

Vocabulary for Unit 1

apostolic Tradition: The word (from the Latin, meaning “to hand on”) refers to the process of passing on the Gospel message. Tradition, which began with the oral communication of the Gospel by the Apostles, was written down in the Scriptures, is handed down and lived out in the life of the Church, and is interpreted by the Magisterium under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

canon: This word has a variety of meanings. The canon of the Scriptures refers to the Church’s list of books of the Bible. The canon of the Mass is another name for the Eucharistic prayer. Canon law is the official body of laws for Catholics.

covenant: In general, a solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being in which mutual commitments are recognized; also called a testament. In the Bible, two covenants are central: (1) the Covenant between God and the ancient people of Israel established in God’s Sinai Covenant with Moses; also called the Old Testament or Old Covenant; and (2) the New Covenant established by Jesus through his sacrificial death and Resurrection; also called the New Testament. The term *testament* has come to be associated primarily with the sacred Scriptures that record the history and meaning of the two biblical covenants.

eisegesis: The process whereby one reads into the text, consequently inserting one’s own opinions.

exegesis: The study of the original meaning of texts in both their historical and literary contexts. It comes from the Greek, meaning “to draw out.” In exegesis we “draw out” the various aspects of a text.

Gospels: Most basically, “the good news” (the phrase on which the word *gospel* is based) of the Revelation of God in and through Jesus Christ, proclaimed initially by him, then by the Apostles, and now by the Church; also refers to those four books of the New Testament that focus on the person, life, teachings, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

inspiration: The guidance of the Holy Spirit in the development of the Scriptures, whereby the Spirit guided the human authors to teach without error those truths of God necessary for our salvation. It is on the basis of inspiration that we can call the Bible the Word of God.

Israelites: The Chosen People of God; members of the twelve tribes descended from Jacob who inhabited the land of Israel during biblical times.

Law: Another name for the Ten Commandments, it is also called the Law of Moses or the Old Law.

Magisterium: The name given the official teaching authority of the Church, whose task is to interpret and preserve the truths of the Church revealed in both the Scriptures and Tradition.

New Testament: The twenty-seven books of the Bible written during the early years of the Church in response to the life, mission, death, and Resurrection of Jesus; also, another name for the New Covenant established between God and humanity by Jesus.



Old Testament: The forty-six books of the Bible that record the history of salvation from Creation, through the story of ancient Israel, and up to the time of Jesus; also refers to the Old Covenant established between God and the people of Israel in God's encounter with Moses on Mount Sinai.

reason: The natural ability human beings have to know and understand truth.

Revelation: God's self-communication and disclosure of the divine plan to humankind through creation, events, persons, and, most fully, Jesus Christ.

salvation history: The pattern of events in human history that exemplify God's presence and saving actions. In Catholic thought, *all* of history is salvation history, even though God's presence may not be recognized.

Scriptures: Generally, the term for any sacred writing. For Christians, the Old and New Testaments that make up the Bible and are recognized as the Word of God.

