

# Bible Study # 11

12 1 15

# 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians

11-15

# Administrative Information

- The Bible Study Class will be presented in the parish hall every Tuesday morning from **9:30 A.M. until 11 A.M.** beginning September 15, 2015 and ending **May 24, 2016** except for the following Tuesdays related to a holiday:
  - Nov 24, 2015 – Thanksgiving Week
  - **Dec 8, 2015 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception**
  - Dec 22, 2015 – Christmas Week
  - Dec 29, 2015 - New Year's Week
  - Mar 22, 2016 – Holy Week
- The same class will be given every Tuesday evening from **7:30 until 9:00 P.M.** in the parish hall
- Contact info (703) 644-5873; email [roberteward3@verizon.net](mailto:roberteward3@verizon.net)
- Inclement weather decision will be based on Fairfax County Public School announcements

# Review of last week

- **In the last class** we looked at *1<sup>st</sup> Cor 12-14*
- Remember that the letters of St Paul were copied and read in the other churches he established as they are for us today
- We saw how 1 Cor 12 set the stage for Paul's dialogue on *Agape* love in 1 Cor 13 which was followed by its application in 1 Cor 14
- In 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 12 Paul discussed the importance and priority of the Spiritual Gifts (charisms) given to the Baptized Christian by the Holy Spirit

# Review of last week

- Paul gave the wonderful analogy of the unity of the human body for how he wanted the members of the Church of *Corinth* to understand the Body of Christ and respond to the variety of gifts found within their midst
- In 1 Cor 13 Paul defines Agape love as the fulfilment of these gifts
- In 1 Cor 14 he continues to differentiate between the “Spiritual Gifts” and points to how they must first and foremost be used for the benefit of the church as a whole
- This sets the stage for the ending of this letter as discussed in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15 and 16

# Notes on 1<sup>ST</sup> Cor 15

- **Pope Benedict XVI**, in his book ***Saint Paul***, discusses:
  - The conversion of St Paul as the moment that he witness the Resurrection of Jesus, which he received directly from Jesus himself, together with his apostolic mission
  - Paul's clearest narrative of what the pope considers **the center of salvation history** is the death and Resurrection of Jesus and his appearance to witnesses (1 Cor 15:14-17)
  - The pope reflects the decisive importance Paul attributes to the Resurrection of Jesus
  - He understands Paul as seeing the Resurrection as the solution to the problem posed by the drama of the Cross

# Notes on 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15

- For the pope the Pascal Mystery consists in the fact that the Crucified man “was risen on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures”
- The pope sees the keystone of Pauline Christology which is found in the whole of Paul’s teaching as having started from, and arrives at, the mystery of him whom the Father raised from the dead
- He also points out that Paul formulates his understanding of the *kerygma* on the fundamental fact of the Resurrection
  - He who was crucified and who thus manifested God’s immense love for man is risen again and is alive among us

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Overview)

- Paul, who was a Pharisee, originally believed in the resurrection of the just which was to come at the close of the age (this was denied by the Sadducees)

His meeting with the risen Christ on the Road to Damascus **shocked him into the new reality** which convinced him that what was being proclaimed by the Christians, who he was hauling to prison, was true

His conversion locked him solidly into the faith of the first disciples and Apostles who saw Jesus as the “righteous one” who had been raised from the dead, making him the Messiah



# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Overview)

- Paul also received from the Church of Jerusalem the understanding that:
  - Jesus died on the Cross, was buried and after the Resurrection appeared risen first to Cephas, then to the Twelve, then to five hundred brethren, most of whom were still alive at Paul's time, then to James and then to all the Apostles
  - To this Paul adds, "Last of all... he appeared to me." (1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15:8)
- This can be seen as the foundation of Paul's apostolate and of his new life

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Overview)

- Paul begins this letter with a powerful proclamation of the crucified one – and he concludes it with a proclamation of the risen one
  - This may be in response to a misunderstanding by the *Corinthians* about the reality and nature of the resurrection
    - Remember that the Greek mind had no concept of bodily life after death
    - The experience of the spirit was so strong among the Corinthian Christians that some of them considered this (the Spirit) to be the resurrection that Paul was proclaiming

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- **1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15: 1-11** *“Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel,...Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believe.”*
  - The *Corinthians* seem to have forgotten the very heart of the gospel
  - So Paul reminds them how he came to them and preached the gospel, they received it and now they stand in the gospel which brings about their salvation and entry into eternal life (but they should not presume once saved always saved)

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- For Paul salvation is a process in which their ongoing fidelity is decisive
- Salvation is tied to the event of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
- Paul was handing on what he received from his vision as well as what he learned from the Apostles in Jerusalem
- The early church understood the resurrection in light of the suffering servant psalms of Isaiah
- Paul reminds them that he was a sinner and he can only speak to them by the grace of God \*

