

1 Corinthians

IGNATIUS CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE QUESTIONS

Welcome

“You are approaching the ‘word of God’. But for thousands of years, ... the Word of God has been approaching you.”

The following guide is provided to enhance your reading of the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians using the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*. If you are new to this resource or to reading the Bible, we recommend you read the general Introduction before you begin. It explains what it means that Scripture is the Word of God as well as how we understand and interpret it as Catholics. It also introduces the special features of the Study Bible and tells how they can enrich your reading and study. Additionally, the *Introduction to Paul and His Letters* will provide valuable context for your reading.

A simple rhythm of prayer followed by reading and reflection is offered below to guide you through the book one chapter at a time. Questions draw attention to key footnotes and word studies to lead you into a deeper understanding of what you read and then prompt you to consider how to apply what you have learned. For a deeper dive, take advantage of additional features as you go: not just the other footnotes but also cross-references to Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* that are provided above the footnotes as well as any maps, charts, or essays that are not touched on in the questions.

Don't miss these helpful icons as you read! They highlight footnotes that pertain to the Church's criteria for interpreting Scripture (see CCC 112–14):



Be attentive to the content and unity of Scripture

Notes marked with a Bible icon connect Old Testament passages and New Testament mysteries, fostering appreciation for God's unified plan.



Read Scripture in light of the Church's living tradition

This icon marks notes drawn from the Holy Spirit's guidance of Church teaching and the spiritual senses of scripture. Here you'll find official teaching as well as interpretations from Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church.



Be attentive to the “analogy of faith”

Explore notes marked with an icon of keys to learn how the mysteries of faith, revealed in Scripture and defined by the Church, clarify and connect with one another in a unified, coherent way.

May God bless you as you read his word!

of God,* did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself,[†] taking the form of a servant,[‡] being born in the likeness of men.[§] And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.[¶] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,^{||} that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,^{|||} and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Shinin
12 Therefore, obeyed, so now much more in salvation with f work in you, bo pleasure.
14 Do all th tioning,¹⁵ that y children of God crooked and per

2:9–11: Rom 10:9; 14:9; Eph 1:20–21. 2:13: 1 Cor 15:10. 2

2:7 emptied himself: The Greek verb *kenōō* means “empty out” or “render void”. The idea is, not that Christ divested himself of divinity when he united himself with humanity, but that he restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. In effect, the Son of God made himself poor in order to make us rich with his grace (2 Cor 8:9) (CCC 472). • Christ emptied himself by compressing the glory of his Godhead within our smallness. What he always was remained perfect and incomprehensible, but what he assumed was in proportion to the measure of our nature (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Apollinarius*).

2:8 death on a cross: The ultimate indignity. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. See note on Mk 15:24.

2:9 exalted him: By raising him from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. A similar destiny awaits all who humble themselves as Jesus did (3:21; Lk 14:11).

2:10 every knee should bow: An allusion to the divine oath in Is 45:23. • Yahweh swore that all peoples, to the very end of the earth, would acknowledge his Lordship and bow before him in homage. Paul moves Christ into the center of this prophecy as the divine Lord destined to be revered by all. **heaven ... earth ... under the earth:** The three principal realms in the world view of ancient Israel (Ex 20:4). Homage will come from all creatures great and small—the angels and saints above, the family of man and beasts spread over the earth, and the dead and the demons of the underworld.

serious that we pur sense of awe at sen the prospect of sinn Encouragement con readers that God's g desire (intention) at 21; CCC 308) (CC “work”, he address and trembling”, he good deeds were th not boast of your g within you (St. Augu 2:15 perverts • Deuterono poetic lawsuit that and ingratitude du

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Prepare

Read the Introduction to 1 Corinthians, paying particular attention to the *Purpose* and *Themes and Characteristics* of the book. What one thing stands out to you, that you would like to remember?

Read the Outline of 1 Corinthians to get an overview of the book. What are its major divisions?

Pray

Use the following questions to guide your reading of 1 Corinthians, going at a pace that is comfortable to you. Before you begin each new section, pray simply for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, open my heart to hear and receive these words as what they truly are, the Word of God. Enlighten my understanding and give me grace to put what I read into practice in my life. Amen.

Read and Reflect

Read and reflect on 1 Corinthians as follows:

- Pray before you read
- Read a section of biblical text by itself
- Read the text again, referring to the notes that accompany the text
- For deeper understanding and to aid in applying what you read, answer the questions that follow. The references at the top of each numbered question correspond to particular notes.

