

Rome, September 13, 2017 zenith.org

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

As you know, in recent days I made an apostolic trip to Colombia. I thank the Lord with all my heart for this great gift; and I wish to reiterate my expression of gratitude to the President of the Republic, who received me with great courtesy, the Colombian bishops, who worked hard to prepare this visit, as well as the other authorities of the country, and all those who collaborated in realizing this trip. And special thanks go to the Colombian people who welcomed me with such affection and so much joy! A joyful people, with many sufferings, but joyful; a people with joy. One of the things that struck me most in all the cities, among the crowds, were the fathers and mothers with children, who lifted up their children for the Pope to bless them, but also with pride, showing their children as if to say, "This is our pride! This is our hope". I thought: a people capable of having children and of showing them off with pride, as their hope; this population has a future. And I liked this a lot.

In a particular way in this trip I was aware of the continuity with the two Popes who visited Colombia before me: Blessed Paul VI in 1968, and Saint John Paul II, in 1986. A continuity strongly inspired by the Spirit, Who guides the steps of the people of God on the paths of history. The motto of the trip was "*Demos el primer paso*", that is, "Let's take the first step", referring to the process of reconciliation that Colombia is going through as it emerges from half a century of domestic conflict, which has disseminated suffering and animosity, causing many wounds that are difficult to heal. But with God's help the journey has now begun. With my visit I wanted to bless the effort of the people, to confirm them in faith and in hope, and to receive their witness, which is a wealth for my ministry and for all the Church. The witness of this people is a wealth for all the Church.

Colombia, like the majority of Latin American countries, is a country where the Christian roots are very strong. And while this fact makes even sharper the pain that the tragedy of war has caused, at the same time it constitutes a guarantee of peace, the firm foundation for its reconstruction, the sap for its invincible hope. It is evident that the evil one has sought to divide the population to destroy the work of God, but it is equally evident that Christ's love, His infinite mercy, is stronger than sin and death.

This trip has meant bringing Christ's blessing, the blessing of the Church for the desire for life and peace that overflows from the heart of the nation; I was able to see it in the eyes of the thousands and thousands of children, teenagers and young people who filled the square in Bogotá and whom I met everywhere; that force of life that nature itself proclaims with its exuberance and its biodiversity. Colombia is the second country in the world in terms of biodiversity. In Bogotá I was able to meet all the bishops of the country, and also the Executive Committee of the Latin American Episcopal Conference. I thank God for having been able to embrace them and give them my pastoral encouragement, for their mission in the service of the Church, sacrament of Christ our peace and our hope.

The day dedicated in a special way to the theme of *reconciliation*, the climax of all the trip, took place at Villavicencio. In the morning there was the great Eucharistic celebration, with the beatification of the martyrs Jesús Emilio Jaramilla Monsalve, bishop and Pedro María Ramírez Ramos, priest; in the afternoon, the special Liturgy of Reconciliation, symbolically facing the Christ of Bocayá, without arms or legs, mutilated like His people.

The beatification of the two martyrs reminded us in a real sense that peace is based also, and perhaps above all, on the blood of many witnesses of love, truth and justice, and also of genuine martyrs, killed for their faith, like the two I have just mentioned. Listening to their biographies moved me to tears; tears of pain and joy together. Before their relics and their faces, the holy faithful people of God strongly felt its own identity, with pain, thinking of the many, too many victims, and with joy, the mercy of God which is extended to those who fear Him (cf. *Lk 1: 50*).

"Steadfast love and faithfulness meet / righteousness and peace kiss each other" (*Psalms 85: 11*), we heard at the beginning. This verse of the Psalm contains the prophecy of what happened last Friday in Colombia; the prophecy and the grace of God for that wounded population, so that it may rise again and journey towards a new life. We have seen these prophetic words full of grace, incarnate in the stories of the witnesses, who spoke on behalf of many who, starting from their wounds, with Christ's grace came out of themselves and opened up to encounter, forgiveness, reconciliation.

In Medellín, the prospect was that of the *Christian life as discipleship*: vocation and mission. When Christians fully commit themselves to following Jesus Christ, they truly become salt, light and leaven for the world, and we see abundant fruits. One of these fruits is the *Hogares*, namely the houses where children and young people whose lives have been damaged can find a new family where they are loved, welcomed, protected and accompanied. And other fruits, abundant like grapes, are the *vocations* to priestly and consecrated life, which I was able to bless and encourage with joy in an unforgettable meeting with consecrated people and their families.

And finally, in Cartagena, the city of Saint Peter Claver, apostle of the slaves, the focus was the *promotion of the human person and fundamental rights*. Saint Peter Claver, like the more recent Saint Maria Bernarda Büttler, gave their lives for the poorest and marginalised, and in this way they showed the way of true revolution, the evangelical rather than ideological one, which truly frees people and societies from the slavery of yesteryear and that which unfortunately still exists today. In this sense, "taking the first step" – the motto of the trip – means drawing closer, bending down, touching the flesh of our wounded and abandoned brother. And doing so with Christ, the Lord Who became a slave for us. Thanks to Him there is hope, because He is mercy and peace.

