**Be Compassionate**

The subway train stops and a man and three young children board a car. The man sits down in one of many empty seats, but the children proceed to run up and down the aisle, making a considerable disturbance. Most of the commuters have their heads buried in their evening newspapers, but soon the whole car is becoming agitated due to the unruly behaviour of these three youngsters.

Finally, someone speaks to the father and tells him that his children are disturbing everyone in the car. He hangs his head and says, “I’m sorry, I don’t know what to do. You see we just left the hospital. Their mother died about an hour ago. They’re so upset, they don’t know how to react. They have been cooped up in the hospital room for hours. I’m sorry they’re disturbing you”.

Suddenly the feelings changed. Now everyone feels compassion when before they felt indignation at the unruly behaviour of the young children.

What has changed? The youngsters are still acting the same as before. The attitude of the passengers has changed because they now understand why the children are behaving in an uncontrollable way.

If only we could all learn to be more compassionate towards others whose behaviour does not agree with our own mood.

We do not always know why people are behaving as they are. We do not know what has happened in the past to cause them to do the things they are doing.

It is not always that we are condoning their behaviour but if we had the same problems they have, the same history they have endured, then perhaps our behaviour would not be any better than theirs.

For this reason, we need to learn to be more compassionate, more patient, more understanding of others. We can honestly say to anyone we meet, “If I were you, I would be feeling the same way you are”. This is not being hypocritical, for if we really were him, and he was suffering mentally or physical, we would feel the same as he does.

What can we do now to help the one whose behaviour is less than we wish it were? Perhaps by just being willing to listen, to show a little attention, to be compassionate, to care.

Our Lord told us, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful”.

The children were misbehaving, true. But when the circumstances became known, anger gave way to compassion. We may not always know why others are as they are, but we are wise to show compassion, for we are going to need all the mercy we can get from our Lord.

He went on to say, “Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back”.