



## From Our Vicar

**Rev. Wayne Walters**

I have recently read an autobiography of an allied prisoner of the Japanese and in it the unimaginable cruelties inflicted on the men. Just prior to liberation a most unexpected act of kindness was amplified by its contrast to the inhuman treatment that was customary. A Japanese soldier, showing appreciation for help given to start his motorbike, returned with a piece of cake. A prisoner being treated as a human being for a moment, rather than something to be despised and beaten at will.

Kindness is most touching when it is unexpected. Kindness is a gentle word. It expresses thoughtfulness with intent to lighten another's load, to ease their troubles, communicating care, value and affection. Kindness softens the heart like nothing else.

Kindness can be expressed by an apt and timely gift, the willing and generous provision of needed help, a word of encouragement, a moment of silent empathic companionship, patient understanding, forgiveness extended or a wrong overlooked, trust given, or a personally significant date or name remembered.

The Psalmist says that a wise person considers being disciplined as a kindness Ps 141:5. Proverbs 16:24 (NLT) says 'Kind words are like honey, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.'

Titus 3:4 is often read at Christmas time – 'But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.'

What a beautiful, tender phrase. Can we allow ourselves to picture and conceive of God as kind toward us - regardless of how undeserving we may feel or know ourselves to be? Do we dare let go of the stern images of God that in our guilt or inadequacy we default to, while all the while God is longing for us to melt into his arms, like John the beloved leaning on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper?

That same Titus passage goes on to 'He save us through the washing of rebirth...' and I picture a midwife tenderly washing a newborn infant... 'and renewal by the Holy Spirit...' clothing us inwardly with a new power and love to live immersed in the kindness of God... 'through Jesus Christ our Saviour.'

May we so savour the kindness of God toward us in Jesus, that our hearts are constantly moved to words and acts of kindness. They say, 'Kindness is catching.' It is so powerful it could change the world - in fact, it did.

God bless you,  
*Wayne*