



My Beloved Ones,

This week's reflection comes from this Sunday's Epistle to the Ephesians, and it is a very moving passage. I ask you all to imagine the circumstances under which the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to the young Church in Ephesus "*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called...*" (Ephesians 4:1). It is deeply emotional to think of St. Paul, in chains, and therefore most likely dictating this letter to another. Even in the midst of tremendous pain and fear, the Saint does not let these new Christians forget their responsibility to God, and so to one another.

They, and we all, have been called to a life which is one of "*...lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love...*" (Ephesians 4:2). It is possible hear that Paul recalls not only our Lord's instructions to non-violence, but perhaps he

remembers the acceptance of those early Christians he himself persecuted, a life he has now chosen, as a follower of Christ.

Notice how he stresses the importance of mutual love and cooperation, continuing by reminding them to "*...maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*" (Ephesians 4:3) This is a dangerous time, and Paul knows that in the absence of Apostles like himself, his words must comfort them—and remind them to carry each other's burdens. "*There is one body and one Spirit...*" (Ephesians 4:4)

As members of this one Body, Paul reminds them of that for which they are striving—despite all the turmoil in their society. "*...you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.*" (Ephesians 4:4-6)

My Beloved in Christ, may we all take the words of the Apostle to heart, remembering that no matter our troubles—individual or societal—we have been given a precious gift through our Baptism into Christ. Not only grace, as Paul concludes his letter, but the value of a group of people—brothers and sisters, who we can lean on, in times of need, and whom we are called to support, as our Lord did for the poor and dispossessed, who become the first Christians.

+ALEXIOS

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