

# Small Groups

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## *Discussion Questions for January 31, 2016 – Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Last week, in St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, we heard about some spiritual gifts: apostle, prophet, teacher, mighty deed doers, healers, assistants, administrators and those who speak in tongues. We read that not everyone gets each one of these gifts, we are only given those that God wants us to use for his glory. And then, this week, St Paul tells us to strive eagerly for these gifts, but that he wants to tell about something even more important to strive for. He then says that even if we have these gifts, but we don't use them in love, then they and we are worthless. Without love, everything we do is about ourselves and not about the others. Without love, we are inward focused and not looking outside ourselves to help and heal others. Without love, our gifts serve our selfishness, our pride, our ego. But with love, we are patient, kind, not jealous, not pompous, not full of ourselves, not quick-tempered. With love, we rejoice in the success of others. With love, we bear all things. With love, we see everything through God's eyes and not our own.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. We've heard this reading from St Paul hundreds of times. We hear it at weddings, but do we really listen? Although it's a long reading, please take the time to read it aloud again. Split it up so that everyone reads a part of it. Take a couple minutes after in silent prayer.
2. After doing #1, offer your thoughts on what this reading means to you. How do you think you can apply something that jumped out at you? Name one thing you plan to do this week related to what St Paul tells us to do.
3. How do the members of your group define love? How does this definition compare with the one Paul gives in Corinthians?
4. In this week's Gospel Jesus says, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in own native place." Do you find it difficult to pursue holiness around those who have known you for a long time?

### **Closing Prayer**

St. Paul, the apostle and missionary, please intercede for us to the Holy Trinity. Please assist us in offering our prayer to God for loving hearts. We read the words you wrote by the influence of the Holy Spirit and we long for that love and peace that you present to us. Please lift your prayer with ours in begging God to give us hearts open to the gifts he has given us, open to the use of those gifts for his glory, and most especially open to use those gifts in love in his name. St Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, be with us on our missionary journey through life as we travel the years as pilgrims, never resting until we rest in the bosom of the Our Lord. You suffered much at the hands of people just like us: the scared, the confused and the selfish. Please ask God to change our hearts so that we are more like those during your journeys who helped you, praised God and grew the Kingdom of God on earth. We ask you to join our prayers to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.