

Kindness is sharing God's love through you to others

St. Paul wrote, “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, **kindness**, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*” {Galatians 5:22-23} To understand what St. Paul meant when he included kindness in the fruit of the Spirit, let's start by defining kindness and how we can be God's servants in sharing kindness with others.

From a spiritual perspective, kindness is the quality of compassion and generosity, characteristic of God's dealings towards the weak and poor and demanded of believers. Put another way, kindness is a virtue which “lifts the spirits” and “touches the hearts” of the people we encounter in our lives. This kind of kindness was shown by Jesus in his words and deeds during his earthly ministry as an example for us to follow.

When kindness is amplified by grace, theologians call it an infused or supernatural virtue gifted to us in baptism when the virtue of kindness becomes part of our very nature – perfecting us in grace – it is a manifestation of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Kindness therefore involves **acts** of kindness, and these acts of kindness can increase by way of practice, prayer and sacramental life. {<https://catholicstrength.com/tag/the-virtue-of-kindness/>}

St. Paul stressed the importance of sharing God's love through us to others when he wrote, “Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” {Romans 2:4} Not only you but every child of God. You may be the way God uses to reach those he puts in your path. As St. John Paul II said, “Allow the light and the healing presence of Christ to shine brightly through your lives. In that way, all those who come in contact with you will discover the loving kindness of God.”

Kindness is not only what you do, but who you are. The goal, then, is to become proficient in producing these all-important acts of kindness in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. Many acts of kindness are available to us every day, yet sometimes we forget to do them. For example,

1. Smile. We don't realize it but when we smile we lighten the load on those around us. Greet the people you see every day with joy!
2. Remind others how much you love them. You know you love them ... but do they? The caresses, the hugs, **and** the words are so important. If Jesus had not become flesh, we would never have understood that God is Love.
3. Listen to the stories of others without prejudice and with patience and love. Each story someone tells you unites you more with the other. These stories are not only words, but they are also parts of their life that need to be shared. {<https://catholic-link.org/15-simple-acts-of-charity-frequently-forget/>}

Let's look at an example of kindness in the Bible. We know the story as the Good Samaritan. One day a man was walking along the road and was suddenly robbed, beaten and left hurting. One man passed by and ignored him, and then another. Later, a Samaritan man came upon him and stopped to help. The Bible says the Samaritan man had compassion on him and, out of kindness, treated the injured man as God asks everyone to do.

St. Teresa of Calcutta, who dedicated her life to serving the poorest of the poor, lived by the following faith inspired principle. “Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.” As one of God’s children, should we do any less?



Reflective Questions:

1. Have you ever benefited from the kindness of a family member or friend? _____
If so, what did they do and how did it make you feel? _____

2. Have you ever benefited from an act of kindness from a stranger? _____
If so, what did they do and how did it make you feel? _____

3. Are random acts of kindness a regular part of your faith walk? _____
4. If not, how might you become more involved in “Let[ting] no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”? _____

