

Abba (AH-buh) The Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke) word for “father.” Jesus called God “Abba.”

abbey (AB-ee) The home of monks or nuns. The leader of monks is an abbot; the leader of nuns is an abbess. See *monastery*.

abortion (uh-BOR-shuhn) The deliberate destruction of a fetus, which is an unborn child.

absolution (ab-suh-LOO-shuhn) The forgiveness of sin through the sacrament of Reconciliation when we are truly sorry. The priest says the words of absolution in the name of Jesus, who died so that our sins would be forgiven. We are pardoned through the power Jesus entrusted to the Church. See *general absolution*.

abstinence (AB-stuh-nuhns) Doing without, usually in a spirit of penance. The Church requires that Catholics over the age of fourteen abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent. See *fasting*.

acclamation (ak-luh-MAY-shun) The people’s short prayer in response to the word of God or after the priest’s prayer during Mass.

Acts of the Apostles (uh-POS-uhls) An

account of the early Church believed to be the continuation of Saint Luke’s Gospel. It describes important events such as the Ascension, Pentecost, the conversion of Saul, and the miracles worked through the apostles.

actual grace (AK-choo-uhl) See *grace, actual*.

actual sin See *sin, actual*.

A.D. Abbreviation of the Latin phrase *anno Domini* (in the year of the Lord), which may be written before or after a year to identify it as a year following the birth of Jesus (dated as 0).

Adam The name of the first man as given in the book of Genesis. See *Eve*.

adoption, supernatural (uh-DOP-shun, soo-per-NACH-er-uhl) The spiritual bond between God and human beings, who are brothers and sisters of Christ. We become members of God’s family through Baptism.

adoration (ad-uh-RAY-shuhn) Worship; the greatest honor, given only to God. Honor given to Mary is not adoration. It is called *hyperdulia*. Honor given to saints and angels is called *dulia*.

adultery (uh-DUHL-tuh-ree) Sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than his or her spouse.

Adultery breaks the marriage vows by which a person promises to love his or her partner only and forever. It is forbidden by the sixth commandment.

Advent The liturgical season, lasting approximately four weeks, during which the Church prepares for Jesus' coming. Advent means "coming." The season of Advent ends with Christmas, the celebration of Jesus' birth, his coming in history. During Advent we also reflect on Jesus' coming to us every day in mystery as well as on his Second Coming in majesty at the end of time.

Advent wreath (reeth)

A circle of evergreen branches (symbolizing God's life that has no end) and four candles, often decorated with bows, that represent the weeks of Advent. Three candles are purple and one is pink. If the candles are white, the bows are purple and pink. On each Sunday of Advent an additional candle is lit and prayers are said. The pink candle is lit on the Third Sunday to express joy that Christmas is near.



advocate (AD-vuh-kit) A person who pleads for another's cause. In the Gospel of John, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Advocate. The Holy Spirit stands up for us as a powerful friend and helps us to follow Jesus and his teachings. Mary, the Mother of God, is also our advocate.

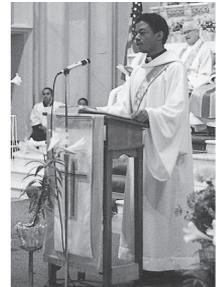
age of reason The point at which a person can tell right from wrong and be held responsible for his or her actions. The age of reason is usually reached by the end of the seventh year. Once a Catholic has reached the age of reason, he or she is required to participate at Mass on Sundays and holy days, and to obey other Church laws. The child is also eligible to receive Holy Communion.

agnostic (ag-NOS-tik) Someone who isn't sure whether or not God exists.

Agnus Dei (AG-nuhs DAY-ee) Latin for "Lamb of God." See *Lamb of God*.

agony of Christ The awful mental suffering that Jesus felt in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before he died as he prayed that the Father's will be done. Jesus' anguish was so great that he sweat blood. But his prayer strengthened him, and through his passion, death, and resurrection, Jesus saved the world.

alb A long, white robe that is worn by ministers of the altar during the eucharistic celebration and other liturgical functions.