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:

Sirach 27:30-28:7(130A)

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalms 103:1-2,3-4,9-10,11-12

Second Reading:

Romans 14:7-9

Gospel:

Matthew 18:21-35

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for Week of September 17, 2017

Monday: *1 Timothy 2:1-8;*

Luke 7:1-10

Tuesday: *1 Timothy 3:1-13;*

Luke 7:11-17

Wednesday: *1 Timothy 3:14-16;*

Luke 7:31-35

Thursday: *Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13;*

Matthew 9:9-13

Friday: *1 Timothy 6:2c-12;*

Luke 8:1-3

Saturday: *1 Timothy 6:13-16;*

Luke 8:4-15

The Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time September 17, 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.

Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow-servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him, saying, "Pay what you owe me." His fellow-servant fell at his feet and appealed to him, saying, "Be patient with me and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow-servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for the man and said to him, "You wicked servant, I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow-servant just as I had pity on you?" And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.'

Matthew 18:28-35



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**



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

We are grateful for the gifts we have received and are eager to use them to show our love for God and for one another. We look to the life and teaching of Jesus for guidance in living as Christian stewards. 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:
 Clyde Hall, Chairman
 Anna Marie Key & Patricia Miles, Auditors
 Agnes Beckert, Secretary
 Art Wagner
 Michele Bullington

Mass Intentions:

4:00 PM Mass & 7:00 Masses are said for your own personal intentions. 11:00 AM Mass for Shirley Beetz

*The Gathering Hymn 488 BB
 There's A Wideness in God's Mercy
 The Offertory Hymn 390 BB
 To Praise You
 The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 343 BB
 I Received the Living God
 Our Song of Praise is 377 BB
 The Spirit Sends Us Forth*



Weekend Offering
September 17, 2017

Collected \$2,240.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
Under \$372.00
 Attendance not available

Stewardship a way of life



Saturday September 23
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Lector: Tami Schaeffer
 E E Ministers: Jerry Schaeffer

Lay Ministers
Sunday September 24
 7:00 AM Mass
 Mary Kay L'Esperance
 Gerard L'Esperance

Sunday September 24
 11:00 AM Mass
 Patricia Hayes
 Mary Rose



Saturday September 30
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Lector: Diane Begi
 E E Ministers: Mary Rose

Sunday October 1
 7:00 AM Mass
 Denise Gelinas
 Roger Gelinas

Sunday October 1
 11:00 AM Mass
 Paula Thurston
 Wayman Johnson

New refreshment Schedule not set looking for some one to take it on.

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



The church office will be closed 9/13-9/21. Voice mail will be checked. Fall festival questions call Deacon Joe 843-743-8779

Donations for Fall Festival Gift Baskets can be placed in the large box in the church hall. Put cash/check donations in the poor box in the rear of the church while the office is closed 9/13-9/21. Thank you

Bible study has restarted Fridays at 10:00 AM

St. Gerard will have baked goods at the Fall Festival on October 14. Since all monies collected will be pure profit for the church, we are asking everyone to contribute a baked item or two. Goodies may be dropped off before 9:00 am the morning of the festival at Odell Weeks. Loaf cakes, breads and cookies were the big sellers last year. Bag cookies in groups of 3, 6 or 12. Bring all items wrapped, labeled and in disposable containers. If you have any questions please contact Nancy Durden @ 215-8008.



Volunteer Corner:
Thanks to the Fall Festival Committee. And Veronica Barker for all her hard work. And the individuals raising money.

The Knights of Columbus, and Sheppard Community Blood Center, is conducting a blood drive at the Chocolate Festival Sat. Oct. 7th from 10:00am to 3:00pm.

In Mrs. Henry's class room at the school on York St. Open your hearts and donate the gift of life. It takes just a few moments of your time, So why not consider giving blood! Every blood donor is a hero to someone. Will you Choose 2 Give? After you donate, stay and enjoy the Chocolate Festival. Bring your family, there will be fun and games for all. Each donor will receive a free T-Shirt and Free Lipid Profile after your 3rd donation in A calendar year. Bring a picture ID, Driver's license or donor card! Donors should drink plenty of water prior to donating. Every Blood Donor is a Hero THE NEED IS CONSTANT. THE GRATIFICATION IS INSTANT.



Thank you

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

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

BLACK CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE
 OCTOBER 5-7, 2017 MIAMI, FLORIDA
 Fr. Chester Smith FOR BROCHURE: Click link below.
http://www.bowmanfrancisministry.com/men_s_conference

Planning continues for the Saint Gerard annual Fall Festival. Although it is scheduled for October, there is much work to be done. Our parish's health and growth are contingent on the success of the festival. You have been very responsive to Fathers request for assistance in the past with this event and parish needs and this year is no exception. To be blunt, now is not the time for resting and the success of this event and the parish depends on the participation of all in whatever way you can. There are many aspects of the event, all of which need volunteers and people to take the lead. