

Vocabulary for Unit 1

Church: The term *Church* has three inseparable meanings: (1) the entire People of God throughout the world; (2) the diocese, which is also known as the local Church; and (3) the assembly of believers gathered for the celebration of the liturgy, especially the Eucharist. In the Nicene Creed, the Church is recognized as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic—traits that together are referred to as “marks of the Church.”

common good: The good that is collectively shared by a number of people and that is beneficial for all members of a given community. Social conditions that allow for all citizens of the earth, individuals and families, to meet basic needs and achieve fulfillment promote the common good.

corporal works of mercy: Charitable actions that respond to people’s physical needs and show respect for human dignity. The traditional list of seven works includes feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, visiting prisoners, and burying the dead.

covenant: A solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being in which mutual commitments are made.

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.

Fall, the: Also called the Fall from grace, the biblical revelation about the origins of sin and evil in the world, expressed figuratively in the account of Adam and Eve in Genesis.

genocide: The systematic and planned extermination of an entire ethnic, religious, political, or cultural group of people.

grace: The free and undeserved gift of God’s loving and active presence in the universe and in our lives, empowering us to respond to his call and to live as his adopted sons and daughters. Grace restores our loving communion with the Holy Trinity, lost through sin.

New Law: Divine Law revealed in the New Testament through the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and through the witness and teaching of the Apostles. The New Law perfects the Old Law and brings it to fulfillment. Also called the Law of Love.

Old Law: Divine Law revealed in the Old Testament, summarized in the Ten Commandments. Also called the Law of Moses. It is succeeded by the New Law of the Gospels.

original holiness: The original state of human beings in their relationship with God, sharing in the divine life in full communion with him.

original justice: The state of complete harmony of our first parents with themselves, with each other, and with all of creation.

Original Sin: The sin by which the first humans disobeyed God and thereby lost original holiness and became subject to death. Original Sin is transmitted to every person born into the world, except Mary and Jesus.



Paschal Mystery: The work of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ mainly through his Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

prophet: A person God chooses to speak his message of salvation. In the Bible, primarily a communicator of a divine message of repentance to the Chosen People, not necessarily a person who predicted the future.

salvation history: The pattern of specific salvific events in human history in which God clearly reveals his presence and saving actions. Salvation was accomplished once and for all through Jesus Christ, a truth foreshadowed and revealed throughout the Old Testament.

Scripture(s): 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.

social justice: The defense of human dignity by ensuring that essential human needs are met and that essential human rights are protected for all people.

synoptic Gospels: From the Greek for “seeing the whole together,” the name given to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, because they are similar in style and content.

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

Trinity: From the Latin *trinus*, meaning “threefold.” Refers to the central mystery of the Christian faith that God exists as a communion of three distinct and interrelated Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery that is inaccessible to human reason alone and is known through Divine Revelation only.

