

Pope Francis' General Audience: On Divine Mercy and Forgiveness

**We are all poor sinners, in need of God's mercy, which has the strength to transform us and give us renewed hope.
Rome, August 9, 2017. Zenit.org**

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

We heard the reaction of Simon the Pharisee's guests: "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" (Luke 7:49). Jesus had just carried out a scandalous gesture. A woman of the city, known by all as a sinner, entered Simon's house, knelt down at Jesus' feet and poured perfumed oil on His feet. All those that were there at the table murmured: if Jesus is a prophet, He shouldn't accept gestures of this sort of such a woman. Those women, poor things, were only useful to be encountered in a hidden way, also by Heads, or to be stoned. According to the mentality of the time, the separation between the saint and the sinner, between the pure and impure, should be clear.

However, Jesus' attitude was different. From the beginning of His ministry in Galilee, He approached lepers, demoniacs, all the sick and marginalized. Such behavior was in no way usual. So true is this that Jesus' liking for the excluded, the "untouchables," was one of the things that most disconcerted His contemporaries. Wherever there was a person suffering, Jesus took charge of him, and that suffering became His own. Jesus did not preach that the condition of pain should be endured with heroism, in the manner of the Stoic philosophers. Jesus shared human pain and when He came across it there burst in His innermost being that attitude that characterizes Christianity: mercy. In face of human pain Jesus feels mercy; Jesus' heart is merciful. Jesus feels compassion, literally; He feels His innermost being quiver. How many times in the Gospels we encounter reactions of this sort. The heart of Christ incarnates and reveals the heart of God, that, wherever there is a man or woman suffering, He wills their cure, their liberation, their full life.

It is because of this that Jesus opens wide His arms to sinners. How many people continue, also today, in a wrong life because they don't find anyone willing to look at them in a different way, with the eyes, better yet, with the heart of God, namely, to look at them with hope. Jesus, instead, sees a possibility of resurrection also in one who has accumulated many wrong choices. Jesus is always there, with an open heart; that mercy issues, which He has in His heart; He forgives, embraces, understands, comes close: Jesus is thus!

Sometimes we forget that for Jesus it wasn't about an easy love, of small price. The Gospels record the first negative reactions in Jesus' dealings in fact when He forgave a man's sins (Cf. Mark 2:1-12). He was a man who suffered doubly, because he couldn't walk and because he felt he was "wrong." And Jesus understood that the latter pain was greater than the former, so much so that He received him immediately with the proclamation of his liberation: "Son, your sins are forgiven!" (v. 5). He frees him from that sense of oppression of feeling wrong. It was then that some scribes – those who believed themselves perfect: I think of many Catholics that believe themselves perfect and scorn others . . . this is sad . . . – some scribes who were present there were scandalized by those words of Jesus, which sounded like blasphemy, because only God can forgive sins.

We, who are used to experiencing the forgiveness of sins, perhaps too "cheaply," should at times remind ourselves how much we cost God's love. Each one of us cost a lot: Jesus' life! He would have given it also for just one of us. Jesus didn't go to the cross because He cured the sick, because He preached charity, because He proclaimed the Beatitudes. The Son of God went to the cross above all because He forgave sins, because He willed the total, definitive liberation of the human heart. Because He does not want the human being to be consumed his whole life with this ineffaceable "tattoo," with the thought of not being able to be received by the merciful heart of God. And with these sentiments Jesus goes to encounter sinners, which we all are.

Thus sinners are forgiven. Not only are they soothed at the psychological level, because they are freed from the sense of guilt, Jesus does much more: He offers people that have erred the hope of a new life. "But, Lord, I am a wretch." "Look ahead and I'll make you a new heart." This is the hope that Jesus gives us. A life marked by love. Matthew, the publican, became an Apostle of Christ: Matthew, who was a traitor of the homeland, an exploiter of people. Zaccheus, corrupt rich man — who certainly had a degree in bribes — of Jericho, was transformed into a benefactor of the poor. The woman of Samaria, who had had five husbands and now lived with another, heard the promise of a "living water," which would always gush within her (Cf. John 4:14). Thus Jesus changes the heart; He does so with all of us.

It does us good to think that God didn't choose as first dough to form His Church people that never erred. The Church is a people of sinners, who experience the mercy and forgiveness of God. Peter understood more the truth about himself when the cock crowed, rather than from his outbursts of generosity, which swelled his chest, making him feel superior to others.

Brothers and sisters, we are all poor sinners, in need of God's mercy, which has the strength to transform us and give us renewed hope. And He does so! And to people that have understood this fundamental truth, God gives the most beautiful mission in the world, namely, love for brothers and sisters and the proclamation of a mercy that He doesn't deny to anyone. And this is our hope. We go on with this trust in forgiveness, in the merciful love of Jesus.

