

Scents

Scripture Reading — Philippians 4:10-20

They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

Philippians 4:18 —

The beautiful plants God has created are not only a pleasure to our eyes; they are also a feast to our nostrils. In park settings, traces of wild rose scents mingle with scents from cedar and pine trees. Inspired by aromas like these, people since ancient times have developed perfumes. Today the massive cosmetics industry makes all kinds of scents available so that people too can give off fragrances.

In our Scripture today the apostle Paul writes of another kind of fragrant offering: gifts that are pleasing to God. Paul wrote those words while he was a prisoner for Jesus Christ in Rome. And in this passage he thanked his Christian friends in Philippi for the gifts they had sent him. He calls their gifts of kindness and care a “fragrant offering ... pleasing to God.”

In the Old Testament God’s people were called to offer fragrant thank-offerings to the Lord. But in our offerings today, does the fragrance come from the things we give? Not really. It comes from the love and obedience shown in the offering.

The people of Philippi lived in Macedonia, about 1,000 miles (1,600 km) from Rome by sea. But when they heard Paul was in prison, they wanted to show their care for this man who had brought them the life-giving message of Jesus Christ. As we show love and concern for others, may a fragrant offering arise from each of us, to the honor and delight of our Lord.

Prayer

Purify our hearts, Lord, so that we deeply desire to show your love and care for others in all kinds of ways. In Jesus, Amen.

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