

***City of God* Terms**

title

About the City of God, in answer to the pagans (Latin *De civitate Dei contra paganos*)

- **City of God** (Latin *civitas Dei*): phrase from Psalm 87:3 (Psalm 86:3 in the Vulgate)
- **city** (Latin *civitas*): city, citizens (as a united community), citizenship
- **in answer to** (Latin *contra*): in answer to, against
- **pagan** (Latin *paganus*, “villager, civilian, pagan”): follower of polytheistic civil religion (sacrificing to Jupiter, etc.) or philosopher who supports polytheistic sacrifice (e.g., a Neo-Platonist)

general key terms

temporal (Latin *temporalis*, “of time”): temporary, belonging to time and to this world, not belonging to heaven and eternity

god (Latin *deus*):

- the one God of the Bible (capitalized in our translation)
- an immortal being (such as Jupiter) worshipped by pagans (Augustine also calls these “demons”)
- an immortal being (angel or demon) created by God
- a human worshipper of God, whom God has made immortal, transformed by theosis

theosis (Greek *theosis*, “deification”): a process in which God’s worshippers participate in God and “the true God... transforms his worshippers into gods” (*City of God* X.1, p. 374)

providence (Latin *providentia*): foresight, foreknowledge (especially God’s knowledge of the future)

sacrament (Latin *sacramentum*, “way of making holy, result of making holy”; translation of Greek *mysterion*, “ritual, secret, mystery”): visible sign of the invisible grace of God (later, both the visible sign and the invisible grace)

holocaust (from Greek *holokaustos*, “burnt whole”): burnt sacrifice

theurgy (from Greek *theourgia*, “god working”): magic rituals intended to control good and evil spirits; Augustine says any spirits responding to sorcery must come from “the Deceiver” (Satan), or they are “a figment of the human imagination” (*City of God* X.11, p. 390), and he criticizes Neo-Platonists for endorsing this practice.

desiderata: desired things

commonwealth (Latin *res publica*, “public thing”): government, republic; according to Scipio’s definition (in Cicero’s *De Re Publica*), *res publica res populi*, literally, “the public thing is the thing of the people,” that is, “a republic belongs to the people,” or in our translation, the “commonwealth” is the “weal of the people” (quoted *City of God* XIX.21, p. 881)