

Romans Commentary Small Group Questions

Romans 1

1. What does St. Paul mean by “the obedience of faith”? What does this obedience look like in your own life?
2. Do you see yourself as “called to belong to Jesus Christ,” “beloved of God,” and “called to be holy” (1:6–7)? What are some challenges you have faced coming to terms with these callings in your life?
3. What are the spiritual gifts that God has given you (1:11–12)? Do you utilize these gifts? How have the gifts of others been of benefit to you?
4. How has the gospel been the power of God for salvation in your own life? Discuss the battles you’ve faced in your life to be proud and unashamed of the gospel.
5. How is the existence of God in nature clear to you (1:19–20)?
6. In 1:18–32, St. Paul tells us about the wrath of God toward the sin of humanity. What is the wrath of God? How can God be both loving and wrathful? How is God’s wrath related to his love?
7. How has the prevailing morality of our culture affected your life? Through what means are you influenced by the culture (TV, music, etc.)? Describe and discuss some of the oppositions that you’ve faced against your Catholic faith.

Romans 2

1. How do both faith and works play a role in salvation? Are St. Paul and the Catholic Church suggesting that we earn our salvation through good works?

- Discuss some ways that we can explain this common misunderstanding to our Protestant brothers and sisters.
2. What does Paul mean when he discusses holding God's loving character "in low esteem" (2:4)? Do you ever find yourself doing this inadvertently? Why should God's kindness cause us to repent instead of continuing in sin?
 3. Discuss some of the areas in your life where you find yourself falling into hypocrisy. What do verses 17–21 mean for your Christian life? If someone accused you of being a hypocrite, what evidence would there be to sustain or refute the charge?
 4. What does it mean to be a "hearer" and a "doer" of the Catholic faith? What is the danger of being merely a hearer and not a doer?
 5. Regarding verses 28–29, discuss being a Catholic "inwardly" and not merely "outwardly." How is Catholicism "a matter of the heart"?

Romans 3

1. According to verse 3, is it ever permissible to do something evil so that good may come out of it? Have you ever confronted such a conflict personally? Where have you observed others, today or in history, commit this error?
2. Discuss the psalmist's description of the wicked man in verses 10–18. Which characteristics stand out to you the most? How do we avoid these being manifest in our lives?
3. Why is faith in Jesus Christ necessary for salvation? Can't we just try our best to be good people? Discuss in your group how you would respond to a question like this.

4. If we are justified by faith and law doesn't contribute to our salvation, what is the purpose of the Church's various laws and regulations? Why are liturgical precepts, canon law, and so forth still valuable for us in our Christian life?
5. Why can we not boast in our works? Is there anything that we can boast in?
6. Discuss in your group how to explain the Catholic doctrine of justification to others.

Romans 4

1. What is faith? How is Abraham a good example of it? What are some things in the story of Abraham that stand out to you?
2. When have you struggled to believe that God is able to keep his promises (4:20–21)? What are some promises that God has for your life?
3. What things make it difficult for you to trust in the love of God? How should you respond to these obstacles?
4. How can we nourish our faith and increase it?
5. What has the love of Jesus, showcased in his death on the cross for you, done in your Christian life? How has it touched your heart? What influence does it have on you? Have you come to terms with the fact that your salvation is not earned but rather received through faith in Jesus Christ?
6. What is Paul trying to tell us about the resurrection in verse 25? What does this mean in the life of a Catholic?

Romans 5

1. Do you rejoice in your sufferings (5:3)? Why does Paul think that we should?
2. How is your salvation a part of your past, present, and future?

3. What are some parts of 5:1–11 that stand out to you? How do you understand the newness of life that you have in Christ? Discuss some of the times that you find it hardest to understand and live in God’s love for you. What parts of this chapter help us to remember that God loves us in those times?
4. How would you explain original sin to those for whom the doctrine does not sit well (5:12–14)?
5. In what ways is Jesus a new Adam?
6. What do verses 21–22 mean? Where have you seen grace abound in the midst of sin (5:20–21)? Do you have faith that God is able to grant grace in such circumstances?

Romans 6

1. Why is baptism necessary (6:1–4)? What does it say about our identity in Christ? How is it linked to faith?
2. In our struggle with sin, how do we “consider ourselves alive to God in Christ Jesus” (6:11)?
3. Why does Paul refer to bondage to sin as slavery (6:15–23)? What does it mean to be a slave to God? How are the two types of slavery different from each other?
4. Why is it not permissible to sin if we are under grace (6:15)?
5. What does it mean to do something “from the heart”? What does it mean to obey God “from the heart” (6:17)?
6. Bring the entirety of your life to mind. Where have you seen sin’s hold over you diminish? What areas in your life have grown through your devotion to God?

Romans 7

1. What does it mean to “live in the flesh” (7:5)? How is this different from a life of obedience to God?
2. Why does Paul use the analogy of marriage in verses 1–6? How is sin an act of adultery? How is God our spouse?
3. What are some areas where you regularly experience temptation (7:7–13)? How do we strive against our thirsts for pleasure, power, and possessions?
4. In Romans 7, Paul describes the internal conflict to commit sin. What is the difference between rebellion against God and struggling in sin while still genuinely loving the Lord? Do you think you’re ever too hard on yourself in your battle against sin?
5. Besides resisting, what are some other ways we can fight against sin? For instance, what are some ways that you can avoid even the near occasion of sin?
6. Do you “take delight in the law of God, in your inner self” (7:22)? How do we cultivate this delight?

Romans 8

1. Do you see yourself as a child of God and as possessing life in the Spirit (8:1–17)?
2. How do we grow in our life in the Spirit? What do you think life in the Spirit entails (8:12–13)?
3. Have you accepted that there is “no condemnation” now toward you (8:1)?

