Vocabulary for Unit 1

**Bible:** Also called Sacred Scripture, the collection of Christian sacred writings accepted by the Church as inspired by God. Composed of the Old and New Testaments.

**biblical inspiration:** The guidance of the Holy Spirit in the development of Scripture, whereby the Spirit guided the human authors to teach without error those truths of God necessary for our salvation. It is on the basis of inspiration that we can call the Bible the Word of God.

**canon:** This word has a variety of meanings. The canon of Scripture refers to the Church’s list of books of the Bible. The canon of the Mass is another name for the Eucharistic prayer. Canon law is the official body of laws for Catholics.

**covenant:** In general, a solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being in which mutual commitments are recognized; also called a testament. In the Bible, two covenants are central: (1) the covenant between God and the ancient people of Israel established in the Sinai Covenant with Moses; also called the Old Testament or Old Covenant; and (2) the New Covenant established by Jesus through his sacrificial death and Resurrection; also called the New Testament. The term *testament* has come to be associated primarily with the Sacred Scripture that records the history and meaning of the two biblical covenants.

**Deposit of Faith:** The heritage of faith contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. It has been passed on from the time of the Apostles. The Magisterium takes from it all that it teaches as revealed truth.

**Divine Revelation:** God’s self-communication through which he makes known the mystery of his divine plan. Divine Revelation is a gift accomplished by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through the words and deeds of salvation history. It is most fully realized in the Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

**Ecumenical Council:** A gathering of all Catholic bishops, convened by the Pope and under his authority and guidance. The last ecumenical council was Vatican Council II, called by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

**Gospel:** Most basically, “the good news” (the phrase on which the word *gospel* is based) of the Revelation of God in and through Jesus Christ, proclaimed initially by him, then by the Apostles, and now by the Church; also refers to those four books of the New Testament that focus on the person, life, teachings, suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

**inerrancy:** The fact that the books of Scripture are free from error regarding the spiritual and religious truth God wishes to reveal through them for the sake of our salvation.

**Israelites:** The Chosen People of God; members of the twelve Tribes descended from Jacob who inhabited the land of Israel during biblical times.

**Law, the:** Another name for the Ten Commandments, it is also called the Law of Moses or the Old Law.

**Magisterium:** The official teaching authority of the Church, whose task is to interpret and preserve the truths of salvation revealed in both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

**natural revelation:** The process by which God makes himself known to human reason through the created world. Historical conditions and the consequences of Original Sin, however, often hinder our ability to fully know God’s truth through natural revelation alone.

**New Testament:** The twenty-seven books of the Bible written during the early years of the Church in response to the life, mission, death, and Resurrection of Jesus; also, another name for the New Covenant established between God and humanity by Jesus.

**Old Testament:** The forty-six books of the Bible that record the history of salvation from Creation, through the story of ancient Israel, and up to the time of Jesus; also refers to the Old Covenant established between God and the people of Israel in God’s encounter with Moses on Mount Sinai.

**Parousia:** The second coming of Christ, when his Kingdom will be fully established and his triumph over evil will be complete.

**reason:** The natural ability human beings have to know and understand truth.

**Sacred Scripture:** Generally, the term for any sacred writing. For Christians, the Old and New Testaments that make up the Bible and are recognized as the Word of God.

**Sacred Tradition:** This term (from the Latin, meaning “to hand on”) refers to the process of passing on the Gospel message. Sacred Tradition, which began with the oral communication of the Gospel by the Apostles, was written down in Scripture, is handed down and lived out in the life of the Church, and is interpreted by the Magisterium under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**salvation history:** The pattern of events in human history that exemplify God’s presence and saving actions.