



An excerpt from the

# Palm Sunday Homily

by Fr Mike Schmitz

You can be kind to animals, kind to the paperboy, kind to every stranger who crosses your path, but kindness to strangers is not the measure of our character.

Kindness at home is the real test.

Because strangers don't carry our history, strangers don't activate our wounds, strangers don't mirror back the parts of us that we've avoided for years, but our spouse does, our children do, and our home does. And this is the uncomfortable thing, the uncomfortable truth that most people dodge.

If all of your graciousness is saved for strangers, that's not kindness. That's image management.

The real measure of who we are isn't the polite smile you give to the grocery clerk. It's the tone you use with the spouse who loves you. It's the patience we offer when our children are overwhelmed. It's the softness we choose on the days our egos want to snap.

Kindness to strangers might make people like you. Kindness to your spouse makes you trustworthy.

Kindness to strangers creates an image. Kindness at home creates a person of character.

And if we're kind everywhere except our own houses, that's not kindness, that's performance. That's image management dressed up as virtue.

The reality is that we are called to love those closest to us because the ones who are closest to us are almost always the hardest to love. But that's almost always where true love is found because, you know, the temptation here when it comes to loving those closest to us is to make it all about us.

Take responsibility for them. The temptation is I have to be the one to fix them. Again, that's not responsibility. That's control.

That's that big temptation of, like, if I take responsibility, what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna take control of their lives. I'm gonna fix them. I'm gonna make all the tweaks. If I can just shape them, I can just control this situation, then they won't be driving off the cliff, and I'll be doing what I need to do.

But we have to resist when that's our temptation; we have to resist control and embrace trust. Look at the Father in the parable. The Father in the parable does not control the exterior lives or the interior lives of his children.

Where we see Jesus, the Lord of everything, he doesn't control the people around him. He doesn't control Judas. He takes responsibility, but he doesn't try to control.



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