

Vocabulary for Unit 6

Assumption of Mary: The dogma that recognizes that the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken directly to Heaven after her life on earth had ended.

ecumenism: The movement to restore unity among all Christians.

excommunication: A severe penalty that results from grave sin against Church law. The penalty is either imposed by a Church official or happens automatically as a result of the offense. An excommunicated person is not permitted to celebrate or receive the Sacraments.

fiat: Latin for “let it be done.”

heresy: The conscious and deliberate rejection of a dogma of the Church.

indulgence: The means by which the Church takes away the punishment that a person would receive in Purgatory.

Purgatory: A state of final purification or cleansing, which one may need to enter following death and before entering Heaven.

schism: A major break that causes division. A schism in the Church is caused by the refusal to submit to the Pope or to be in communion with the Church’s members.

sola gratia: Central to the Reformation, this phrase means “grace alone,” which means that salvation comes through God’s grace alone rather than through any human effort. This sole focus on grace contradicts the truth that while God’s grace is ultimately the source of salvation, human beings can cooperate with it through their good works, or deny it.

sola scriptura: Central to the Reformation, this phrase means that “Scripture alone,” rather than Scripture and Tradition, should be the basis for Church teaching, in contradiction to the truth of Catholic teaching.

theologian: A person who studies theology. Theology is “the study of God”; the academic discipline and effort to understand, interpret, and order our experience of God and Christian faith; classically defined as “faith seeking understanding.”

theology: Literally, the “study of God”; the academic discipline and effort to understand, interpret, and order our experience of God and Christian faith.

Theotokos: A Greek title for Mary meaning “God bearer.”

