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sanctuary ^{ˈsæŋktʃəri} (săngkch-ě-ě)

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n. pl. sanctuaries

1.
 - a. A sacred place, such as a church, temple, or mosque.
 - b. The holiest part of a sacred place, as the part of a Christian church around the altar.
2.
 - a. A sacred place, such as a church, in which fugitives formerly were immune to arrest.
 - b. Immunity to arrest afforded by a sanctuary: *sought sanctuary in the church.*
 - c. The condition of being protected or comforted: *"Women such as herself tended to ... seek sanctuary in religion" (Paul Scott).* See [Synonyms at shelter](#).
3.
 - a. A place of refuge or asylum.
 - b. A reserved area in which birds and other animals, especially wild animals, are protected from hunting or disturbance.

[Middle English, from Old French *sainctuarie*, from Late Latin *sānctuārium*, from Latin *sānctus*, sacred; see SANCTIFY.]

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