St. Gerard Catholic Church



640 Edrie St. NE, Aiken, SC 29801
803 649-3203

Fr. Emmanuel O. Andinam: Administrator
Joseph A. Dennis: Deacon

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a(115A)

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 85:9,10,11-12,13-14

Second Reading:

Romans 9:1-5

Gospel:

Matthew 14:22-33

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for Week of August 13, 2017

Monday: *Deuteronomy 10:12-22;*
Matthew 17:22-27

Tuesday: *Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a,*
10ab (622); 1 Corinthians 15:20-27;
Luke 1:39-56

Wednesday: *Deuteronomy 34:1-12;*
Matthew 18: 15-20

Thursday: *Joshua 3:7-10a,11,13-17;*
Matthew 18:21-19:1

Friday: *Joshua 24:1-13;*
Matthew 19:3-12

Saturday: *Joshua 24:14-29;*
Matthew 19:13-15

Mass Times: Weekdays Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:15 AM,
First Friday Benediction after Mass

Weekend Saturday Vigil 4:00 PM, Sunday 7:00 AM and 11:00 AM

Confessions: after weekday Masses and by Appointment

Office Hours: 9:00 AM till 3:00 PM Tuesday - Thursday

Bible Study: Fridays 10:00 AM , **CCD:** No Class at this time

RCIA: Contact Deacon Joe 843 743-8779

Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Funerals: By Appointment, Contact the office.

Contact Us: Phone 803 649-3203, **E-Mail** stgerardscatholi@atlanticbbn.net

Facebook @stgerardaiken, **Emergency number for Father 803 341-5933**

The Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time August 13, 2017

Mission Statement

Called to be a People for Others

Vision Statement

Anchored by faith hope and love in Jesus Christ,
we strive to be active disciples, serving each
other and all God's people by welcoming and
embracing the enriching diversity of our community of
faith.



But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It's me! Don't be afraid.' 28 It was Peter who answered. 'Lord,' he said, 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.' Jesus said, 'Come.' Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but then noticing the wind, he took fright and began to sink. 'Lord,' he cried, 'save me!' Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. 'You have so little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?' And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God.' Matthew 14:27-33



Pray for our sick:
 Marge Glauser
 Leonard Saunders
 Shirley Paige
 William and Jackie Cobbs
 Woody Alexander
 Rosa Johnson
 Brenda Ligons
 Joe Fulmer
 Jean Schodowski
 Dick Smoot

Stewards of God's gifts are not passive beneficiaries. We cooperate with God in our own redemption and in the redemption of others. We are also obliged to be stewards of the Church. USCCB



Pastoral Council:
 Marge Glauser, Chairperson
 Janet Menefee, Vice Chair
 Payson Borst
 Jacqueline Brown
 Fredrick Cadek
 Joan Hesik
 Gregory Wright
 Patricia Hayes
 Matt Fitzpatrick

Finance Council:
 Vacant, Chairman
 Anna Marie Key, Auditor
 Agnes Beckert
 Art Wagner
 Clyde Hall

Mass Intentions:
 4:00 PM Mass is for the soul of Bruce McGrath from: Sue Charlesworth. 7:00 & 11:00 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions.

The Gathering Hymn 560 H
Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past
The Offertory Hymn is 780 H
Precious Lord, Take My Hand
The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 550 H
We Walk By Fait
Our Song of Praise is 782 H
Stand By Me



Weekend Offering
 August 6, 2017

Collected \$3,140.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
Over \$528.00
 Attendance 135

Stewardship a way of life



Lector: Diane Begic
E E Ministers: Mary Rose



Lector: Joan Hesik
E E Ministers: Ellen Heim

Refreshments August 13
 Jackie Cobbs/Rosa DiStefano

Lay Ministers
Saturday August 19
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
Lector: Diane Begic
E E Ministers: Mary Rose

Saturday August 26
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
Lector: Joan Hesik
E E Ministers: Ellen Heim

Sunday August 20
 7:00 AM Mass
 Denise Gelinas
 Roger Gelinas

Sunday August 27
 7:00 AM Mass
 Mary Kay L'Esperance
 Gerard L'Esperance

Refreshments August 20
 Jackie Brown/Jeanette Coleman

Refreshments August 27
 Open

The Legion of Mary is meeting at 1:30 on Fridays. Please consider joining. Call Paula Thurston at 803 226-1120

Perpetual Novena in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Tuesdays at the 8:15 Mass



Feast of the Assumption of Mary, Holy Day of Obligation. Saint Gerard will offer two Masses on Tuesday, August 15th 8:15 AM and 6 PM.

