

## Vocabulary for Unit 2

**apostolic fathers:** A group of Greek Christian authors in the late first and early second centuries. They are our chief source of information about the early Church and may have historical connections to the Apostles.

**Catholic Church:** The name given to the universal group of Christian communities that is in communion with the Pope, the successor of Peter. It was established by Christ on the foundation of his Apostles.

**Communion of Saints:** The spiritual union of all those who believe in Christ and have been redeemed, including those who have died and those who are still living.

**Creator:** A title given to God to signify that God and only God is the ultimate creator of everything that is and everything that ever will be.

**creed:** An official profession of faith, usually prepared and presented by a council of the Church and used in the Church's liturgy. Based on the Latin *credo*, meaning "I believe," the two most familiar Catholic creeds are the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

**denomination:** A group of religious organizations uniting under a single legal and administrative body and subscribing to the same creed and moral code.

**ecumenism:** The movement to restore unity among the Christian Churches and, ultimately, of all humans throughout "the whole wide world" (the literal meaning of the word).

**faith:** In general, the belief in the existence of God. For Christians, the gift of God by which one freely accepts God's full Revelation in Jesus Christ. It is a matter of both the head (acceptance of Church teaching regarding the Revelation of God) and the heart (love of God and neighbor as a response to God's first loving us); also, one of the three theological virtues.

**final judgment:** The judgment of the human race by Jesus Christ at his second coming, as noted in the Nicene Creed. It is also called the Last Judgment.

**gifts of the Holy Spirit:** Special graces given to us by the Holy Spirit to help us respond to God's call to holiness. The list of seven gifts is derived from Isaiah 11:1–3.

**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, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

**heaven:** Traditionally, the dwelling place of God and the saints, meaning all who are saved; more accurately, not a place but a state of eternal life and union with God, in which one experiences full happiness and the satisfaction of the deepest human longings.



**hell:** The state of permanent separation from God, reserved for those who freely and consciously choose to reject God to the very end of their lives.

**Incarnation:** Based on the words meaning “in flesh,” the mystery and Church dogma that the Son of God assumed human nature and “became flesh” in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Incarnation means that Jesus, the Son of God and second Person of the Trinity, is *both* fully God and fully man.

**monotheism:** Belief in one God instead of many.

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

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

**Pentecost:** The biblical event following the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus at which the Holy Spirit was poured out on his disciples; the first Pentecost is often identified as the birth of the Church. In the Christian liturgical year, the feast fifty days after Easter on which the biblical event of Pentecost is recalled and celebrated.

**purgatory:** A state of final purification or cleansing, which one may need to enter following death and before entry into heaven.

**religion:** The beliefs and practices followed by those committed to the Gospel of Jesus and full participation in the life of the Church. By virtue of the First Commandment, the first duty of a religious person is to worship and serve God alone.

**salvation:** Liberation from sin and eternal union with God in heaven. Salvation is accomplished by God alone through the Paschal Mystery—the dying and rising of Jesus Christ.

**Theotokos:** Greek for “god-bearer.” It is the name given to Mary after an ecumenical council in the fifth century to affirm that she is the Mother of the human Jesus and the Mother of God.

**Trinity:** Often referred to as the Blessed Trinity, the central Christian mystery and dogma that there is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

