

Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church
Bible Sharing Program 2010-11
1 Corinthians #5: The Connection Between Consuming
Food Offered to Idols & Loving One's
Neighbours

TGQ = Tim Gray Study Set Questions
TGR = Tim Gray Study Set Responses
NJBC = New Jerome Biblical Commentary
CSB = Ignatius Catholic Study Bible
HO = Special Handout
SK = Sze Go Chinese Bible

A	<u>Introduction of Related Passages</u> “Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.”	Cor 8-9 1Sam 3:9
B	<u>“Knowledge Puffs Up but Love Builds Up”</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about the truth is important; however, it also leads to pride and becomes a stumbling block. God loves those who are willing to repent and learn to be kind and humble as Christ is. • Religious faith does not degrade rationality but one must go see beyond wisdom in order to enter God’s mystery through faith and love. • “anyone who loves God is known by him” – Knowing God does not only rely on human efforts but God’s grace; the grace that is only given to those who love God. 	Cor 8:1-3 HO 1 Jn 20:3-8, 21:7 Rm 5:5, HO 2 Cor 8:3, TGR 5-D
C	<u>The Corinthian Christians Are Allowed to Consume the Food Offered to Idols</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The context of eating food sacrificed to idols: idol-worship and fornication are often part of the whole ritual. • The Christians in Corinth believe that those who are knowledgeable know that “there is no God but one” and that “no idol in the world really exists”, therefore, they could eat meat that has been offered to idols. • Paul reaffirms the OT teaching of one God but emphasizes the teaching of the Holy Trinity, especially about the Creator God and Jesus Christ through whom all things were made. • Knowledge should be used to build up the community (1Cor 3 – foundation) instead of destroying it. The Corinthians who claimed to be knowledgeable only focus on their own “right” and believe that if idols do not exist they have the right to eat meat that has been offered to idols. They have little regards for the weaker ones among them who may stumble because of their actions. • Therefore, one must use love to gauge the consequences of his/her actions despite the right one may have. One’s privilege should only be exercised if it does not hurt the community or others’ rights. • Paul does not condone to the Corinthians eating sacrificed meat, not because of the teachings of the Church but for pastoral reason (pride, selfishness). The eating of sacrificed meat is quite different from the Chinese custom of “dividing the roasted meat”. 	Cor 8:1-3 TGQ p. 25 Cor 8:4, TGR 5-1a Cor 8:5-6 Dt 6:4-5 TGR 5-2 TGR 5-1b,1c TGR 5 – 3-4 TGR 5 – 1c
D	<u>The Apostles as Role Models</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul differs from the “knowledgeable” Christians in Corinth in the way that he does not abuse his privilege of an apostle and “endure anything rather than put an 	Cor 9:1-27 Cor 9:1-14, TGR 5 – 6a, 6b

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	<p>obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another different is that Paul is never boastful of his knowledge, for he writes, “If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe betide me if I do not proclaim the gospel!” Therefore, he is a perfect model for all evangelizers. • “I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some.” Ultimately, Christians should surpass themselves as the mystic St. John of the Cross; or the philosophy of Zen or Buddhism, one must humble oneself and enter into a state of detachment and become the “universal man”. To surpass (different from giving up) the brokenness of individualism, one must attain a deeper and fuller identity. • The metaphor of athletic competition shows that one must put in efforts in persevering in goodness and salvation. The context of this metaphor: on the one hand, one must love God and rely on God’s grace for salvation; on the other hand, salvation does not rely on one’s effort, nor one’s perseverance as athletes work hard towards winning. St. Augustine teaches, “Pray as if it all depends on God and work as if it all depends on you.” 	<p>Cor 9:16, HO 3</p> <p>Cor 9:22, TGR 5 – 7a, HO 4</p> <p>Cor 9:24-27, TGR 5 – 8a</p>
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SPECIAL HANDOUT

1. (St. Augustine on reading the Platonist books.) "For I had now begun to wish to be thought wise. I was full of self-esteem...my knowledge only bred self-conceit...But how could I expect that the Platonist books would ever teach me charity?...I should be able to see and understand the difference between presumption and confession..." (Confessions, VII, n.20).
2. "The Church must deny that anyone, be it the most impressive theologian or the greatest saint, ever penetrates the transcendence of the Father...This is not, however, an admission of ignorance. It is an enlightening invitation to know God beyond the intellect, to enter, through love, the realm of doxology, and there to taste God through the soul's spiritual senses. From the times of St. Gregory the Great (590-604) through the Middle Ages, theologians spoke of love of God as being true knowledge of God...Or in the language of an anonymous English mystic of the 14th century, the mystical knowledge of God takes place in a 'cloud of unknowing.'...For this reason God is not known by reason, but by faith; and there is no valid "theology of glory" that is not first of all a "theology of the cross"...for love goes beyond knowledge, the heart further than the mind." (G. Tavad, *The Church, Community of Salvation – An Ecumenical Ecclesiology*, p.67)
"The proper human response to the God who speaks is faith. Here we see clearly that 'in order to accept revelation, man must open his mind and heart to the working of the Holy Spirit who enables him to understand the word of God present in the sacred Scriptures'" (BXVI, *Verbum Domini*, n. III.4).

St. Augustine: "I believe in order to understand, and I understand the better I believe."
3. As the Son was sent by the Father,(131) so He too sent the Apostles, saying: "Go, therefore, 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 things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world".(132) The Church has received this solemn mandate of Christ to proclaim the saving truth from the apostles and must carry it out to the very ends of the earth.(133) Wherefore she makes the words of the Apostle her own: "Woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel", (134) and continues unceasingly to send heralds of the Gospel until such time as the infant churches are fully established and can themselves continue the work of evangelizing. (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium* 17)
4. The man who is "fully born" has an entirely "inner experience of life." He apprehends his life fully and wholly from an inner ground that is at once more universal than the empirical ego and yet entirely his own. He is in a deeper, fuller identity than that of his limited ego-self which is only a fragment of his being. He is in a certain sense identified with everybody: or in the familiar language of the New Testament...he is "all things to all men." He is able to experience their joys and sufferings as his own, without however becoming dominated by them. He has attained to a deep inner freedom – the Freedom of the Spirit...(C. Bochen, *Thomas Merton – Essential Writings*, p. 165).