast:** one who smashes Divine or sacred images

**Iconodules:** one who honors sacred images as points of departure for prayer

**Idolatry:** directs Divine worship to a creature or created thing, a sin against the First Commandment (Exodus 20:4-5). Idolatry is a mortal sin, even if the worship is external only and the Catholic does not believe in the idol, as it violates the duty of *professing* the Faith.

**Indulgence:** the remission of the temporal punishment due to forgiven sins. The Church dispenses indulgences from the treasury of superabundant merits of Jesus and the saints. The measure of how efficacious an indulgence is: the perfection of the act itself and the charity with which the task is performed.

**Intercession:** the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints in Heaven, the faithful on Earth, and the souls in Purgatory mediate on behalf of another person, whether living or dead.

**Liturgy:** the work or service of the people; right worship of God.

**Mortification:** practicing asceticism to control your passions, such that you act from your intellect and will rather than emotions or base instincts. This self-discipline is a means to imitate Christ and to offer some suffering to Him which can be used for your purification, payment of your temporal punishment, or for the good of others.

**Mosaic:** A picture made up of tiny pieces of colored glass.

**Menorah:** means “candlestick.” It has seven candles which the Jewish people use to celebrate religious rituals. The menorah symbolizes Creation, with the highest middle candle being the Sabbath. After the the desecration of the Temple in 200 BC when the Jews rededicated the Temple, they had enough oil for one day; but God provided and the oil lasted eight days (the time it took to make more oil).

**Nazirite Vow:** an religious oath taken as a way for non-Levites to participate in the priestly ministry. The Vow was for a finite period of time to dedicate oneself wholly to God. *Nazir* means to consecrate. Jesus was referred to as the *Nazarene* on the inscription on the Cross.

**Pentecost:** In Judaism, Pentecost was the fiftieth day after the first fruits of the harvest; they brought the first fruits of the harvest as an offering to the Lord and the last fruits of the harvest at Pentecost. For Catholics, Pentecost celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and Mary in the Upper Room; the “birthday” of the Church.

**Preternatural:** “Beside nature.” Angels and fallen angels are preternatural; they have abilities which we do not have in the natural order.

**Real Presence:** the Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. The whole Christ is *really, truly, and substantially* Present in the Blessed Sacrament: Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Jesus is uniquely Present in the Eucharist in the fullest sense. See CCC 1373-1381.

**Relic:** An object connected with Jesus or with a saint. A *first-class* relic is something from the body of Jesus or a saint. A *second-class* relic is something used by Jesus or a saint. A *third-class* relic is something which has been touched to a first- or second-class relic.

**Sacrament:** an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Sacraments consist of a “form” – the words we use; and “matter” – the tangible signs of the sacrament. The outward signs are received by us through our physical senses; the inward reality is the grace conferred upon the soul – the communion with God and a share in His Divine life. See the sacrament chart in Session 3.

**Sacramentals:** objects or actions used by the Church to achieve merits of a spiritual nature. These are not sacraments; thus the grace received depends upon the prayerful petition of the person performing the sacramental. Wearing medals or scapulars are examples of sacramentals.

**Schism:** willfully separating oneself from the Church. St Augustine defines it thus: “sinful dissensions which deviate from fraternal charity.” Schism offends against the unity of the Church.

**Supernatural:** “Above nature.” God is supernatural; the miracles He accomplishes and all of His Divine acts are supernatural.

**Temporal punishment:** the punishment that God in His justice exacts (either on Earth or in Purgatory) in payment of your sins. While the *guilt* of the sin is forgiven, the *punishment* must be paid.

**Thurible:** a container for burning incense. See the pictures in Session 6.

**Thurifer:** The person who holds and swings the thurible to waft the sweet aroma of the burning incense.

**Veneration:** the deep respect or honor we pay to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints. This stops short of *worship*.

**Virtues:** There are three *theological* virtues: faith, hope, and charity; these orient our hearts towards God. There are four *cardinal* virtues, so called from the Latin word *cardo*, meaning “hinge.” The other virtues “hinge” upon these four: Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice. *Prudence* is the “charioteer” of the other cardinal virtues: it drives the others. Prudence disposes a person to discern the good and choose the correct means to accomplish it (CCC 1806). *Temperance* enables us to use the goods of this world wisely (CCC 1809). *Fortitude* ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in doing the good (CCC 1808). *Justice* means to give everyone their “due” – giving to God what He is due and to others what they are due – financially, physically, and morally (CCC 1807). The moral virtues are acquired by education, deliberate acts, and perseverance in doing the right thing. In the moral virtues, our efforts are blessed by God’s grace to bear fruit. The more often we practice the moral virtues, the easier and more natural they become for us, as long as we seek to do God’s Will and pursue virtue (CCC 1810). The gifts of the Holy Spirit sustain our pursuit of virtue: these are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. These gifts bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity. (CCC 1831-1832)

**Works of Mercy:** there are Spiritual and Corporal works of mercy. The Spiritual works of mercy are: \*Counsel the doubtful; \*Comfort the sorrowful; \*Instruct the ignorant; \*Admonish the sinner; \*Pray for the living and the dead; \*Forgive injuries willingly; \*Bear wrongs patiently. The Corporal works of mercy are: \*Feed the hungry; \*Give drink to the thirsty; \*Shelter the homeless; Clothe the naked; \*Visit the sick; \*Visit or ransom the prisoners; \*Bury the dead.