At the end of each chapter, review what you have written and linger where you feel drawn, asking the Lord to speak to your heart and into your life. What do you hear? Respond in prayer and ask his help to live what you hear in your attitudes and actions this week.

Chapter 1



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 1:8

- How does the OT describe the “day of the LORD”?

- In terms of history, how does the “day of the LORD” come about?

1 Corinthians 1:17

- What is Paul trying to stress about his ministry?

- When Paul says he does not speak “with eloquent wisdom”, what is he saying about the power of the gospel—and about his own mission?

1 Corinthians 1:23

- Look up Deut 21:22–23. Why was the crucifixion a stumbling block to Jews?

- How did Paul deal with this difficulty?

Word Study: *Wisdom* (1 Corinthians 1:20).

- What does “wisdom” mean in the ordinary usage of the word in Paul’s day?
 - How does Paul use the OT Wisdom tradition (especially in the third sense referred to in the note)?
 - Why, in Paul’s view, can wisdom not be equated with the ingenuity of philosophers and thinkers?
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- Why would the crucifixion be foolishness to Gentiles?



For Application

1 Corinthians 1:8

- Look at the note for this passage. Why do you think Paul reminds the Corinthians ever so gently of the Day of Judgment right at the beginning of his letter?
- Look up this topic in the *Catechism* (CCC 678, 682). What in your life will Christ judge at the Last Judgment?

1 Corinthians 1:10–17

- What perspective should help us overcome the growth of factions in our parish or diocese?
- Where should our supreme allegiance be?
- How would you answer Paul’s rhetorical questions?
- Whose position should you be taking, and how would you know you held it?

1 Corinthians 1: 18–25

- Review the notes for these verses. In that context, what might Paul say about theological and disciplinary issues that can tend to divide parishes and dioceses?
- How do you make God’s wisdom and God’s “weakness” your own?

1 Corinthians 1:26–31

- How much education in the Catholic faith have you had?
- What do you think of it?

1 Corinthians

- What people contributed to the understanding of the faith you have?
- Whether you are well or badly educated in the faith, what attitude does Paul counsel you to take?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 2



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 2:4

- How are proclamations of the gospel made effective?

- What is the main idea running through this passage?

1 Corinthians 2:9

- After Paul paraphrases Is 64:4, he quotes Sir 1:10. How does he draw these two passages together?

- What is he trying to stress?

1 Corinthians 2:10

- Who is uniquely qualified to probe the mind of God?

- How and about what does this same agent enlighten us?

1 Corinthians 2:16

- According to the note, what does Paul conclude from Isaiah's rhetorical question?



For Application

1 Corinthians 2:2

- For an evangelist, what does it mean to “know nothing . . . except Jesus Christ and him crucified”?
- How might you apply this passage when you share your faith?

1 Corinthians 2:5

- Does your faith rest on the power of God or on what you have learned from your parents or catechists? If the former, what can you share that demonstrates that fact? If the latter, what needs to happen for your faith to rest on the power of God—and what do you plan to do about it?

1 Corinthians 2:13–14

- In the context of chaps. 12–14 of this letter, how do you read these verses?
- What is a “spiritual” and an “unspiritual” person in Paul’s understanding?
- Why are spiritual gifts not understood by an “unspiritual” person?
- What does it mean to discern something spiritually?

1 Corinthians 2:14–15

- Does Paul mean to imply that the person with spiritual gifts is not subject to the Church's oversight? If not, by whom is he judged when he exercises gifts?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 3



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 3:5–23

- If the ministry is primarily the work of God, what two points must teachers of the flock recognize about their efforts?

1 Corinthians

- How must members of the faithful regard their teachers?

1 Corinthians 3:10

- In the OT, how were architects engaged in work on the Temple endowed by God?
- What is the role of King Solomon here?
- In what way does Paul compare himself (at least implicitly) with Solomon?

Word Study: *Suffer Loss* (1 Corinthians 3:15).

- How does the Greek OT use this verb?
- How do the Gospels use it?
- Does the context of 1 Cor 3:15 suggest what Paul is alluding to?

1 Corinthians 3:15

- In a literal sense, what is Paul saying about some Christian workers?
- What kind of agent does the OT often depict fire as being?
- How does Catholic tradition interpret Paul's teaching in the light of Purgatory?



