

CHAPTER 16



1 Corinthians 16 opens with St. Paul mentioning a financial collection that he is arranging among various churches to help the poverty-stricken Christians in Jerusalem (16:1, 3; see Acts 11:29; Romans 15:25). He advises the Corinthians Christians to set aside a small amount of money at the beginning of each week - meaning Sunday - so that there will not need to be a big fund-raising drive after St. Paul arrives in Corinth (16:2).

St. Paul then briefly outlines for the Corinthians his travel plans. He will be traveling to them through Macedonia (16:5), but plans to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost (16:8). His reason for staying in Ephesus is that he has a tremendous opportunity for evangelism there, even though he also faces many people who oppose his work (16:9). When he does finally arrive in Corinth, he intends to spend a significant amount of time in the city (he mentions staying for the winter) (16:7).

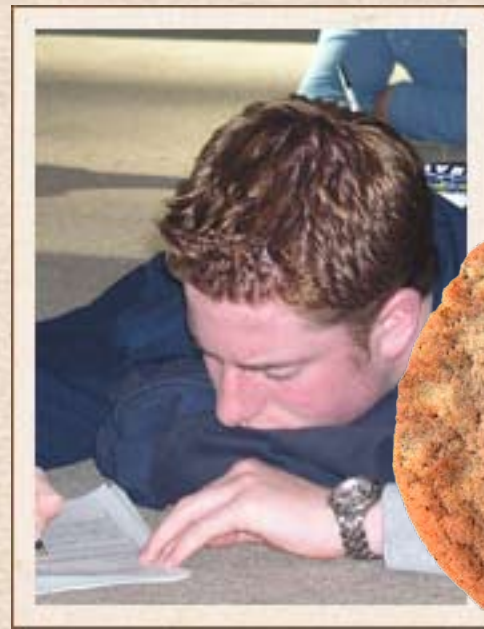
The apostle then instructs the Corinthians that, if St. Timothy should come before he has arrived in Corinth, they should receive him peacefully and honorably, and then send him on to where St. Paul is staying (16:10-11). Ambrosiaster states that the problem of dissidents in the church in Corinth was also the reason why Apollos refused to visit the city (16:12). Despite Apollos' being the bishop of Corinth, Didymus the Blind adds, he refused to return to the city until the divisions were healed.

St. Paul follows this with an exhortation to "watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong" (16:13). At the same time, being brave and strong is holding to the faith isn't enough: you must also do these things with love (16:14). The Corinthians are then encouraged to submit themselves to the household of Stephanus and all who labor with St. Paul (16:16).

St. Paul's exhortation to "greet one another with a holy

kiss" (16:20) is a common ending to his epistles, and also refers to a moment in the Liturgy when Christians gave each other a ritual kiss as a sign of unity. Verse 22 is closely related to the encouragement verse 13: those who love Jesus will stand fast in the faith, and therefore those who do not stand fast in the faith demonstrate that they do not love Jesus, and thus are no longer part of the body of Christ.

As he does in other epistles, he closes by praying that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with his readers (16:23). He then adds that his own love is with them in Christ (16:24).



TODAY'S SPECIAL: GIVE TO CHARITY

Our Lord explicitly instructs us to give to the poor (Matthew 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 11:41; 12:33), and the centurion Cornelius was told that he was blessed because he prayed and gave to the poor (Acts 10:4). Charitable giving is essential to the Christian life.

We should remember that Christ instructs us that assisting the needy is to give aid to Him; we therefore should serve the poor and outcasts in the same way that we attempt to serve Christ if we saw Him in dire straits.

Such service should be indiscriminate; we address the need, and not the virtue of the person, as St. Maximos the Confessor teaches: "He who gives alms in imitation of God does not discriminate between the wicked and the virtuous, the just and the unjust, when providing for men's bodily needs."

God may call those who are blessed with notable financial affluence to greater giving. Many parishes need repairs performed, equipment or resources purchased, or activities financed; it could be that God is calling you to give of your largesse to His Church. On a larger scale, our dioceses and archdioceses always need funds for our national programs, and our seminaries depend upon donations to educate the next generation of clergy and church leaders. All of these are needs that can be met by giving.