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- **1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15: 12-19** *“Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection from the dead....If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are all men most to be pitied.”*
  - From here on Paul will show how Christ’s resurrection involves the resurrection of the members of the churches
  - He asks how they could possibly deny the resurrection of others if they believed that Jesus had first risen from the dead
  - Thus, he says that to deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny the resurrection of Christ

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- **The denial of the resurrection would have disastrous consequences**
  - It would mean that the preaching of the Apostles is empty, without substance, useless
  - One cannot claim that Christ has been raised and at the same time claim that the dead are not raised for they are two sides of the same coin \*

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- **1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15: 20-28** *“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep... that God may be everything to every one.”*
  - This is Paul’s positive theology of the resurrection as a single mystery of Christ
    - Paul begins by using the Old Testament image of first fruits required of every Jew by the Torah to be offered on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan
    - This was precisely the day in which Jesus is said to have risen from the dead
- The second image Paul uses is that of solidarity between the death of Adam and the life of Christ as the second and final Adam reversing sin and the curse of death



# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- Paul spent a great deal of time discussing the *Parousia* of Christ in his letters to the *Thessalonians*
- He also claims that Christ's reign began with his resurrection and it is still ongoing right now and will only culminate in His handing over the kingdom to his God and Father
- To Paul this is a "process" in which Christ must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet (*Ps 110:1*)
- Here Paul personifies death as Christ's mortal enemy which is overcome by Christ's death on the cross followed by his resurrection

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- The resurrection of all the faithful will be the ultimate triumph of Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (*Rev 19:16*) Feast of Christ the King
- The **ultimate destiny is the heavenly Jerusalem, the wedding feast of the lamb \***

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- **1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15: 29-49** *“Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead?...Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.”*
  - Here, Paul presents the consequences of not believing in the resurrection from the dead
  - He argues from concrete practices of those who practice baptism for the dead and his own risking his life for the sake of the gospel
    - Some scholars believe he is referring the dead as those who die with Christ in baptism

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- A second explanation is that the practice was similar to that of Mormons today: undergoing baptism in proxy for those who have died without baptism
- According to this view Paul is neither approving or condemning the practice
- He is only offering it to show that their practice is meaningless if they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead
- A third explanation is that they were being baptized “for” or “on behalf of” those who have died
  - A pagan souse of a Christian who had died would request and receive baptism in the hope of being rejoined with the beloved in the resurrection of the dead

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- Finally, Paul quotes the words of the wicked in *Is 22:13* “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”
- This makes the purpose of your life the pursuit of pleasure
- Stop sinning refers to the moral lapse the *Corinthians* have fallen into
- Paul now considers the questions that might still be urged by those who cannot understand a bodily resurrection
  - First, how will it take place
  - Second, what will be the nature of the risen body and what kind of body will it be

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- He responds in reverse order and stresses that this miracle of nature is the work of God
  - The earthly body is sown in corruption and dishonor
  - The weak body becomes powerful
  - The natural body becomes a spiritual body
- Just as one star differs from another star in brightness, so the glory of each glorified body is different

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 15 (Cont)

- **1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15: 50-58** *“I tell you this, brethren, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,...always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”*
  - Moving toward the end of this letter, Paul addresses the question - how is it possible for a decaying human body to obtain this glorious future?
  - So he responds using familiar biblical images from the last day: sadness, the last trumpet and the resurrection
  - He quotes from an earlier version of the *LXX* (*Septuagint*) relating to *Is 25:8* where he says the sting of death is sin, the power of sin is the law

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 16



# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 16

- This final chapter is a **long postscript** dealing with certain housekeeping details like:
  - The collection for the poor in Jerusalem
  - Paul's travel plans and those of his collaborators
  - A final exhortation and greeting
- If you have ever wondered where our Sunday collection originated, here would be a good place to start
  - The gift was to help mold the churches together
  - It was needed to help the Church in Jerusalem who were living in the idealistic community life that Luke describes in *Acts 2*

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 16 (Cont)

- The first day of the week refers to the day of celebrating the Eucharist, the Lord's day, because it was the day of Jesus' resurrection
- Every Sunday was considered "Easter Sunday" and it is in that spirit that we still celebrate the resurrection on the first day of the week
- It is not known how long the early Church continued to celebrate the Jewish Sabbath
- *Acts 20:7* refers to the "first day of the week" as an established time for gathering to celebrate the Eucharist

# 1<sup>ST</sup> Corinthians 16 (Cont)

- On that day the *Corinthians* were asked to set aside and save whatever one could afford for the Church in *Jerusalem*
- Unlike the temple tax, which was levied on all equally, the contributions were to be according to one's means and were entirely voluntary
- Probably no other factor on the practical level sealed the unity of Paul's churches with the mother church in Jerusalem than the gifts collected from the diaspora churches
- Our collections today are a way of testifying to the unity of the community and to the commitment to each individual to support it and its growth

# Transition

- We will look at a transition to Paul's Second Letter to the *Corinthians*