

Ephesians 4:25–5:2^{vii}

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

^{vii} About the Second Reading: Ephesians 4:25–5:2

Today's reading continues the ethical exhortation of the previous two weeks. The new life of the baptized is to be lived out in specific ways. Old patterns of behavior must be replaced with new ones.

All discourse and behavior should build up the life of the community. Thus all Christians participate in the unifying work of the Spirit in the Church (4:3). They are to imitate God's work of forgiveness and love shown in Christ's self-offering (Colossians 3:12-13). The phrase, "a fragrant offering" (5:2) is used in the Greek version of the Old Testament to describe the burnt offering (Exodus 29:18; Leviticus 2:9; 3:5), and later applied to the people themselves (Ezekiel 20:41). This whole section is based on the belief that Christian living is an integral corollary of Christian doctrine.