All Saints' Day November 1, a feast and a holy day of obligation in the United States (except when it falls on a Saturday or Monday). This feast honors all saints, whether they have been officially canonized or not. Its eve is Halloween,



a name derived from Hallowed (Holy Ones) Eve.

All Souls' Day November 2, a day when Catholics pray for those who have died. Mass is offered for the intention of freeing those who might still be in purgatory.

Alleluia (al-lay-LOO-yuh) A prayer that expresses joy in the greatness of God. The word is Hebrew for "Yahweh be praised!" and occurs often in the psalms. Catholics sing "Alleluia" before and after a brief verse, right before the proclamation of the Gospel during the Mass. During Lent the Alleluia is not said.

Almighty (awl-MY-tee) Able to do all things; possessing all powers. Only God is almighty.

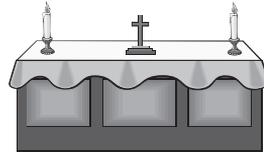
alms Gifts of money or goods made to needy people in a spirit of Christian charity. Almsgiving, along with fasting and prayer, is a practice that characterizes the season of Lent.

Alpha and Omega (AL-fuh and oh-MAY-guh) The first (alpha) and last (omega) letters of the Greek alphabet. In Revelation 22:13, Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. He is everything from eternity to eternity. The alpha and omega are used in Church art and are also carved into the paschal candle.



Alpha & Omega

altar (AWL-ter) The holy table upon which the sacrifice of Mass is offered and around which God's people gather to share the eucharistic meal. The altar stands for



Christ. The relics of saints are often placed in or under the altar.

altar cloth The cloth that covers the altar.

altar server A person who assists the priest at the altar during Mass or who helps in other liturgical services.



altar stone A flat piece of stone that contains relics and is embedded in the altar.

ambo (AM-boh) The lectern from which the word of God is proclaimed.



ambry (AM-bree, also spelled aumbry) Wall cupboard in the sanctuary of the church in which holy oils are kept.

amen A Hebrew word that means "yes!" or "truly." Saying "Amen" after a prayer is an expression of one's faith and one's agreement with the prayer.

angels (AYN-jels) Powerful beings created by God who have high intelligence and free will and, like God, are pure spirit. They praise and serve God, sometimes

acting as his messengers. Although angels have no bodies, they can assume bodies when appearing on earth. According to tradition, some angels turned against God and became fallen angels. Tradition also holds that there are nine choirs of angels with different tasks. See *guardian angels, archangel, devils, cherubim, seraphim*.

requirements for a true marriage was lacking. For example, if the marriage wasn't freely entered into, it would be invalid. An annulment is declared only after a thorough investigation. Persons who have been granted an annulment are free to marry again.

DID YOU KNOW?



The nine choirs of angels are: seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, archangels, principalities, and angels.



Annunciation (uh-nuhn-see-AY-shuhn) The Angel Gabriel's announcement of the Incarnation to Mary at Nazareth. At Mary's consent, the Son of God became man in her through the power of the Holy Spirit. The feast of the Annunciation is March 25, nine months before Christmas. See *Incarnation*.

Angelus (AN-juh-luhs) A prayer honoring Mary and the Incarnation, traditionally prayed in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. The Angelus takes its name from its first word in Latin, *angelus*, which means "the angel." See *Incarnation*.

anointing (uh-NOINT-ing) Pouring blessed oil on persons, places, or things, to make them holy. Israelites anointed their priests, prophets, and kings. Anointing with oil is used in celebrating the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Orders. See *oils, holy*.

anger An emotion that can be either good or bad. Anger is a capital sin when it leads to the desire for revenge or actions that harm a person. Anger is just if it leads to good changes through lawful means.

Anointing of the Sick A sacrament administered by a priest or bishop to those who are seriously ill, elderly, or in danger of death. Through the blessed oil of the sick and the words of this sacrament, God offers spiritual healing, the

annulment (uh-NUHL-munt) A Church decree stating that two people were not actually married because one of the

forgiveness of sin, strength to cope with the condition, peace, and sometimes physical healing. This sacrament was formerly called Extreme Unction.

antichrist Jesus Christ's ultimate enemy. According to Scripture, the antichrist will appear shortly before the Second Coming of the Lord.

antiphon (AN-tuh-fon) A short verse, usually from a psalm or other part of the Bible. An antiphon is said or sung before and/or after a psalm or in between its verses.