Fall festival meeting Wednesday August 23, at 7:00 PM

Second Collection for Archdiocese for The Military Service

Joint Finance and Parish Council meeting Wednesday August 16, at 6 PM

Steve Riley and the Riley family would like to thank you, the members of St. Gerard, for the special Mass, the prayers and all the love that you showed over the years and now in this time of sorrow. Thank you and Bless you.

Father Emmanuel thanks you all for the Birthday reception the prayers and good wishes. And for your support the last few years. May God Bless you.

The Saint Gerard Religious Education program is in need of teachers or assistants for the following classes: Preschool, Second/Third Grade, Post Confirmation. We have students signed up for these classes, it is imperative that we have teachers for them. Your church is growing, please respond to the Holy Spirit and assist how you can. Teaching materials will be provided. Please contact the church office to help.

Volunteer Corner:
 We need volunteers for the Fall Festival. Someone will be outside after the Masses on August 19 and 20. Please stop and find out what our needs are and get involved.

Registration has begun for the Saint Gerard Religious Education program 2017-2018 school year. Classes will be available for ages 3/4 through those recently confirmed. It is the diocese's policy that each child be enrolled in a religious education program two years prior to first Eucharist and two years prior to Confirmation. Please see the representative after each Mass to sign up or contact the church office at 803-649-3203 or Dottie Dennis at 843-743-8676. Registration forms are also available in the church hall lobby. Classes will begin in September and will be held on Sundays at 10 AM in the church hall. Please contact the Dottie Dennis if you wish to assist with Religious Education this year, either teaching or as an assistant. 843-743-8676 or o2readmore@yahoo.com

Family Charitable Outreach:
 Contact Marge Glauser-Hall or the office.

Handyman or 2 (or 3) Needed!
 We are happy to announce that Lowe's has graciously donated all the materials needed to build the children's games for the Fall Festival. Now, we need volunteers to build the games. If you have tools, space and skills please contact Dot Dennis at o2readmore@yahoo.com or call/text 843-743-8676 Please contact Dot Dennis at o2readmore@yahoo.com or call/text 843-743-8676 if you have an empty aquarium that we can borrow for the Fall Festival on Oct. 14

In Harms' Way: Please remember in your prayers our Nation and loved ones of our parishioners currently serving in harms' way: James Ligons, Robert McHugh and Chris Solenberger. Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. I ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

If you are on the Eucharistic Minister, Lector of refreshment schedule and have a conflict please switch with someone so we have someone serving.

The Saint Gerard Men's and Ladies Groups meet again in early December. Date and time TBD. A silent auction is on the schedule.

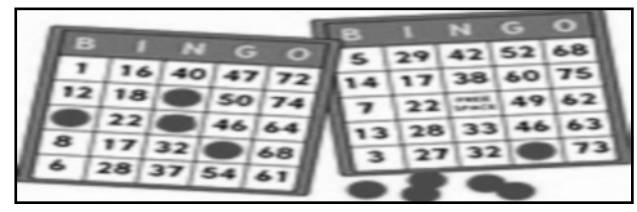
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BLACK CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE
 OCTOBER 5-7, 2017 MIAMI, FLORIDA

The Bowman Francis Ministry team would like to invite you to the fourteen annual Black Catholic Men's conference in Miami Florida October 5-7. This conference invitation is extended to all males and youth males 10-17 years of age. Come to the conference and be blessed to be the best youth you can be in the church, community and world. If you have any concerns you can reached me at 317-523-0900 or check out the ministry at bowmanfrancisministry.com

Fr. Chester Smith FOR BROCHURE: Click link below. http://www.bowmanfrancisministry.com/men_s_conference

BINGO Columbus Club Hall Every Monday at 7:10 PM till 9:00 PM 5 Cards \$ 10.00. Each Additional Card \$2.00 15 Regular Games \$20 Payout 1 Coverall Jackpot \$150 Payout



Hospital Visits: If you or a loved one is in Aiken Regional Hospital (ARMC) please let St Gerards know. Remember - ARMC does not inform us of Catholic patients, even if you register as a Catholic; it is up to the patient or family to do so. You can: ask the ARMC Chaplain to call the Catholic church, ask your nurse to inform the Catholic church (name & room number), call-St.Gerard at 649-3203 and leave a message or email St Gerard at: stgerardscatholi@atlanticbnn.net. You should follow this advice for Nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities also.

If you know of someone that needs The Blessed Sacrament brought to their home or hospital please call the office.