

Glossary

ADVOCATE – From a Latin word meaning “to call to one’s aid”; another name for the Holy Spirit.

ANOINT – From a Latin word meaning “to smear with oil.” Anointing is a sacred ceremonial practice in which holy oil is smeared on someone as a sign that they are set apart for a special purpose.

APOSTLE – From a Greek word meaning “one who is sent.” The original twelve Apostles were chosen by Jesus to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations.

ARK OF THE COVENANT – The wooden, gold-covered chest that held the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments and other sacred objects of the Israelites.

ASCENSION, THE – From a Latin word meaning “to go up.” The Ascension occurred forty days after the Resurrection when the Apostles witnessed Jesus go up into heaven.

BAPTISM – From a Greek word meaning “to immerse.” Through Baptism, we become a new creation, an adopted son or daughter of God, and an official member of the Church. The graces of Baptism help us to live and share in God’s love.

BIBLE – From the Greek word *biblia*, which means “collection of books.” The Bible contains seventy-three books of many different types.

CATHOLIC – A word meaning “universal”; the name for the Church instituted by Jesus and passed down through the successors of the Apostles.

CHRISTIAN – A follower of Christ who has been baptized in his name.

CHURCH – The whole assembly of baptized Christians throughout the world who profess the same faith in Jesus Christ.

CONCUPISCENCE – The desire or inclination to commit sin.

COVENANT – From a Latin word meaning “to agree on.” More than a contract, a covenant is an exchange of persons that helps establish an ongoing relationship.

CROSS – In the Roman Empire, crucifixion was a form of execution carried out by nailing or binding a person to a wooden cross. Jesus’ Cross has become a universal Christian symbol of his sacrifice and victory over sin and death.

EXILE – To be forced from your native home and have to live somewhere else. During the Exile period, God’s people were conquered by their enemies and led away from the Promised Land by their captors, and they lived in exile for many years.

FALL, THE – The event in Genesis when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and “fell” from grace.

GARDEN OF EDEN – Also called “Paradise.” God made this special place for Adam and Eve to live in before the Fall.

GOSPEL – From the Old English words meaning “good news.” In the New Testament, the four Gospels are the four books that detail the life, teachings, miracles, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

GRACE – The divine assistance freely given to us by God, which we did not need to earn. Grace allows us to respond to God’s call to become his children.

“I AM WHO I AM” – The holy name of God, first spoken to Moses. “I AM” or “I AM WHO I AM” is the English translation of the four-letter Hebrew word YHWH (commonly pronounced “Yahweh”).

INCARNATION, THE – From the word “incarnate,” which means to take on flesh or human form. Through the Incarnation, God the Son assumed a human body, was born of Mary, and became man.

INSPIRED – From a Latin word meaning “to breathe into.” The Holy Spirit guided the human authors of the Bible as they wrote the truth God wants us to know for our salvation.

ISRAELITES – The descendants of the Patriarch Jacob (whose other name was Israel). Jacob’s twelve sons were the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.

JEWS – Another name for the Israelite people, or “men of Judah,” used in the period of the Exile and after.

JUDGES – The twelve leaders of Israel who were chosen by God to help defend the Israelites from their enemies.

LAST SUPPER – The Passover meal that Jesus ate with his Apostles on the same night as his betrayal and arrest. It was during this meal that he instituted the Eucharist.

LEPERS – People who contracted the disease of leprosy. According to the Law of Moses, lepers were unclean and had to live away from other people.

MANNA – The heavenly food that God provided to sustain the Israelites while they wandered in the desert. Manna was white and sweet and could be made into cakes.

MARTYRDOM – From a Greek word meaning “witness.” A martyr gives up his or her life in defense of the Faith.

MESSIAH – From the Hebrew word that means “anointed one.” The Messiah was prophesied to be as the one who would deliver the Jewish people from oppression.

MORALITY – The principles that determine whether something is right or wrong, good or evil.

NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT – The final, perpetual covenant that God made with the entire human family through Jesus Christ, making it possible for us to dwell with him in heaven for eternity.

NEW TESTAMENT – The latter part of the Bible that details the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, along with the early history of his Church.

OLD TESTAMENT – The first part of the Bible, which details Creation, the Fall, and God’s ongoing attempts to repair his relationship with humanity.

ORIGINAL SIN – The “stain” of sin that we inherited from Adam and Eve, which means we are born in a “state of sin” and require redemption.

OUR FATHER – Also called the “Lord’s Prayer.” This prayer that Jesus taught his disciples is considered a summary of the whole Gospel.

PASSION, THE – The time of Jesus’ suffering, from his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane through his arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

PASSOVER – The Jewish feast that commemorates the night when God “passed over” the Israelite homes in Egypt, protecting their children from death and freeing them from slavery.

Patriarch – The male head of a family or tribe, often the eldest or most respected man in the family. A matriarch is the female head of a family or tribe. The Patriarchs of the Israelites are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

PERSECUTION – The intentional harassment or abuse of a person or group by another person or group, often because of religious differences.

PLAGUES – A series of devastating catastrophes that fell upon the Egyptians after Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go and worship God.

PROMISED LAND – The region that God promised to give to Abraham and his descendants as an inheritance. Other terms for this area are “Israel,” “the Levant,” “Palestine,” and “Canaan.”

PROPHETS – Individuals chosen by God to proclaim God’s will to the people and call everyone to live according to the covenant. In biblical times, they often played an important role as inspired advisors to kings.

REDEEMER, REDEMPTION – From a Latin word meaning “to buy back.” Jesus is our Redeemer because he paid the price for us with his own blood and saved us from sin and death.

REVELATION – Divine truth that God communicates to us through his Word (Scripture) and the teachings handed down to us (Tradition).

SACRED SCRIPTURE – The collection of ancient biblical texts that are inspired by God and reveal his nature and presence to his people.

SALVATION – Our deliverance through Jesus Christ from the powers of sin and death.

SALVATION HISTORY – The events that reveal God’s redemptive plan in human history, culminating in Jesus Christ, who completely reveals the Father to us.

SAVIOR – Jesus Christ, the one who delivers us from the consequences of sin and death.

TABERNACLE – The portable tent that the Israelites used for worship in the desert. It housed the Ark of the Covenant.

TEN COMMANDMENTS – Ten laws that God gave the Israelites to teach them how to live and worship as a free people.

TRINITY – The three distinct Persons who make up the single divine nature of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

TRANSFIGURED – Transformed into something better or more beautiful.

WORSHIP – To honor and show reverence to God alone.