Apocalypse (uh-POK-uh-lips) See *Revelation, Book of*.

Apocrypha (uh-POK-ruh-fuh) On the one hand, writings that are not included in the Bible because the Church concluded they were not divinely inspired, for example, the Gospel of Thomas. On the other hand, the Catholic Church includes some books in the Bible that Protestants do not, and they call those books the Apocrypha.

apostasy (uh-POS-tuh-see) The rejection of Christian faith by a baptized person who had freely believed.

apostle (uh-POS-uhl)
One who is sent and who represents and acts on the authority of the sender. The term is usually applied to the twelve men that Jesus chose



as his closest followers. These became

witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, preachers of the Gospel, and leaders of his Church. Today's bishops are their successors. The twelve apostles are Peter, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew (or Nathanael), Matthew, Simon, Jude (Thaddeus), and Matthias, who replaced Judas Iscariot, the betrayer. Saint Paul is called the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Apostles' Creed A prayer from the first centuries of the Church that is a statement of belief, summarizing the teachings of the apostles. The Apostles' Creed has twelve articles (parts) that contain the main beliefs of Christianity. It is handed on as a gift during the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Apostleship of Prayer (uh-POS-uhl-ship) A worldwide Catholic organization that promotes prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Members daily pray the Morning Offering for the two intentions the pope assigns for each month.

apostolate (uh-POS-tl-it) Work that the followers of Jesus do today to carry on the mission he entrusted to his apostles—the salvation of the world.

apostolicity (uh-pos-tl-IS-i-tee) One of the four identifying characteristics, or marks, of the true Catholic Church. It has three meanings: (1) The Church is founded on the apostles and shares in the mission Jesus gave them. (2) The pope and bishops—who are lawful successors of the apostles—have the same special authority and responsibilities

that Jesus entrusted to the first apostles. (3) Led by the hierarchy, the Church teaches today what Jesus handed on to the apostles to teach.

Apostolic See (ap-uh-STOL-ik) See *Holy See*.

apparition (ap-uh-RISH-uhn) A vision of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, another saint, or an angel. In the Bible, angels often appeared to people. Today, the Church carefully investigates claims that an apparition has taken place and never declares that it must be believed. Popular approved sites of Marian apparitions are Lourdes, Fatima, and Guadalupe.

Aramaic (ar-uh-MAY-ik) The language spoken by Jesus and most of the Jews during Jesus' life. The New Testament contains several Aramaic words and phrases.

archangel (AHRK-ayn-juhl) A high-ranking angel whom God sends to deliver important messages to people during key times in salvation history. For example, the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary that God had chosen her to become the mother of the Savior. In the Bible we read that the Archangel Michael and his angels battled with Satan. He is the champion of loyalty to God and the protector of the People of God. The story of the Archangel Raphael, who brought healing to the blind man Tobit and accompanied Tobit's son on his journey, is also found in the Bible.

archbishop (ahrch-BISH-uhp) The bishop of an archdiocese, who usually has some authority over bishops in nearby dioceses.

archdiocese (arch-DY-uh-sees) A territory headed by an archbishop that is the primary diocese in a group of dioceses that form a Church province. See *diocese*.

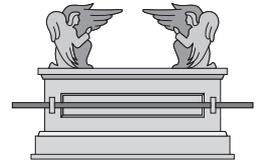
ark In the Book of Genesis, the large boat that Noah built to save himself, his family, and pairs of animals during the great flood.



God sent forty days of rain to wipe out other

life on earth because of sin. The ark is a symbol of the Church, which saves us. See *deluge*.

ark of the covenant (KUHV-uh-nuhnt) The portable wooden box that Moses built to hold the stone tablets containing the commandments. The ark was lined with gold inside and out, and on the top were two angels facing each other. To the Israelites, the ark was the throne of God and a sign of his presence with them in their desert wanderings and in the first Temple, where the ark was kept in the holy of holies.



articles of faith (AHR-ti-kuhls) Statements of belief about truths revealed by God.

