

Take-Home 14: Welcome One Another

Romans 14:1-15:13 · Keep this sheet; bring it back next week

What We Found

Rome's churches were quarreling over food and days, the weak and the strong at one table. Paul sides doctrinally with the free, "nothing is unclean in itself" (14:14), on the Lord's own authority ("Thus he declared all foods clean," Mk 7:19), and then binds them hardest: do not despise, do not let your liberty "cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died" (14:15). Each side has its sin (14:3): the strong despise, the weak pass judgment; and each of us "shall give account of himself to God" (14:12), of himself.

The proportions: "the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (14:17), which relativizes menus and never morals. A certain judgment of conscience binds, even when erroneous: "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (14:23; CCC 1790, with 1783-1785 on formation), so consciences are formed over time, never violated tonight. The model is Calvary: "Christ did not please himself" (15:3; Ps 69:9). And the command that opened the chapter closes it with its warrant: "Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (15:7). In essentials, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, charity.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. JOHN XXIII

In his first encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, St. John XXIII commended the old axiom, of uncertain authorship and beloved anyway: in essentials, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, charity. a fitting charter for Romans 14's whole terrain.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

On the road to martyrdom around AD 107, St. Ignatius urged the churches: be careful to observe one Eucharist; one flesh of our Lord, one cup, one altar, one bishop (Letter to the Philadelphians 4). He guards the one Eucharist; and a community that will not share its daily tables is rehearsing division at the altar.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: ST. PHILIP NERI

St. Philip Neri, apostle of Rome, teaches in substance, by the life his early biographers recount, that souls are won with gentleness and joy or usually not at all: he corrected with humor and refused to crush tender consciences. The kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy (14:17); most disputes need the temperature lowered and the joy raised.

Live It This Week

- Identify one in-house preference you have treated as an essential, and pray daily for the Catholics on the other side of it.

- Do one concrete act of welcome toward a Christian whose style or scruples grate on you: a meal, a message, a seat saved.
- Pray 15:13 over your parish each day: God of hope, fill them with all joy and peace in believing.
- FIND BOTH OF YOUR WRITTEN ANSWERS, the Session 1 sealed guess and the Session 8 revision, AND BRING THEM NEXT WEEK. The final session needs them.

Memory Verse

"Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

Romans 15:7 (RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Romans 15:14-16:27 once, all the way through the names; do not skip the names. Catechism references for this session: CCC 1790, 1783-1785, 2284-2285, 814, 817.