

Vocabulary for Unit 3

bishop: Based on a word for “overseer,” one who has received the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, is a member of the College of Bishops, and is recognized as a successor of the Apostles. When he serves as head of a diocese, he is often referred to as the ordinary or local bishop.

Body of Christ: A term that, when capitalized, designates Jesus’ Body in the Eucharist, or the entire Church, which is also referred to as the Mystical Body of Christ.

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

charism: A special gift or grace of the Holy Spirit given to an individual Christian or a community, commonly for the benefit and building up of the entire Church.

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.

consecrated life: A state of life recognized by the official Church in which a person publicly professes vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

diocese: Also known as a “particular” or “local” Church, the regional community of believers, who commonly gather in parishes, under the leadership of a bishop. At times, a diocese is determined not on the basis of geography but on the basis of language or culture.

doctrine: An official teaching of the Church based on the Revelation of God by and through Christ.

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.

fruits of the Holy Spirit: The characteristics and qualities of those who allow themselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit. They are listed in Galatians 5:22–23.

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.

laity: All members of the Church, with the exception of those who are ordained. The laity share in Christ’s role as priest, prophet, and king, witnessing to God’s love and power in the world.



Marks of the Church: The four characteristics of the true Church of Jesus Christ: One, Holy, Catholic (universal), and Apostolic. These Marks are recited at Mass as part of the Nicene Creed.

martyr: A person who voluntarily suffers death because of her or his beliefs. The Church has canonized many martyrs as saints.

parish: A specific community of believers, commonly but not always defined geographically, whose pastoral and spiritual care is guided by a priest or other leader appointed by a bishop.

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

Passion, the: The suffering and death of Jesus.

Pentecost: The biblical event following the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus at which the Holy Spirit was poured out on his disciples. In the Liturgical Year, the feast fifty days after Easter on which the biblical event of Pentecost is recalled and celebrated.

Pope: Based on a word for “father,” the successor of Saint Peter and Bishop of Rome, who holds the office of the papacy. Often called the Holy Father.

Resurrection, the: The passage of Jesus from death to life on the third day after his Crucifixion; the heart of the Paschal Mystery and the basis of our hope in the resurrection of the dead.