Ascension (uh-SEN-shuhn) The entry of Jesus into heaven forty days after his resurrection when he was exalted at the Father's right hand where he remains in glory. The feast of the Ascension is a holy day of obligation in the United States. It is celebrated either on the Thursday that falls forty days after Easter, or on the nearest Sunday. The bishop of each diocese makes this decision.

Ash Wednesday The first day of Lent. On this day, blessed ashes, obtained by burning the palms used on the previous Palm Sunday, are traced on the foreheads of believers in the form of a cross. Wearing ashes has long been a sign of one's sorrow for sin. The ashes and the words said remind us of death and of the importance of contrition and penance.

assumption (uh-SUHMP-shuhn) The taking up of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, body and soul, into heaven at the end of her earthly life. She is already enjoying the state that awaits the other faithful members of the Church at the end of

the world. The feast of the Assumption, celebrated on August 15, is a holy day of obligation in the United States (except when it falls on a Saturday or Monday).

astrology (uh-STROL-uh-jee) The sin of foretelling the future by studying the position of the stars. See *divination*.

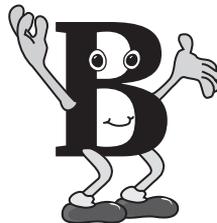
atheist (AY-thee-ist) Someone who doesn't believe that God exists.

atonement (uh-TOHN-muhnt) The redemptive act of Jesus that reconciled human beings with God. The word means "at one" again.

auxiliary bishop (awg-ZIL-yuh-ree) See *bishop, auxiliary*.

avarice (AV-er-is) Greed, covetousness, an *extreme* desire for wealth. This capital sin is committed when a person values material goods above everything else, including the welfare of others.

Ave Maria (AH-vay muh-REE-uh) The Latin words for "Hail Mary."



Babel, Tower of (BAB-uhl) A structure that Noah's descendants built. Genesis

11:1–9 tells this story, which is intended to explain the origin of nations and lan-

guages. God confused the languages of the people and they scattered to different parts of the earth.

balm The fragrant resin from certain trees that is mixed with oil to make chrism.

banns The public announcement—in speech or writing—that a couple has decided to marry. The purpose of the banns is to find out whether there is any impediment to the marriage. Banns are usually published three times in the parish bulletin.

Baptism (BAP-tiz-uhm) The first and most necessary sacrament of initiation that makes us children of God and members of the Church and gives us the right to receive the other sacraments. It unites us to Christ and, through his death and resurrection, makes us heirs of heaven. At Baptism, a person is freed of original sin as well as any personal sin, and is given sanctifying grace, the theological virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The sacrament consists of pouring water on a person or immersing him or her while saying, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” In an emergency, anyone can baptize. See *theological virtues*.

Baptism, conditional (kuhn-DISH-uh-nl) Baptism that is administered when there is doubt about whether a person has been validly baptized. The minister prefaces the words of Baptism with “If you are not yet baptized.”

Baptism of blood The sacrament of salvation (the removal of sin and granting of sanctifying grace) that is received by someone who dies for the Catholic faith before he or she is able to be baptized with water.

Baptism of desire The sacrament of salvation that is received by someone who intends to seek God and do God’s will and is sorry for sin but who is unable to be baptized with water.

baptismal font

(bap-TIZ-muhl)

A basin or pool that is used for baptisms.

baptistery

(BAP-tuh-tree) A building separate from the church or the part of the church that is used for baptisms.



basilica (buh-SIL-i-kuh) An especially important church. Major basilicas are located in Rome; minor basilicas are found there and elsewhere.

B.C. Abbreviation for “before Christ.” The years *before* the birth of Jesus (dated as 0) are preceded or followed by “B.C.”

beatification

(bee-at-uh-fi-KAY-shuhn) The last step before a person is declared a saint. The pope beatifies a person after his or her writings, teaching, and life are carefully studied and found to be worthy, and after a miracle has been worked through the person’s interces-



sion. Once beatified, a person is called Blessed and can be publicly honored in Church celebrations. See *canonization*.

