

Glossary

Abide – to stay with

Absolve – to forgive completely

Absolution – complete forgiveness of sins

Adultery – to be unfaithful to one's husband or wife

Advent – four week season of prayer, penance and preparation for Christmas

Angels – pure spiritual beings who worship and serve God continually

Anoint – to smear or pour oil on the head as a sign that God has specially chosen that person

Apostle – 'one sent out' to preach the good news

Ark of the Covenant – the chest in which Moses placed the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments. The Hebrews treasured it as the most sacred sign of God's presence among them

Ascension – the return of Jesus to his Father in heaven, forty days after his resurrection from death

Authority – the power to settle a question, particularly in religious matters, e.g. the meaning of scripture

Baffling – puzzling, mystifying

Baptism – the rite or sacrament of initiation into the Christian Church

Barren – unable to have children

Bind – to make as law

Bishop – a leader, teacher and guide for God's people (the Church) in a certain area called a diocese

Blasphemy – irreverent or false speech about holy things, e.g. swearing or cursing

Blessed Sacrament – Jesus Christ's body, the consecrated crated host, which is usually reserved (kept safely) in the tabernacle

Bread of Presence – it was an offering, often a food, made to God by the people in their local shrine

Canonize – when the Church makes someone who has died a saint

Cardinal – a cardinal is next in rank to the pope and acts as his adviser and is usually in charge of a large diocese

Carmelite – a member of the order of nuns of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Catacombs – underground passages along which the dead of ancient Rome were buried; Christians met there for worship in times of persecution

Catechumen – a person who is being instructed in the basic teaching of the Christian faith and is preparing for Baptism

Catechumenate – the period of time in which people prepare for the Sacrament of Baptism

Chosen People – the Israelites (Jews) were chosen by God to play a unique role in world history

Chrism – a perfumed oil used for anointing

Christ – another word for Messiah; both mean 'Anointed One' in English

Commandments – the laws given by God to Moses

Commitment – constant effort and enthusiasm for a cause

Conceive – to become pregnant

Confession – speaking out sins to God; also a name for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Confessional – small room in which a person confesses their sins to a priest

Convent – a building occupied by a community of religious women

Conscience – our inner voice that tells us right from wrong

Covenant – a solemn promise between two people or groups of people, e.g. God's covenant with Abraham

Crypt – cellar, basement

Curé – Parish Priest

Deities – gods

Descendants – ancestors, genealogy

Diocese – the Church in a certain area for which the bishop is responsible

Disciple – 'learner or follower'; the disciples followed Jesus during his ministry on earth and learnt from him

Divinity – being God

Emmanuel – a name meaning ‘God with us’, and one of the titles of the Messiah

Eucharist – a service of thanksgiving, frequently used as another name for the Mass or Holy Communion

Evangelical groups – enthusiastic or zealous supporters of a particular cause and very eager to make other people share its beliefs or ideals

Evil One – Satan, the devil

Exorcism – driving out evil, freeing from the grip of sin

Extortion – using force to obtain money or information

Frankincense – a sweet smelling gum burned as incense, a gift for a king

Galilee – the northern Jewish region in which Jesus grew up

Gentiles – not born into the Jewish faith or race, non-Jews

Godparent – someone who promises to help bring a baptised person up as a Christian

Handmaid – a female servant

Haemorrhage – flow of blood

High priest – the senior Jewish leader

Incense – a pleasant smelling gum or spice which is burned as a sign of devotion in a religious ceremony

Indelible mark – a mark that cannot be removed

Iniquity – evil, crime, sin

Israel – God’s chosen people, the twelve tribes of descendants of Abraham

Jews, Jewish People – the name of the people of Israel after about 500 BC

Keys to the kingdom – Jesus gave Simon Peter authority and leadership over the Church, symbolised by ‘the keys to the kingdom’

Kindred – relations

Lay missionary – a missionary who is not ordained to a particular ministry

Legion of Mary – An association of Catholic lay-people who serve the Church on a voluntary basis; there are over three million active members in almost every country in the world

Leprosy – a tropical disease affecting the skin and nerves and in severe cases causing disfigurement

Loose – to untie, to cancel a law or rule

Loose living – reckless living, out of control, irresponsible

Lowly – simple and small

Magnificat – Mary’s song of praise to God after she had been greeted by Elizabeth

Malaria – an infectious disease

Martyr – a ‘witness’, someone who is willing to stand up for their faith, even if it means death

Mass – a frequently used name for the celebration of the Eucharist

Mediator – a go-between, intermediary

Messiah – the Saviour sent by God to save his people from their sins; the one who would preach the Kingdom of God; it is a Hebrew word meaning ‘Anointed One’.

