

## Acts of Kindness

As you can see from the slide, we are going to talk about “kindness”, which is the continuation of the theme “Fruit of the Spirit”. The Oxford Dictionary

defines the word as “a kind act” or “an act of love”. We may feel sorry for a person who is in a difficult or unpleasant situation, but we are not kind to them because we have done nothing to help them. Kindness is “love in action”; it is a practical expression of love – visible, sometimes tangible, but never just emotional or sentimental.

The classic example of kindness in the Bible is of course the story of the “Good Samaritan”. You know the story – a Jewish man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They took all he had, beat him up and left him naked and half dead on the side of the road. A priest came by, felt sorry for him but walked past without offering any help, fearing that touching a dead man would make him unclean. Another religious leader came but also walked right past. Then came a Samaritan, a person who was considered to be of an inferior race by the Jews. The Samaritan bound up the man’s wounds, took him to the nearest inn and paid for the man to stay there. Then he told the inn keeper to take care of him and promised that he would stop by on his way back to pay for it.

When we read this story, we are often tempted to laugh at the priest and the religious person for being so callous, mean and cold-hearted. Yet, have we not behaved in the same way in our daily lives? Have we not turned a blind eye to the needs of others and turned a deaf ear to the requests of others simply because we are too busy with our work and our schedules?

**No act of kindness,  
no matter how small,  
is ever wasted.**  
- Aesop

Being kind is certainly risky. When we are kind to others, people might think that we are kind to them because of other reasons. “Why is he so nice to me?” People might also take advantage of our kindness. So why should we be kind to others?

I think there are two reasons. The simplest and most important reason is written in Matthew 7:12: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” It is often called the ‘Golden Rule’ in human relationships. On the one hand, it means you want people to assist you in the same way when you are in an unpleasant and difficult situation. On the other hand, it also means not to do anything to others that you do not want others to do to you. In all these, it involves empathizing with others, seeing the “I” or “me” in the other person and that is what Jesus means by ‘love your neighbor as yourself’.

The second reason is that the world needs random acts of kindness and this is how we can change the world. We live in an angry and bitter world. People are angry with God for not treating them fairly, angry with the government for having not done enough for them, angry with their neighbors, angry at their job. And people often think that only a tycoon, a legislative councilor, or the Chief Executive can change the world. The reality is that even they cannot change the world because we are the world. However, one act of kindness can lead to a chain reaction of other acts of kindness. When one person chooses to be kind to another, it’s more likely that person will be kind to another setting off ripples of kindness. *(The following YouTube clip may help you to understand this)*

<https://youtu.be/nwAYpLVyeFU>

I know it is one thing for students and teachers to listen to an assembly talk on kindness but it is quite another thing to act on it. Every day, the world is filled with people around us who need an act of kindness and I hope you will start with your family and your school. Be

sensitive to the needs of others and be kind to someone this week. Kindness can be as small as a big smile to someone or a few words of encouragement. It can be at any time of the day, at any place and it can come in any form or shape.

It often gives me much pain when I receive comments from commuters saying that our students on public transport are completely oblivious to the needs of others because they are so focused on their mobile phones. I am not blaming you for your lack of sensitivity. I am only upset that I have not taught you well.

So, let's start with making St. Paul's College a caring place for everyone and I am sure in our own small ways, we will make the world a better place.