For Application

1 Corinthians 3:1–4

- What does Paul mean in this text (especially v. 3), when he uses the expression “of the flesh”?
- In your dealings with other Christians, in what ways do you tend to act as a person “of the flesh”?

1 Corinthians 3:5–9

- Who are your favorite Catholic evangelists, theologians, or speakers?
- Why are they your favorites?

1 Corinthians

- Are your attitudes about them in conformity with Paul's counsel in these verses?

1 Corinthians 3:11–14

- What (or who) is the foundation of your life?

- What are you building on that foundation?

- At the end of your life, will your efforts prove durable?

- If you instruct others (such as pupils or your own children), how will your instruction have benefited them—or you?

1 Corinthians 3:16–17

- After reading these verses, how would you describe yourself?

- Is that the way your teachers regard you?

- What kind of care should your catechists, teachers, or pastor take of your development in the faith?

- If you are a catechist, teacher, or pastor, how do you fulfill the responsibility described by Paul? (What does Paul suggest should happen if you do not?)

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 4



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 4:4

- What is Paul saying about the state of his conscience?

- How is the final verdict on his ministry to come?

1 Corinthians 4:6

- When Paul cautions the Corinthians “not to go beyond what is written”, to what is he referring?
- What is he trying to halt?
- Some commentators use this verse to defend a *sola Scriptura* (the Bible only) approach, but how does Paul himself contradict such an interpretation?

1 Corinthians 4:8–13

- How does Paul reprimand self-righteous Corinthians for egoism and unfairness?
- What is he actually saying about them?
- To what are the Corinthians exposing themselves?

1 Corinthians 4:15

- What is the connection between fatherhood and priesthood in the ancient Near East?

- How does it carry over into the New Covenant?

- In what Vatican II document is this connection confirmed?



For Application

1 Corinthians 4:3–5

- Why is it not advisable to “grade” yourself for the way you live your Christian life?

- From what single judge can you expect just commendation or blame?

1 Corinthians 4:7–8

- Name one thing about your personality, character, talents, or accomplishments that arises entirely from yourself (as opposed to what you have learned or received from others). When it comes to your relationship to God, do any of these traits or achievements stand up as your own? If not, what can you be proud of?

1 Corinthians 4:12–13

- Paul implies that he takes the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:11–12, 38–48) literally. When you are reviled or slandered, how do you respond?

- How do you imitate Paul (4:16)?

1 Corinthians 4:20

- If the kingdom of God does not consist of mere words, of what does it consist? Whose?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 5



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 5:5

- What does Paul mean by commanding the Corinthian Church to deliver the incestuous man over “to Satan”?

- What does he anticipate will be destroyed?

- What is Paul's hidden assumption?

1 Corinthians 5:6

- What is the significance of leaven?

- What does it symbolize here?

1 Corinthians 5:7–8

- What spiritual lesson is Paul drawing from the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

- Why does Paul mention the Paschal sacrifice of Christ in this context?

- What are the eucharistic overtones?

1 Corinthians 5:13

- To what Mosaic provision is Paul alluding when he quotes from Deuteronomy? Why?



For Application

1 Corinthians 5:1–2

- Why is it important for practicing Catholics to take a stand against the sexual immorality that sometimes occurs within a church community?
- How “hard line” a stand does Paul take?
- What does his stand say about your own?

1 Corinthians 5:6

- According to this verse, what is the effect of sexual immorality on the Christian community?
- Look up the concept of *scandal* in the *Catechism* (CCC 2284–85). Why is tolerance for sexual sin so pernicious?

1 Corinthians 5:7–8

- What is the “old leaven” that Paul wants you to cleanse from your heart?
- What reason does he give for that cleansing?

- What is the nature of the “unleavened bread” in v. 8 with which you are to replace it?

1 Corinthians 5:11–12

- What would Paul say you should do regarding fellow Catholics who persist in leading immoral lives?
- In the context of this chapter, what would be his rationale for advising you to avoid associating with them?
- What does charity demand—and for whom—in such cases?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 6



For Understanding

Word Study: *Sanctified* (1 Corinthians 6:11).

- What does it mean for things to be sanctified, or “made holy”?
- What does it mean for persons to be sanctified?
- How does Baptism sanctify?
- How is the challenge to grow in sanctity supported by Jesus’ and Paul’s prayers?

1 Corinthians 6:16

- According to Genesis, why is the proper context for sexual union the covenant of marriage?
- Why is it such a serious sin to become one with a prostitute?

1 Corinthians 6:20

- How might the marital theme that runs through the preceding verses be used to interpret the meaning of Jesus' death?
- What is the implied contrast in Paul's words that we should "glorify God with [our] body"?

Essay: *Shun Immorality, Shun Idolatry.*

- What is the connection between sexual immorality and idolatry in the religions of the ancient Near East?
- What, to Paul, is the theological significance of the body, and what is the role of self-mastery in his view?
- How does Paul emphasize the connection between these sins by appealing to the experience of Israel?
- What, then, should be the lesson for us in the modern age?



For Application

1 Corinthians 6:1–6

- What principle of behavior is Paul advocating for Christians who have legal grievances against one another?
- How practical do you think his advice is for Christians today?
- If you think it impractical, what then should modern Christians do in such cases?

1 Corinthians 6:7

- Compare this verse with Mt 5:38–42. How does it apply the Sermon on the Mount?
- How would you answer Paul's (admittedly rhetorical) questions for yourself?

1 Corinthians 6:13

- How is your body meant for the Lord, and how do you serve him with it?
- How would you apply Paul's comment that "the Lord" is meant "for the body" to yourself?

- What does it mean for the Lord to be meant for your body?

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

- If your life is not your own, whose is it? Why?

- If your life does not belong to you, how do you glorify God with your sexuality, given your present circumstances?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 7



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 7:5

- What kind of a safeguard are the conjugal rights shared by husband and wife?
- According to Paul's teaching, what does periodic continence give the couple opportunities to do?
- According to Catholic teaching, what does periodic continence allow, and what can it promote?

1 Corinthians 7:7

- Why does Paul uphold celibacy as the ideal state in life for believers?
- How is Paul's position unlike that of certain Corinthian ascetics?

1 Corinthians 7:15

- What does the "Pauline privilege" mean?

- What are the conditions that need to be met before it applies?

1 Corinthians 7:39

- How long does the marriage covenant last?

- What does the expression “in the Lord” mean for the surviving spouse who wants to remarry?



For Application

1 Corinthians 7:4

- How might marriage partners apply this verse to themselves if they are tempted to use sexual intercourse as a tool of manipulation or control or as a weapon?

- How might attitudes of “independence” in a marriage change by admitting the mutual rights of spouses toward each other?

1 Corinthians 7:17–24

- Read these verses and then the note for them. What “unchangeable circumstances” were you in when you came to a mature faith in Christ?

1 Corinthians

- Which of them did you want to change?

- How might you be content with what you cannot (or should not) change?

1 Corinthians 7:29–31

- What does it mean to be “detached” from your circumstances?

- Is Paul advocating a passionless existence or something else (v. 32)?

1 Corinthians 7:35

- Whether you are married or single, how might you give your “undivided devotion” to the Lord in your present circumstances?

- In other words, how can you use your present state in life to grow in holiness?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 8



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 8:1—11:1

- Why was the question of eating idol food a significant moral challenge for many believers living in a pagan environment?

- What is Paul's position?

1 Corinthians 8:7–13

- Into what two groups does the controversy over eating idol food divide people?
- If the “strong” are free to eat such food, how must they temper that freedom?
- What does Paul warn the “strong” about?

1 Corinthians 8:8

- To what extent is Paul ambivalent toward idol food?

Essay: Paul, Idol Food, and the Jerusalem Council.

- In what way does Paul appear to be at odds with the Jerusalem Council over the matter of eating idol food?
- What are some unsatisfactory attempts to ease the tension between Paul and the Council?
- What clarifications help us understand that, on a theological level, he was actually in agreement with the Council?

- What does he caution in spite of that ambivalence?



For Application

1 Corinthians 8:1–3

- To what danger does Paul point in the possession of knowledge?

- How can you use knowledge (for example, the knowledge of the faith) to build others up?

1 Corinthians 8:4–8

- How does your knowledge that only God governs the universe apply when someone invites you to dabble in esoteric spiritual practices, such as apparently innocent occult games?

- Should you take up practices of other religions?

- What is the danger to others that Paul points to in verses 7–8?