Missionary – someone who goes out to preach and teach about Jesus

Model of faith – an excellent example of one who has absolute trust in God

Monastery – a building in which a group of people with religious vows live together, e.g. monks or nuns

Myrrh – an ointment made from the sap of a tree

Nazareth – a town in Galilee where Jesus was brought up

Nero – a Roman Emperor who in AD 64 began persecuting Christians in Rome

New Testament (NT) – the books of the Bible that deal with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and all that this means for his followers, the Church

Nostra Aetate – it is the Declaration on the Catholic Church’s relation to non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council (1962 - 1965)

Novice – a trainee, someone who has joined a religious order but has not yet taken vows

Novitiate – the part of the convent or monastery where novices live

Old Testament (OT) – the Jewish books of the Bible; they are about the friendship between God and Israel before the time of Jesus

Original Sin – the very first sin, also the sinful tendency that human inherit from the disobedience of Adam and Eve

Pagan – one who does not hold the Christian faith but may believe in many gods of nature, a heathen

Pages in court – servants or attendants to a king

Pentecost – a Jewish feast day, celebrated 50 days after Passover

Pentecost Sunday – a Christian feast day remembering the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and followers of Jesus

Pharisee – a member of a strict sect of people who observed all the Jewish laws and customs, but often it is a word applied to self-righteous people

Ploughshares – the part of the plough that cuts the soil for the furrow

Pneumonia – an inflammatory disease of the lungs

Pope – a word meaning ‘father’; used for the Bishop of Rome and the head of the Catholic Church all over the world

Prevail – triumph, succeed

Proclaim – to speak out or to announce (important news)

Prophecies – messages of divine truth revealing God’s will

Prophet – someone who proclaims God’s messages; one who speaks by divine inspiration

Redeemed – saved, rescued

Remnant – those that remain after the rest has gone

Repentance – turning to God and being truly sorry

Revelation – God’s showing Himself to Israel by His Word in the Bible; Christians believe that Jesus is God’s full self-revelation

Roman governor – the senior Roman in an occupied territory; the Emperor’s representative

Sabbath – the day of rest; seventh day of the week (Saturday in the Jewish calendar, Sunday for Christians)

Sacrifice – the offering of a person or thing to God, often to make up for sin, and sometimes involving death

Sadducees – members of a Jewish group who belonged to the ruling class and denied the resurrection of the dead

Salvation – being saved, being united to God

Sanctifying grace – the help people receive from God enabling them to be saved

Sanhedrin – the Jewish Great Council, made up of Sadducees, Pharisees and teachers of the law

Saul – St. Paul’s name before he was called Paul

Saviour – the One who is to save us from sin

Scapegoat – someone who is made to bear the punishment that should rightly fall on others.

Scribes – those who made and kept copies of the Law and helped interpret the Law

Sects – a denomination of a larger religious group

Stock of Jesse – descendants or ancestors of Jesse

Successor – someone who follows in the footsteps of another, who takes on that person’s duties and responsibilities

Supernatural – above ordinary life; the spiritual life with God

Swaddling clothes – strips of cloth wrapped around a baby

Symbol – something simple that leads one to imagine a bigger, more mysterious reality

Synagogue – place for Jewish prayer and learning

Tax collector – one who collected tax for the Romans from the Jews; tax collectors were usually hated and considered to be public sinners

Temple – the central place of worship and sacrifice for the Jews in Jerusalem

Temptation – thoughts that can lead us to sin if we give in to them

Ten Commandments – ten rules for living life to the full given by God through Moses to Israel

Torah – a name for the first five books of the Bible; these books are also known as the Law or Pentateuch

Tradition – knowledge, beliefs and customs that are handed down from one generation to the next

Transform – change

Trials – troubles, hardship

Visitation – Mary’s visit to Elizabeth after she had been told the news by the Angel Gabriel

Wisdom – the gift of being able to see things as God sees them; the ability to see the truth

Zechariah – father of John the Baptist and husband of Elizabeth