4. What does the virtue of hope entail (8:24–25)? Why is it so important for our culture and the individual Christian life? Do you ever take it for granted that others live without the hope of Christ?
5. How is your relationship with the Holy Spirit (8:26–28)? Do you understand the Spirit's love for you? Do you understand the Spirit's power and willingness to come to your aid?
6. What characteristics of the love of God stand out to you (8:31–39)?
7. What are some areas of suffering that you face? How has Christ helped you conquer these things?

Romans 9

1. Who are the children of God (9:6–8)? Who are not? What does this mean for our Christian life?
2. Do you resonate with Paul's desires for his brethren (9:1–3)? Do you ache for those who don't know Jesus Christ? How should we respond to these aches in our heart?
3. How do you understand verse 13? Are you confident in God's love for you? What about his love for others in your life, even those who oppose or annoy you?
4. How is God's mercy on display in this chapter (9:25–29)? Where have you seen his mercy in your own life?
5. What is the reason for Israel not being saved (9:30–33)? How can we avoid making their mistakes in our own lives?

Romans 10

1. What is the danger of having unenlightened zeal for Christ? How can this zeal be transformed into true zeal?
2. What is the value and importance of making a verbal confession of our faith in Jesus (10:9–10)?
3. How is Romans 10:9–13 commonly interpreted? How is its message linked to baptism?
4. How is your zeal for evangelization? How are you diligently seeking to lead others to Christ? What are some things that you can do to live out the call to evangelize in your life?
5. We're often told to preach the gospel and, if necessary, to use words. What does Paul say the importance of words is in evangelization (10:14–17)? What challenges does this present for us?
6. In verse 12 we read that in Christ "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek," as Christ is the Lord of all peoples. How does this confront the divisiveness that we see in our culture today? How does this possibly challenge our own deep prejudices and biases against other groups and individuals?

Romans 11

1. What can we learn from verses 1–6? How do we endure in faith through doubts and confusion?
2. How does God's faithfulness toward Israel inspire you in your own walk with him? Are there areas of your life that you thought God was done with? Take some time today to remember God's promised fidelity to you.

3. Do you respect your Jewish roots as a Catholic? Do you pray for the Jewish people? How, like St. Paul, can we develop a heart for the Jewish people?
4. What are some things about God that you don't understand? Are you comfortable leaving room for mystery (11:33–36)? Are you comfortable not understanding why God acts in certain ways?
5. Paul speaks of Israel as an enemy of sorts. He also speaks of Israel as beloved. How are both of these true?

Romans 12

1. How have you given yourself as a living sacrifice to God (12:1–2)? What is the “renewal of your mind”?
2. What are the gifts that you have? Do you use them for the good of the body of Christ?
3. Is it a struggle to have humility in the midst of the body of Christ (12:3–8)? Do you often slip into comparing yourself to others? What would Paul's advice to you be?
4. Do you have good relationships with those in your parish? Do you love your fellow Catholics “with brotherly affection” (12:10)? Do you contribute to their needs and show hospitality (12:13)? How well do you live out verses 9–13? How does this passage stir you onward?
5. Do you “bless your enemies” (12:14)? How does this exhortation run against our normal human intuitions?
6. How should we respond to evil, according to verses 14–19?

Romans 13

1. What do you think about St. Paul's exhortation to obey civil authorities? Do you respect your government leaders? Do you heed their laws? Is Paul saying that it's never permissible to disobey political leaders?
2. Should we pay our taxes? What arguments does Paul give in support of paying taxes?
3. What is the greatest commandment? How is love the fulfillment of the law?
4. Do St. Paul's teachings on the primacy of love make the commandments of Jesus and the law invalid and useless? What is the link between love and obligations?
5. What is the danger of gratifying the flesh? How can we be strategic and avoid the near occasions of sin?

Romans 14

1. Is it challenging to love certain people in your parish context? Your family? Some of your friends? How do St. Paul's exhortations in this passage apply to your life and relationships?
2. How are we to resolve the minor differences that exist between us and our brothers and sisters in Christ? Why should we act in such a way?
3. What is the danger of passing judgment on our brothers and sisters in Christ? What does St. Paul encourage us to do instead?
4. Are there tensions in any of your relationships? How can you strive for more peace and to build up one another in those relationships?

Romans 15

1. How have you had to bear with the failings of the weak? What does this look like? Are you willing to take up this challenging call?
2. Can there be others who share in the duties of the priesthood while Jesus holds the position of the priesthood preeminently (15:16)? How do those in religious life share in the priesthood of Christ? How do we all as members of the Church share in the priesthood of Christ?
3. How do the Scriptures encourage you in your daily life (15:4)? How has this Bible study encouraged you to meditate on Scripture more?
4. What are your thoughts on Paul's zeal for the unreached? How can you support the Church's efforts to take the gospel to those who have never heard it?
5. What is Paul bringing to the saints in Jerusalem? How can we support other ministries, parishes, and causes? What are some things that you feel God is calling you to support and become invested in?
6. Do you pray for those who ask you to pray for them (15:30)? Do you ask others to pray for you? Do you believe that there is power in prayer?

Romans 16

1. What lessons can we derive from Paul's greeting to individual people? What does it reveal about the personalistic nature of Christian love?
2. How does this chapter show the importance of greeting those at Mass with the sign of peace?

3. How does Paul say to behave toward those who cause dissention? What is the line between ignoring such people and avoiding such people? What's the danger if we don't walk such a line well?
4. What are some virtues that we must cultivate so that we minister for Christ and not ourselves (16:18)?
5. How does Paul end his letter? Why does he do this?