1 Corinthians 8:9–13

- How would Paul respond to you if you objected, “Well, if this brother is so weak that he falls into sin because of what he sees me do, it’s his problem”?
- What is your responsibility to those whose conscience is more delicate on certain matters than your own?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 9



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 9:1–27

- How does Paul use his own example as a challenge to the “strong” in Corinth?

1 Corinthians

- What suggests that Paul still has the issue of idol food uppermost in mind in this chapter?

1 Corinthians 9:5

- In what two ways can Paul's statement about being accompanied by a wife be understood?
- What is the background of the discipline of clerical celibacy in the Latin Rite?
- What is the practice of the Eastern Rite churches?
- What was the practice in apostolic times?

1 Corinthians 9:9

- What point is Paul making by referring to Deut 25:4?

1 Corinthians 9:20

- Why did Paul continue to maintain certain Jewish traditions even though he was a Christian?
- What was Paul's ethnic background?



For Application

1 Corinthians 9:3–14

- How would you use these verses to explain the practice of giving parish priests a salary or of paying a stipend to the parish for the performance of a wedding or a funeral?

1 Corinthians 9:16

- What is your own responsibility to preach the gospel?

- How aware are you of that responsibility, and how seriously do you take it?

1 Corinthians 9:22–23

- How might your practice of Catholic living be adapted to the needs of the scrupulous, the easygoing, the strenuously rigorous, or the cynical or doubting persons with whom you associate?

- How can you be “all things to all men” without compromising your own integrity or watering down your faith?

1 Corinthians 9:27

- The Church requires certain minimal practices of penance and mortification (such as seasonal fasts) and recommends that you do more than the minimum. Can you suggest practices that might be good to adopt?

- How might someone go beyond the minimum required?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 10



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 10:1–13

- In comparing the Corinthians with the Israelites in the desert, how does Paul liken the blessings both groups received?

- What must the Corinthians guard against?

1 Corinthians 10:2

- What did the solidarity of the Israelites with Moses in the Red Sea prefigure?

- What does the Exodus prefigure?

1 Corinthians 10:7–10

- What four examples of the Israelites' apostasy during the Exodus does Paul present to the Corinthians?

- Why does he gather these food-related episodes together?

1 Corinthians 10:16

- What is the “cup of blessing”?

- What use did Jesus make of it at the Last Supper?

- In what sense do we “participate” in it?

1 Corinthians 10:25–30

- If Paul opposed eating idol food in temples, how did he feel about eating sacrificial meat sold afterward in the open market?
- Under what circumstances were Christians to abstain from such meat?



For Application

1 Corinthians 10:12

- In what ways are you in danger of overconfidence in your beliefs or practice of the faith?
- What examples from your own experience can you cite to illustrate the danger of presuming your own stability?

1 Corinthians 10:14–17

- According to Paul, what is the effect of the Eucharist on the person who consumes it?
- When you receive Communion, how aware are you of this effect?

1 Corinthians 10:18–22

- How would Paul view alternative spiritualities, such as New Age views or pagan mysticism?

- What does v. 21 say to a Christian with an interest in such spiritualities?

1 Corinthians 10:31

- What are some of the mundane things you do that you could devote to the glory of God?

- How could eating, drinking, or doing anything “ordinary” glorify God?

- How did St. Thérèse of Lisieux look at everyday activities?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 11



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 11:3–16

- What is the subject of scholarly disagreement in these verses?
- What point of view is expressed in the note?
- What is implied by Paul's guidelines for dealing with the problem?

1 Corinthians 11:6

- What do many believe the veil signifies?
- Why does the Catholic Church no longer require women to wear head coverings at Mass?

1 Corinthians 11:17–34

- What problems developed because of the ancient Christian custom of having a common meal before the liturgy?

- What three historical factors put this crisis in perspective?

1 Corinthians 11:26

- What does the separate Consecration of bread and wine at Mass represent?
- Why does Paul stress that unworthy reception of Communion brings judgment upon the perpetrators?
- What is in Paul's mind in making this statement?



For Application

1 Corinthians 11:3–10

- Given the casual dress styles of this era, do you “dress up” (more or less formally) to attend the liturgy or “dress down” (casually)?
- What is your rationale for dressing as you do to attend Mass?
- Whom does your style of dress honor?

1 Corinthians 11:17–22

- How do you prepare yourself to attend the liturgy?

