

## Lent Reflection: Kindness

And so for the Last in our Lenten series on the *Fruits of the Spirit*. And here's an opportunity for me to wear my *Fruits of the Spirit* hat (also known as my *Old Dean Mitre*) made specially for me by Gretel of St Martin's, Camberley. It has each of the fruits of the spirit woven into it – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It reminds me of the loving heart of that community, and of so many others in our diocese, as we focus this week on the fruit of kindness.

The Old Testament Hebrew word *chesed* and the New Testament Greek word *chrestotes* translate as 'loving kindness' with a flavour of goodness of heart, gentleness, generosity and graciousness.

There are several candidates in the Bible who could be patron saints of this sort of kindness. Ruth in her extraordinary devotion to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Joseph in his remarkable forgiveness of the brothers who betrayed him. Tabitha, who seems to have made her whole life a service of kindness and charity to others. But the greatest kindness, tenderheartedness, act of forgiveness is, of course, that of God in Jesus - towards each one of us - which we prepare to witness this week as, once again in Holy Week, we make the journey to the cross.

It is in response to this kindness of God the Father, through the Son, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, that we seek to become channels of His kindness in the world. Pray that the Spirit might lead you to express this kindness in your life in the week ahead. Perhaps through random acts of generosity? Perhaps through extending forgiveness to those who have wronged you? Perhaps through embracing someone whom society rejects? Perhaps through charitable giving? Perhaps through words of encouragement to someone who needs them?

Let's all be clothed with our fruits of the spirit hats this week and be more intentional than ever in being channels of His kindness to a world which feels like it needs it more than ever. My colleagues on the Bishop's Leadership Team join me in wishing you a truly holy week and a happy and joyful Easter.

+Paul

13 April 2025

## Galatians 5: 22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.