



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

19 May 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Lumen Gentium \ˈlū-mən ˌjɛn-tsē-əm\

Latin for "Light of the Nations," a reference to Christ in the first words of *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. One of 16 documents produced by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), it clarifies the mission, identity, and self-understanding of the church as both mystery and community.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-lumen-gentium>

CONTEXT

Many theologians see *Lumen Gentium* . . . as the centerpiece of the council. It is in this document that the Catholic Church articulates its own identity.

—Dennis M. Doyle, *The Church Emerging from Vatican II*

Lumen Gentium teaches us that we are all called to holiness . . . in the very different ways we live our Christian life.

—Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

WHY IT MATTERS

Lumen Gentium made Vatican II truly the "council of the Church about the Church," as theologian Hermann Pottmeyer notes. *Lumen Gentium* reinstated a vital truth, obscured by the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, that the church, and all its members, exists for the sake of the world and not to defend itself from the world.

From *Lumen Gentium*: Christ made the laity his witnesses and gave them understanding of the faith. It remains for each to cooperate in the external spread and dynamic growth of the Kingdom of Christ in the world. Therefore, let the laity devotedly strive to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth, and insistently beg of God the gift of wisdom (35).

RELATED WORDS

Dogma | Magisterium | Gaudium et spes

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How many feast days does Mary have?

At present, the Roman calendar commemorates 15 Mary days. Marian feasts accumulated through the centuries. They began to surface after the Council of Ephesus (431) bestowed the title "God-bearer" (*Theotokos*) on the mother of Jesus.

Four Marian celebrations are solemnities, the highest commemoration of the liturgical year: Mary, Mother of God (Jan. 1), Annunciation (March 25), Assumption (Aug. 15), and Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8). Three are feasts: Presentation of the Lord (Feb. 2), Visitation (May 31), and Birth of Mary (Sept. 8). Four are memorials, a simpler remembrance: Queenship of Mary (Aug. 22), Our Lady of Sorrows (Sept. 15), Our Lady of the Rosary (Oct. 7), and Presentation of Mary (Nov. 21). Four are optional memorials: Our Lady of Lourdes (Feb. 11), Immaculate Heart of Mary (second Saturday after Pentecost), Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (July 16), and Dedication of St. Mary Major Basilica (Aug. 5). The U.S. Bishops celebrate a 16th memorial for Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12).

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-Mary-feasts>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH (MAY 20)

Mary by any other name

To Argentinians, she's Our Lady of Lujan. To Cubans, Our Lady of Charity. She's Our Lady of the Assumption in India and Our Lady of High Grace in the Dominican Republic. In the Americas, we turn to Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Immaculate Conception. Entire countries and countless religious orders rely on her favor and protection.

READINGS: Genesis 3:9-15, 20 or Acts 1:12-14; John 19:25-34 (572 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/052024.cfm>).
"Woman, behold, your son."

FAITH IN ACTION

While her names are many and her patronage broad, consider Mary's most ancient and important title of all: *Theotokos*, "God-bearer." How will you follow Mary's example to bring God into the world today?