

1st Corinthians



Lesson 1: Paul Condemns Divisions in the Church

Suggested Responses

Suggested responses are provided for the purpose of guiding group discussion safely within the bounds of Church teaching. Small group discussion leaders should become familiar with the suggested responses prior to group discussion. In order to make the most of this study, all participants are encouraged to respond to the questions on their own before reading the suggested responses.

1. Paul is writing to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus who are called to be saints, as well as to all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This means that the letter is addressed not only to those who are already cleansed from their sins, but also to those who still await cleansing. The Catechism teaches that no matter what their state or walk of life, all Christians are called to the fullness of Christian life and charity. All are called to holiness and intimate union with Christ.
2. Deuteronomy 7:9 tells us that God is faithful, steadfastly loving and upholding his covenant with those who keep his commandments. 1 Cor 10:13 assures us that God is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength. CCC 210 says that after Israel turned away from God to worship the golden calf, God heard the prayers of Moses and walked among the unfaithful people to demonstrate his love. God tells Moses, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name 'the LORD.'" Moses confesses that the Lord is a forgiving God. CCC 211 further explains that the divine name, "I Am," expresses God's faithfulness. Despite man's faithlessness and sin, God's love will remain steadfast; by going so far as to give up his own Son for us, God reveals that he is "rich in mercy."
3. The word *koinonia* means fellowship. As explained in Points to Ponder: "In the Greco-Roman culture this word was full of meaning, signifying a profound sharing, whether of a business relationship, marriage, special meal, legal arrangement, or common citizenship of a country or city. This concept was important to the Greeks in both religious and civic life." CCC 1090 tells us that in the earthly liturgy we share in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle. We, along with the heavenly army will sing a hymn of glory to the Lord as we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, until he, our life, shall appear, and we too will appear with him in glory.
4. CCC 1250 teaches that because children are born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, they have need of the new birth in Baptism in order to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God to which all men are called. In infant Baptism, the sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest. If the Church and the parents do not confer Baptism shortly after a child's birth, they deny that child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God. CCC 1252 further explains that the practice of infant Baptism is a long-standing tradition in the Church. There is documentation of infant baptism dating from the second century, and it is most probable that when whole "households" received baptism, infants also were baptized.
5. In Eph 4:1-3, Paul writes: "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
6. In Jn 17:20-21 Christ prays: "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." CCC 814 tells us that the Church has always been marked



by diversity which comes from both the variety of God's gifts and the diversity of those who receive them. Among the Church's members there are different gifts, offices, conditions, and ways of life. Diversity is not opposed to the Church's unity, although sin and the burden of its consequences constantly threaten the gift of unity.

7. Matthew 28:18-20 tells us: "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.'" Peter tells us in Acts 2:38: "And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"
8. Deut 8:17-18 tells us to remember the source of all we have. "Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth; that he may confirm his covenant which he swore to your fathers, as at this day." Paul's letter to the Romans tells us to be careful of boasting, "Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith." Paul writes: to the Ephesians, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast."