

Vocabulary for Unit 2

actual graces: God's interventions and support for us in the everyday moments of our lives. Actual graces are important for conversion and for continuing growth in holiness.

blessing: A prayer asking that God care for a particular person, place, or activity. A simple blessing is usually made with the Sign of the Cross.

contemplation: A form of wordless prayer in which one is fully focused on the presence of God; sometimes defined as "resting in God"; a deep sense of loving adoration of God.

efficacious: The power something holds to cause a desired effect. The Sacraments are efficacious in bringing about the spiritual reality they signify.

ex opere operato: The Latin phrase that literally means "by the work worked" or, according to the *Catechism*, "by the very fact of the action's being performed" (CCC, 1128), indicating that Sacraments are efficacious.

freedom: The ability to choose for the good; in light of the Sacraments, true freedom comes from the positive response to God's grace.

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.

intercession: A prayer on behalf of another person or group.

Liturgy of the Hours: Also known as the Divine Office, the official, public, daily prayer of the Catholic Church. The Divine Office provides standard prayers, Scripture readings, and reflections at regular hours throughout the day.

meditation: A form of prayer involving a variety of methods and techniques in which one engages the mind, imagination, and emotions to focus on a particular truth, biblical theme, or other spiritual matter.

petition: A prayer form in which one asks God for help and forgiveness.

popular piety: Religious reverence or devotion of the people, including customs such as novenas (nine days of prayer), honoring or requesting the intercession of a particular saint, praying the Rosary, and so on.

praise: A prayer of acknowledgment that God is God, giving God glory not for what he does, but simply because he is.



prayer: Lifting up of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from him. The five basic forms of prayer are blessing, praise, petition, thanksgiving, and intercession. In prayer we communicate with God in a relationship of love.

redemption: From the Latin *redemptio*, meaning "a buying back"; referring, in the Old Testament, to Yahweh's deliverance of Israel and, in the New Testament, to Christ's deliverance of all Christians from the forces of sin.

Sacrament: An efficacious and visible sign of God's grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The Seven Sacraments are Baptism, the Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.

sacramental economy: The communication or dispensation of the fruits of Christ's Paschal Mystery in the celebration of the Church's sacramental liturgy.

sacramentals: Sacred signs (such as holy water and a crucifix) that bear some resemblance to the Sacraments but that do not carry the guarantee of God's grace associated with the Seven Sacraments.

sanctifying grace: The grace that heals our human nature wounded by sin and restores us to friendship with God by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity. It is a supernatural gift of God, infused into our souls by the Holy Spirit, that continues the work of making us holy.

sign: A word, object, or gesture that refers to a specific thing or action; however, when used with regard to Sacraments, the word *sign* becomes interchangeable with the word *symbol*.

symbol: An object or action that points us to another reality. It leads us to look beyond our senses to consider a deeper mystery.

thanksgiving: A prayer of gratitude for the gift of life and the gifts of life.

vocal prayer: A prayer that is spoken aloud or silently, such as the Lord's Prayer. It is one of the three expressions of prayer, the other two being meditation and contemplation.

walking ritual: Walking together, as in a procession or pilgrimage, symbolic of the journey of life and our solidarity with others on this journey.

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