

## Vocabulary for Unit 5

**Beatitudes:** The teachings of Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount in which he describes the actions and attitudes that should characterize Christians and by which one can discover genuine meaning and happiness.

**cardinal virtues:** Based on the Latin word for “pivot,” four virtues that are viewed as pivotal or essential for full Christian living: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

**common good:** Social conditions that allow for all citizens of the earth, individuals and families, to meet basic needs and achieve fulfillment.

**conscience:** The “interior voice” of a person, a God-given internal sense of what is morally wrong or right. Conscience leads people to understand themselves as responsible for their actions and prompts them to do good and avoid evil. To make good judgments, one needs to have a well-formed conscience.

**conversion:** A profound change of heart, turning away from sin and toward God.

**free will:** The gift from God that allows human beings to choose from among various actions, for which we are held accountable. It is the basis for moral responsibility.

**human dignity:** The idea that because all people are created in God’s image, they have fundamental worth. This notion is the foundation of Catholic social teaching.

**human rights:** The basic political, social, and economic rights that every human being claims, by virtue of their human dignity as beings created by God. Society cannot grant these rights and must not violate them.

**morality:** Dealing with the goodness or evil of human acts, attitudes, and values; involves matters such as right judgment, decision-making skills, personal freedom and responsibility, and so on.

**mortal sin:** An action so contrary to the will of God that it results in a complete separation from God and God’s grace. As a consequence of that separation, the person is condemned to eternal death. To be a mortal sin requires three conditions: it must involve a grave matter, the person must have full knowledge of the evil of the act, and the person must give his or her full consent in committing the act.

**natural law:** Our God-given instinct to be in right relationship with God, other people, the world, and ourselves. The basis for natural law is our participation in God’s wisdom and goodness because we are created in the divine likeness. The fundamental expressions of natural law remain fixed and unchanging, which is why natural law is the foundation for both personal morality and civil norms.

**New Law:** The law of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is a law of love, grace, and freedom. It is distinguished from the Old Law, or the Law of Moses.



**Old Law:** The Law of Moses, the Ten Commandments. It contrasts with the New Law of the Gospel.

**social doctrine:** The body of teaching by the Church on economic and social matters that includes moral judgments and demands for action in favor of those being harmed.

**social justice:** The Church's commitment, and mandate to its members, to engage in conscious efforts to fight against, if not overcome, social sin.

**solidarity:** Union of one's heart and mind with those who are poor and powerless or who face an injustice. It is an act of Christian charity.

**stewardship:** An attitude that we do not own the gifts God has given us but are trustees of those gifts. We have an obligation to share our time, talents, and material treasures with others.

**theological virtues:** The name for the God-given virtues of faith, hope, and love. These virtues enable us to know God as God and lead us to union with God in mind and heart.

**venial sin:** A less serious offense against the will of God that diminishes one's personal character and weakens but does not rupture one's relationship with God.

**vice:** A practice or a habit that leads a person to sin.

**virtue:** A good habit, one that creates within us a kind of inner readiness or attraction to move toward or accomplish moral good. The theological virtues are faith, hope, and love.