- How would you evaluate your “liturgical manners” (for example, the manner in which you express your respect for the Eucharistic Presence or your manner of participating in the liturgy)?

- How careful are you to respect the desire for quiet on the part of those who wish to pray before or after Mass?

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

- What is the state of your belief in transubstantiation, the transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus at the Consecration?

- If you have problems believing in this real transformation, what have you done to resolve them?

1 Corinthians 11:27–28

- How do you examine the state of your soul before you go to Communion?

- If you were to receive Communion while in a state of serious (mortal) sin, what does Paul say you would be doing?

- What, then, should you do if you are in a state of serious sin?

- What should you do before going to Communion if you are *not* in a state of serious sin?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 12



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 12:4–6

- From whom do charismatic gifts flow?

- How is the Trinity the model for these gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:7

- Why are charisms given?

- To what do they unite us?

- What is the Catholic distinction between the role of charisms and that of sanctifying grace?

1 Corinthians 12:13

- If the “Body of Christ” is not simply a metaphor, what is it?

- What does the Holy Spirit do in the Body?

- How does union with Christ affect social and ethnic differences?

- To what does the expression “drink of one Spirit” refer?

1 Corinthians 12:31

- Why is apostleship given pride of place among the ministerial gifts?
- What is the mission of apostles?
- Who carries on their work today?



For Application

1 Corinthians 12:3

- What is Paul’s “rule of thumb” for discerning the origin of a spiritual activity or manifestation?
- How would you compare this “rule” with 1 Jn 3:4–10 and 4:1–4?
- How would you apply this rule to a charismatic leader who is a powerful preacher but denies that Jesus is God?

1 Corinthians 12:4–7

- Read CCC 2539–41 on the subject of *envy* (one of the “seven deadly sins”). How might these verses address the problem of envy among people who work in ministry?

- If the same Spirit works in all who have charisms, how can one worker be envious of the success of another?

1 Corinthians 12:22–26

- What need does the Church have of her weaker members?

- What need does she have for the lesser charisms?

- How ought you to respond when a parish member is criticized for a problem—or praised for an achievement?

1 Corinthians 12:29–31

- How should you view a Christian who appears to do well in one area of life but seems to have no talent in another?

- How do you view leaders who are strong in one area (“a great preacher”) but weak in another (“not good with people”)?

- What is Paul saying about such differences here?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 13



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 13:1–13

- What relation does this chapter have to Paul's discussion of charismatic gifts?
- What does Paul insist that love (charity) must do?
- What becomes of charisms if they are exercised without love?

1 Corinthians 13:4–7

- Why can love not be reduced to a feeling that comes and goes?
- Who is the object of the love poured into our hearts by the Spirit?
- What are some of the vices contrary to charity that Paul mentions?

1 Corinthians 13:12

- What kind of mirror was manufactured in Corinth?
- What was the quality of the reflected image in such a mirror?
- What contrast does Paul draw between a mirror image and face-to-face vision?

1 Corinthians 13:13

- What is missing from the translation quoted in the note?
- What is the relationship of faith, hope, and love to the present? To eternity?

1 Corinthians

- Why are these three virtues called “theological” virtues?

- Why is love the greatest of the three?



For Application

1 Corinthians 13:1–3

- Who loses when works of great spiritual power are done with impure or uncharitable motives?

- In these three “if...then” statements, what happens in the “then” half?

- If you have ever done good acts for bad motives, what have the consequences been for you?

1 Corinthians 13:5

- If love is not arrogant, what is it?

- If love is not rude, what is it?

1 Corinthians

- If love does not insist on its own way, how does it act toward the other person?

- If love is not irritable or resentful, what is its attitude?

1 Corinthians 13:7

- What does it mean to bear, believe, hope, and endure “all things”?

- How do you think love (charity) might respond to falsehoods, lies, and personal attacks on others?

- What does God ask when the going gets rough for you?

1 Corinthians 13:11

- What are some of the “childish ways” that might characterize the response of people to charismatic expressions—whether they consider themselves charismatic or not?

- In the context of this chapter, what is a more adult way of viewing charismatic spirituality?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 14



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 14:1

- What is prophecy?

- Why does Paul prefer it to other charismatic gifts?

1 Corinthians 14:21

- What is Is 28:11–12 about in its original context?

- How does Paul apply it to the charism of tongues?

1 Corinthians 14:27–28

- What three pastoral guidelines does Paul give for speaking in tongues in a Christian assembly?

