

## Culture of kindness and St. Jeanne Antide

### **"Need of good example in front of the world's Demands."**

... But what am I saying? Your good example! You know Doubtless, how important it is never to give any other kind, For as St. John Chrysostom says; **"the voice of deeds makes itself heard better, and is more effective than the piercing sound of the trumpet: so that, continues the same doctor, if we take care to shine with solid virtue, if we show ourselves gentle, merciful, humble, pure of heart, patient in bearing wrong, pleased at having to suffer, we shall more effectively draw to the truth those who witness our edifying conduct than if we worked miracles in the presence** (Hom. XV on ch. 5 of Mt) : **so great is the power of good example over minds and hearts.**

But it would be futile to give wise counsel to the poor, to remonstrate with them and give them affecting lessons, to say the most admirable things most capable of winning their hearts for virtue, if our external behaviour gave the lie to our words and discourses. We should be like sounding brass, as the Apostle says (1 Cor 13,1), we will produce no fruit or almost; those who listen to us, witnesses of our contradictions between our words and our actions, *would reproach us bitterly as the Son of God did to the Scribes and the Pharisees: They say and teach enough: but they personally don't do what they prescribe to the others.* (Mt 23,3).

(L.D. from the Preliminary Discourse p. 154)

Jeanne Antide speaks of good example, that is of assuming a lifestyle that is coherent with God's choice and the service of the others ; coherence with the Word of God that we listen and pray, believe and operate. Giving good example means **living the culture of kindness** with the gestures that say **love; that love that educates the others to do likewise.**



As "daughter of the Church" JA invites us to live ecclesial synodality, in coherence (good example) with a life that is capable to give its time in order to build: *communion, participation, mission. How?*



## Worksheet 3

year 2021

## ***Friends of Jeanne Antide***

with **"Fraternity and social Friendship"**

**Giving one's time:  
revolution of kindness...**

The big climatic change of our planet that render us more aware of the current the ecological disaster, the pandemic that is seemingly repeating to us at every wave: "I am still there", the considerable efforts of changes of mentality, lifestyles ... whatever provokes within us, lead us to the point that "nobody is saved alone" (FT 54) of Pope Francis' encyclical "All Brothers."

In the first worksheet of our annual journey on the encyclical, the topic of **"universal fraternity"** has open us widely to social love that sees and loves, in every human being, a brother of the same dignity and greatness; in the second worksheet **the culture of the encounter** that becomes dialogue, confrontation, proximity and help, has prepared us to a concrete human lifestyle that the Pope defines as **culture of kindness**. It's the thrilling topic of this third worksheet. St. Jeanne Antide will accompany us in the Synodal spirit of the Church.

### **Culture of kindness** (we will refer especially to n. 222-224)

In his encyclical "All brothers" Pope Francis states that once kindness becomes a culture within society it transforms lifestyles, relationships and the ways ideas are discussed and compared. Kindness facilitates the quest for consensus; it opens new paths where hostility and conflict would burn all bridges. (F.T. n° 224). **The importance of the relationship, or the relation of time, of human relationships and of solidarity among us run throughout the encyclical and is a key of fundamental reading.** But then ...

## What is kindness?

«Pope Francis writes that kindness, **“frees us from the cruelty** that at times infects human relationships, **from the anxiety** that prevents us from thinking of others, from **the frantic flurry of activity** that forgets that others also have a right to be happy». Kindness “is no superficial bourgeois virtue”, “it expresses a state of mind ... kind, pleasing that gives comfort”; it’s a basic part of the person. One is kind according to his humanity. The Christian should be the kind person par excellence, because from the Gospel he learns to relate with other with respect and empathy with all that surrounds him. (FT224)

Kindness is **the virtue** of the strong, **the quality** of those who hold the reins of their life, **the sign** that transmits the ability to desire the good of the other, **the witnessing** of the one who is unified by the meaning of his own life.

## Which is the style of kindness?

It’s a lifestyle demonstrating to accept the other without idealisms, in his concreteness. It avoids being determined by the current emotions or by instinctive thought, but by the meaning of one’s life; as Jesus did with the adulterous woman: he looked at her heart.

“This way of treating others can take different forms: an act of kindness, a concern not to offend by word or deed, a readiness to alleviate their burdens. It involves “speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement” (FT223). The kind person doesn’t avoid conflict, but he accepts it, reduces it and renders it a means of possible progress and not an event of destruction.

### FOR THE REFLECTION:?

*Which aspect of kindness would I like to be my characteristic and that of the group of the Friends of JA?*

**Moreover** ... Gentleness implies also **the ability to take time for the other, it goes beyond the hurry of doing things.** In this sense **it learns how to put the person in the centre.** We often organise the time with the things to be done, we move all the time without noticing the ground under our feet. We run while remaining seated, while going from one place to the other through connection. **We must stop urgently** ... to be in contact

with ourselves, to encounter the other even with prayer which isn’t a waste of time, but it’s a daily preparation to new paths for the good of everybody, **while respecting and welcoming the diversities.**

*«Be still and know that I am God.».*

Tells us Ps. 46,10. **We must urgently “stop”.**



## The Good Samaritan

The Pope perceived in the encyclical an aspect of our life, which especially, in modern society is lived crazily: **time.** instead, he suggests to us how to live it in a new way: **time to listen, to dialogue and to care for** ....

The Samaritan, besides helping the wounded man, “he also gave him something that in our frenetic world we cling to tightly : **he gave him his time.** Certainly he had his own plans for that day ... yet he was able to put all that aside ... without even knowing the injured man, he saw him as deserving **the gift of his time** “(FT63).

This new way of reading the parable “summons us to rediscover our vocation as citizens”; it shows us that “the existence of each and every individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions” (FT66). On giving his time, the Samaritan enriched himself, because giving one’s time means giving it to yourself. Without the other who receives, we cannot “take time” for ourselves.

Pope Francis states that “nobody is saved alone” (FT54) and “we are either all saved together or no one is saved” (FT137).

The opposite of “giving time” is to withdraw within myself.

We don’t know what happened to the Samaritan when he left the hotel keeper, but what he did was surely the best investment possible of his time. We even know that he involved the hotel keeper and those who worked with him : **involvement is a continuation of his given time!**

### For REFLECTION:

- ✓ *Do I know how to give my time to the others? How?*
- ✓ *As group of friends of J.A. : Do we give time to the others, do we involve them in the service of charity? What else can we do?*
- ✓ *For prayer we can take Psalm 46.*