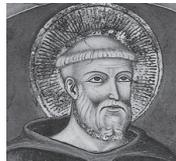
beatific vision (bee-uh-TIF-ik) The clear knowledge of God enjoyed by those who are in heaven and see God face to face as he is. While on earth, we know God through our faith and minds and creation. Those in heaven know God directly, and this bond brings complete happiness. *Beatific* means causing perfect happiness.

Beatitudes (bee-AT-uh-toohdz) Promises made by Jesus that form a blueprint for Christian living, a way that we can achieve the fullness of life and happiness. In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus gives eight Beatitudes during the Sermon on the Mount. In Luke’s Gospel, he gives four Beatitudes. See p. 82 for a list of the Beatitudes.

Beelzebub (bee-EL-zuh-buhb) Another name for Satan or anyone who does his work. In Matthew 12:24, Beelzebub means the “prince of demons.”

belief The act of faith in which a person accepts certain truths revealed by God.

Benedictines (ben-i-DIK-tins) The religious order founded by Saint Benedict in the sixth century that became the foundation of Western monasticism (the way of life for monks and nuns). The Benedictine Rule combines prayer and work. See *monk, nun*.



St. Benedict, founder of the Benedictines

Benediction (ben-i-DIK-shun) A blessing, in particular the act of blessing people with the Holy Eucharist after exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. See *exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*.

Bethlehem (BETH-li-hem) A town in Israel not far from Jerusalem where King David and his descendant Jesus Christ were born. Bethlehem means “House of Bread.”

Bible The collection of various kinds of books written by human beings under the inspiration of God, who is the author. The Bible, also known as Sacred Scripture, has two major parts: the Old Testament, composed of forty-six books, and the New Testament, composed of twenty-seven books. Along with Sacred Tradition, the Bible is the source of God’s revelation to human beings. See *Tradition, Sacred*. See p. 87 for a list of books in the Bible.

biretta (buh-RET-uh) A ceremonial cap worn by priests, bishops, and cardinals for special occasions. Since Vatican II, its use has become less common.



birth control See *contraception*.

bishop A successor of the apostles who usually is the head of a diocese and presides at its cathedral. A bishop has received the fullness of the priesthood and can administer all the sacraments. He is assisted by priests and deacons as



he serves as Christ did—teaching, governing, and sanctifying. The pope is the bishop of Rome.

bishop, auxiliary (awg-ZIL-yuh-ree) A bishop who assists the diocesan bishop in caring for the people of a certain area.

blasphemy (BLAS-fuh-mee) Hatel, irreverent, defiant language directed to God, the Church, the saints, and holy things. Using God's name to cover up a crime or for some other evil purpose is also blasphemy. Blasphemy is a grave sin against the second commandment.

blesed (1) Holy. (2) Made sacred through a religious rite. (3) The saints. (4) The title given by the pope to a person who has been beatified, the step before canonization.

Blessed Sacrament The Holy Eucharist; the consecrated bread and wine that have become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Mass. See *Eucharist*.

Blessed Trinity See *Trinity, Holy*.

Blessed Virgin Mary See *Mary, Blessed Virgin*.

blssing The sacramental that asks God's favor, assistance, and grace upon a person or object. The words can be accompanied by outstretched hands, the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water. Blessings are usually imparted by an ordained minister, but some can also be given by

a layperson. The official *Book of Blessings* contains many rites for blessings. See *sacramental, rite*.

Blood of Christ Jesus shed his blood to redeem us from sin. See *Eucharist*.

Body of Christ (1) The Eucharist. (2) A name for the Church (sometimes called Mystical Body of Christ) that highlights our union with Jesus. As members of the Church, we are joined to Jesus and to one another, forming one "body" with Jesus as the head. The Mystical Body includes members of the Church on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven.

Bread of Life The expression Jesus used to identify himself in John 6:35. Jesus told a crowd that he would give them himself to eat. He was talking about the Holy Eucharist, but his listeners, who did not understand, murmured and argued about his statements. Still, Jesus said: "This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:58).

Breviary (BREE-vee-er-ee) The book containing the Liturgy of the Hours, or Divine Office. See *Liturgy of the Hours*.

brothers, religious Men in a religious community who make vows but are not ordained.

brothers and sisters of Jesus A phrase in the Gospels that refers to close relatives (such as cousins) of Jesus.