



# Holy Year of Mercy

December 8, 2015 - November 20, 2016

“Be bearers of the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, **KINDNESS**, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Galatians 5: 22



**KINDNESS** as a fruit of the Holy Spirit is more than being friendly, generous or considerate. Christian **KINDNESS** expresses God’s tender mercy, love and compassion for another, even for someone who is not a friend. Christian **KINDNESS** also expects nothing in return. This type of kindness is not natural for most people and it is only through the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, that we can live out the fruit of **KINDNESS**.

A wonderful example of someone who practiced **KINDNESS** is St. Josephine Bakhita. The path for sainthood was a long journey that was filled with heartache, sacrifice and in the end, great joy. Josephine was born in Olgossa, Sudan in 1869 to a prosperous family and lived a carefree life. When she was about 9, however, she was captured to be sold into slavery. She was so frightened and mistreated, that she forgot her name. Her captors named her “Bakhita” which means “fortunate.” After multiple owners, some who physically mistreated her, Bakhita was given to a wealthy couple in Italy to nanny their daughter. As business took the couple abroad for long periods of time, Bakhita and the child lived with the Canossian Sisters. It was here that Bakhita would learn about God without knowing who he was. Bakhita was

baptized and expressed her desire to become a sister. In 1896, she professed her vows. She assisted the community through cooking, sewing, embroidery and welcoming visitors at the door. She was well loved by her sisters, local citizens and students of the sisters’ school. When she died in 1947, she laid in state for three days as thousands came to pay their respects to the simple sister known for her acts of **KINDNESS**. She once wrote:

*If I were to meet the slave-traders who kidnapped me and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands, for if that did not happen, I would not be a Christian and Religious today...*

St. Josephine Bakhita is a model of Christian **KINDNESS**. Her feast day is February 8.

## ✠ **KINDNESS** in Action:

- ⇒ Help someone with homework or classwork
- ⇒ Be nice or talk to someone who is usually ignored by others
- ⇒ Write cards to shut-ins for Valentine’s Day

<b>February 7</b> Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 5:1-11	<i>Jesus told the apostles, “Be not afraid!” How does faith in Jesus help you to let go of troubles in your life?</i>
<b>February 14</b> First Sunday in Lent	Psalm 91	<i>“Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.” How does St. Josephine Bakhita teach us to trust the Lord, no matter how difficult life is?”</i>
<b>February 21</b> Second Sunday in Lent	Philippians 3:20-4:1	<i>“Stand firm in the Lord.” What acts of self-sacrificing kindness will you do this week?</i>
<b>February 28</b> Third Sunday in Lent	Psalm 103	<i>“The Lord is kind and merciful.” Who has shown you kindness and mercy? Remember to thank God for them and offer prayers for them.</i>



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## BACKGROUND FOR THE RESOURCE



The fruits of the Holy Spirit are based on the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians. Though Paul identifies nine fruits, over time the Church added three more fruits of the Holy Spirit to the list (goodness, modesty, chastity).

What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

We often hear the expression, “Actions speak louder than words.” The fruits of the Holy Spirit are behaviors or attitudes which help us to respond to every day situations and witness to God’s grace working within us. They are signs to others that we are believers and depend on the Holy Spirit to live a faithful Christian life.

February’s resource highlights the fruit of KINDNESS.

The picture on the left hand side of the page is that of St. Josephine Bakhita. For more information regarding St. Josephine Bakhita, go to :

[http://www.vatican.va/news\\_services/liturgy/saints/ns\\_lit\\_doc\\_20001001\\_giuseppina-bakhita\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20001001_giuseppina-bakhita_en.html)

There are also youtube videos about her life.

The icon on the left hand side of the page is the official icon for the Holy Year of Mercy. For more information on the Holy Year of Mercy go to: <http://phillyocf.org/>

For bulletin board ideas on KINDNESS, go to:

<http://www.ihmimmaculata.org/docLinks/ABCNotes.html>