- What does he assume about the control of this gift?

1 Corinthians 14:34–35

- Though Paul enjoins silence on women in public worship, what are the exceptions to this?

- What is he prohibiting?



For Application

1 Corinthians 14:1

- What attitude does Paul recommend toward charismatic gifts?

- What should be your aim in desiring them?

1 Corinthians 14:12

- What gifts do you have that you can use for building up the Church?

- How have you used them toward that end?

- How would you know that the Holy Spirit (rather than mere human motives) was behind your use of these gifts?

1 Corinthians 14:26

- How do you prepare yourself for liturgical or private worship?

- How fully do you participate when worship begins?

- How does your participation (for example, by saying the responses at the Mass) affect others around you?

1 Corinthians 14:27–33

- Though the exercise of charismatic gifts is sometimes described as “ecstatic”, what does Paul have to say about self-control?

- If you are blessed with charismatic manifestations, how do you exercise control over them?
- According to v. 33, why should you control them?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 15



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 15:12

- How might denial of the resurrection of the dead have a Jewish background? A Greek one?

1 Corinthians

- What would result from a Christian denial of the resurrection?

1 Corinthians 15:29

- Why does this passage baffle interpreters?

- What seems to have been the practice of living believers?

- Look up 2 Mac 12:39–45; why does the writer praise Judas Maccabeus for taking up a collection for the dead?

- What is Paul's point in referring to the practice of being "baptized on behalf of the dead"?

1 Corinthians 15:42–44

- What does Paul say our risen bodies will be like?

- What four qualities of the risen bodies of the saints does Catholic theology enumerate?

1 Corinthians 15:52

- What are two uses of the trumpet in ancient Israel that fill out the background of Paul's image of the "last trumpet"?
- How is trumpet imagery used in the Prophets?



For Application

1 Corinthians 15:10

- Who are you, by the grace of God?
- When it comes to your life with God, how do you feel about yourself?
- How has the grace of God in your regard not been in vain?

1 Corinthians 15:12–19

- What is your own belief about the resurrection of the dead?

- How firmly do you hold to the Christian belief on this subject in your own regard—especially if you are facing a life-threatening illness or immediate danger of death?

- When people say, “When you’re dead, you’re dead!”, how do you respond internally?

- What do you say?

1 Corinthians 15:46–49

- What does the expression “Grace builds on nature” mean?

- How does the spiritual build on the physical?

- Do you regard your body as something from which to be liberated, or as something on which to build?

- What is Paul suggesting the pattern of God’s action to be?

1 Corinthians 15:56–57

- How is sin the “sting” of death?
- Since everyone dies, how does sin make a difference in the experience?
- How does Jesus give you the victory that removes that sting (even though death itself will occur)?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:

Chapter 16



For Understanding

1 Corinthians 16:1–4

- Why did Paul spend so much energy collecting donations on his third missionary journey?

1 Corinthians 16:8

- From what city was Paul writing his first letter to the Corinthians?

- When did he himself arrive at Corinth?

1 Corinthians 16:19

- Who were Aquila and Prisca, and what was their relationship with Paul?

1 Corinthians 16:22

- What does the expression *marana tha* mean?

- When was it used?

- What does this imply?



For Application

1 Corinthians 16:1

- Who are the “saints” Paul is talking about?

- How might you yourself be considered a “saint” in this sense?

- How badly do you want to become a saint in the customary meaning of that term?

1 Corinthians 16:13

- Why does faith demand watchfulness, firmness, courage, and strength?

- How does your own personal faith demand these virtues in your current environment?

- Given the drift of modern society, how might these virtues become even more necessary in the future?

1 Corinthians 16:20

- What is the “sign of peace” you share at the liturgy supposed to signify for life outside the liturgy?

- In an ideal situation, what should your relationship with fellow Catholics be like?

- How do you practice hospitality toward them?

1 Corinthians 16:22

- Why does Paul wish a curse on anyone who “has no love for the Lord”?

- Is he wishing evil on them or acknowledging the consequences of their choice?

- How is one who loves the Lord blessed?

Reflect

After reading and reflecting on this chapter, I hear the Lord saying to me:

My prayer response to him:



Review and Respond

To complete your study of 1 Corinthians, prayerfully read it straight through, focusing on the biblical text alone. What stands out to you?

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. What is your response to him?