

Lesson Eleven: Galatians 6:1-10

Keeping on Track

As Paul comes to the close of his letter, he begins to offer his readers some practical advice on how to live as Christians. Christianity can be so profound and complex, and yet can also be so simple.

Upkeep of the Body (6:1-6)

Read 6:1-6. Discuss your responses to Q#2. While you are answering the first part of this question—"Someone else in the church is sinning"—apply the questions in the left margin on that same page "For Thought and Discussion." "Fraternal correction", as the ICSB calls it, is not easy, but is apparently part of our Christian duty. Is this a duty we take on or one we tend to dodge?

Share your responses to Q#3-7.

Q#8-10 regard Paul's most fundamental definition of the law of Christ in this final section of his letter. Discuss your responses to these questions and then, as a group, take a few moments to make a list of what may often prevent us from fulfilling this basic law. In other words, if it's really this simple, why don't we just do it?

Last week I was listening to a podcast that was a recording of a gathering of sisters who were discussing how to discern what God's will is for our lives. It was an interesting discussion. There were some deep theological insights offered on the subject and then towards the end, one of the sisters who had been quiet during the entire session spoke up. You could tell by her voice that she was obviously quite advanced in age—she even mentioned that she was certainly the oldest woman at this assembly. She very kindly agreed with all that had been said thus far and then, with the wisdom of her years, pointed out that, for her, it was much simpler than all that. She said that she has learned that God's will is right in front of her all the time—obvious as can be. "When I go through my day" she said, "and I see something and think, 'Wouldn't it be nice if this or that were done?' and it is something that is within my ability and my power to make so, I know that that is God's will for me that day. No one needs to see or even know that I did it. It needs to be done, so I do it." Now that is wisdom, and I think that is exactly what Paul means when he talks about sharing one another's burdens as Christ did.

Planting for a harvest (6:7-10)

Read 6:7-10. Share your responses to Q#11-14.

Have you ever grown "weary in well-doing"? That sounds funny, but I know exactly what Paul is talking about. In fact, it's right about this part of Lent every year when I tend to get a little weary of the whole thing. It can be exhausting—yes, rewarding too—exercising extra spiritual discipline, stepping up our holiness, striving to be a saint.

Paul must have known this temptation to slack off. It's interesting that he should use the analogy of cultivating a garden in relation to cultivating our faith. One of my brothers always teases his wife that she likes the "idea" of gardening. Every year she enthusiastically plants a garden, but it isn't long before it's choking in weeds and wilting from lack of moisture. If you want a good harvest, you have to get out in the heat of the August sun and pull weeds. It's the same with our faith.

This is why Paul also knows that we need to encourage one another. (So, my brother should maybe go pick a few weeds himself instead of teasing.) Maybe we could make that a special intention this week—to encourage someone else to persevere. Any ideas about how we could

make that happen?

USCC for Adults Chapter 9: Receive the Holy Spirit USCC for Adults (CCC 683-747)

1. What are some of the ways that the Holy Spirit has been portrayed in Scripture?
2. There are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: 1) wisdom, 2) understanding, 3) counsel, 4) fortitude, 5) knowledge, 6) piety, and 7) fear of the Lord. This list can be helpful in knowing what to pray for—instead of some of the more foolish things we think we need. The more of the Spirit's gifts we receive, the more we may realize the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit: 1) charity, 2) joy, 3) peace, 4) patience, 5) benignity, 6) goodness, 7) long-suffering, 8) mildness, 9) faith, 10) modesty, 11) continency, and 12) chastity.
3. How does the Holy Spirit work through the Sacraments of the Church?

FYI: During the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass, the priest invokes the Holy Spirit in the consecration of the bread and wine. This part of the prayer is called the “epiclesis.” There have been differences among the rites regarding the necessity of this invocation in transubstantiation and traditions concerning when to kneel. I don't know too much about all that, but I do like to pay special attention to this moment when I'm at Mass. It's a little different in each Eucharistic Prayer. Listen for it and see if you can tell when it occurs. (There is a way to cheat. If there is a deacon present or another priest concelebrating the Mass, watch for when they kneel down during the Eucharistic Prayer and then perk up your ears!)

4/7/2011

Our last regular meeting will be on April 21 when we will discuss:

Lesson 12: Focusing on the Eternal Life Change Galatians 6:11-18 and Review

Chapter 10 The Church: Reflecting the Light of Christ (CCC 748-810)

The LifeChange lesson is part review and can take some time, so don't wait until the last minute to read your lesson. It's actually probably a good idea to re-read the entire letter in order to do this last part of the lesson. Also, since our next meeting lands on Holy Thursday, I'm fairly certain that there will not be a morning Mass, so plan accordingly.