

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

# Kindness

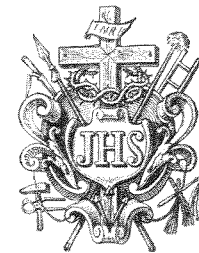
THE BLOOM OF CHARITY

*Thoughts on Fraternal Charity*

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## KINDNESS

Be ye kind one to another; merciful, forgiving one another, even as God hath forgiven you in Christ.

—*Eph. iv. 32.*

\* \* \*

Let the charity of the brotherhood abide in you.

—*Heb. xiii. 1.*

\* \* \*

This commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother.

—*1 John iv. 21.*

\* \* \*

Jesus said . . . A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another.

—*John xiii. 34-35.*

\* \* \*

There is a missionary sent from heaven whose gentle influence is of great importance in the exercise of our apostleship. Its name is kindness.

We do not believe there is a heart on earth, however hardened in worldliness or long habits of sin, that is altogether callous to the influence of this heaven-sent missionary.

We may judge of the beneficial effects of kindness by the contrary results of its antithesis, unkindness, which, resembling a withering frost or a biting blast sweeping over the fair things of earth, scatters destruction as it passes.

\* \* \*

Kind words are the music of the world.

\* \* \*

LORD!

“Plant in us an humble mind,  
Patient, pitiful, and kind;  
Meek and lowly let us be,  
Full of goodness, full of Thee.”

\* \* \*

How many a noble work has been nipped in the bud by the blast of an unkind judgment; how many a generous heart has been crushed in its brightest hopes by a jealous criticism; how many a holy inspiration, destined to bear abundant fruit for God and souls, has been forced back into the poor heart from whence it had ascended, there to be stifled utterly, and forever, leaving that heart, as the poet so graphically represents it, “like a deserted bird’s nest filled with snow,” because unkindness had robbed it of that for which, perhaps, alone it cared to live. How much, then, we may believe has been lost to the world of all that is good and

great and beautiful through the instrumentality of unkindness; and if it be thus, what developments, on the other hand, may we not expect, in the order of grace as well as of nature, in the hearts and minds of men beneath the genial sun of kindness?

\* \* \*

Let us be kind if we would promote the interests of that Heart of which kindness was the special characteristic. Let it not be in isolated acts, “few and far between”; this is not the kindness of Jesus’ Heart. No, it must be like prayer, a *habitual disposition* of heart which is ready to manifest itself without any effort and almost unconsciously, at all seasons and in all circumstances, and thus it will be with hearts which are united to that Heart of love. Kindness will flow from them, as it were, naturally, just as the flowers give forth their perfume, the birds their song, and as the sun shines down alike on good and bad, as it goes on its daily circuit—because all this is of their very nature. In the most trivial things of daily life the spirit of kindness should render itself evident. Kindness is as the bloom upon the fruit—it renders charity and religion attractive and beautiful.

\* \* \*

Without kindness, even charitable works lose their power of winning souls; for without it the idea of love of anything supernatural—in a

word, of Jesus, is not conveyed to the minds by the works performed, even though they be done from a right motive. There is such a thing as doing exterior actions, which are intended to be charitable, ungraciously. Now, actions thus performed do not manifest the kindness of the Heart of Jesus, nor will they be efficacious in extending the empire of His love or in winning souls to His kingdom.

\* \* \*

My son, in thy good deeds, make no complaint, and when thou givest anything, add not grief by an evil word. Shall not the dew assuage the heat? So also the good word is better than the gift. Lo, is not a word better than a gift? But both are with a justified man.

—*Ecclus. xviii. 15-17.*

\* \* \*

#### REFLECTIONS ON KINDNESS

If we reflect upon it, kindness is but the outcome and exemplar of the divine precept: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There is nothing we personally so much appreciate as kindness. We like others to think of us kindly, to speak to us kindly, and to render us kindly actions and in a kindly manner. Now we should know how to put ourselves in the place of others, and thus we should testify to them that kindness that we value so much ourselves.

\* \* \*

When our divine Lord came down upon earth, He came not only to save us by shedding His blood for us, but to teach us by His example how to cooperate with Him in extending the kingdom of His Father. And one of the most powerful means which He employed for this purpose was kindness, gentleness, and forbearance. "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared," by which words we learn that kindness is not altogether synonymous with goodness, but, as it were, a luster, a bloom, an attraction superadded to it.

We might regard this sweet reflection from the Heart of Jesus from many points of view, but it is especially under one aspect that we have been considering it; namely, as a powerful weapon in our hands for the efficacious exercise of our apostolate. Kindly thoughts of others will be productive of prayer in their regard, at once fervent and affectionate—prayer such as the loving Heart of Jesus willingly listens to; kindly words and deeds will draw souls to the love of Him whose spirit they behold so attractively reproduced in His members. As the wood-violets give forth their perfume from beneath the brushwood that conceals them from view, telling us of their unseen nearness, so kindness reveals to us the nearness of Jesus, the sweetness of Whose spirit is thus breathed forth.

Such is the kindness which is that great mis-

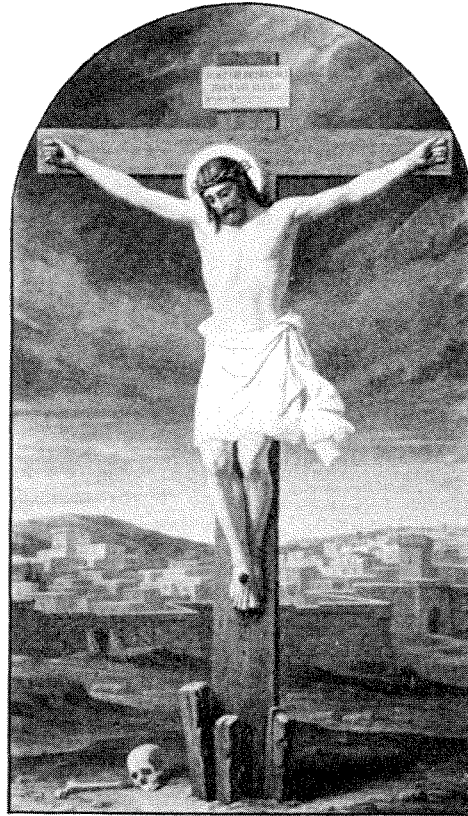
which these rules require of us?—"To love our neighbor as ourselves." Oh, how tender is the love we bear ourselves! how intent upon our own welfare! how sensible of everything that we apprehend as an evil to us! Is the love of our neighbors anything like this? Do we treat them as we would desire to be treated ourselves? Are we concerned at the evils which befall them, as if they had befallen ourselves? I fear we cannot say it. Again, "To love our neighbors as Christ has loved us." Oh, what a love is this! He has laid down His very life for the love of us; and this without any desert on our side; for we deserve nothing but hell; we were His enemies by sin. Can our love for our neighbors stand the test of this rule? Are we willing to part with so much as our own humor, our convenience or inclination, our pleasure or satisfaction, for the love of our neighbors, and rather than give them occasion of grief or sin? If not, how far are we from loving our neighbor as Christ has loved us!

Conclude to exercise daily repeated acts of fraternal charity.

\* \* \*

## CHARITY TO THE POOR

Reflect that amongst the branches of fraternal charity, there is one that Our Lord seems to take in a special manner to heart; insomuch that He has declared our eternal lot shall be decided by our diligence or negligence in the exercise of it (Matt. xxv), and this is charity to the poor. These He declares He has substituted in His own stead, and what we do for them He takes as done for Himself (ver. 43, 45). This branch of charity duly exercised, in proportion to every man's circumstances, will bring thousands one day into the happy tabernacles of everlasting life. But where shall the unjust stewards then appear, who, having the substance of their master, viz., their worldly riches, intrusted in their hands, with express orders to employ their superfluities at least in relieving the necessity of His poor children, either covetously detain or prodigally squander away that which should be their support, and to which they have an indisputable title! Alas! What a figure will their extravagant expenses then make! What account will they be able to give of all that they have sacrificed to pride and vanity, to luxury and intemperance, to gaming and criminal diversions! Will not all these robberies of the substance of the poor cry to heaven against them for vengeance on that day?



THE CRUCIFIXION

"Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." *John 15, 13*

Now, "anguish of spirit full often is mine," now "my path is strewn with thorns, not roses," alas! I am perhaps misunderstood and made to suffer, but soon my boat shall touch the shores of eternity, and I shall receive a welcome from Him Who has loved me eternally. No one hath hoped in the Lord and been confounded.

—*Rev. Henry Brinkmeyer: Conferences of a Retreat.*

## BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

On this subject, as well as the other Beatitudes, Christ has given us the most perfect example. He addressed Himself to all mankind, when in His mercy He said, "Come to Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." (Matt. xi. 28.) He took advantage of every occasion of doing good, therefore "He was teaching daily in the temple." (Luke xix. 47.) And "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil." (Acts x. 38.) He performed all these works of mercy with the most tender affection, for He acted like the good Samaritan, "who bound up the wounds of him that fell among robbers." (Luke x. 30. Therefore "go thou and do in like manner."

Consider the reward attached to works of mercy. "They shall obtain mercy." This mercy will accompany them in this life, it will extend to both body and soul, and it will be their reward in the next life: "With the same measure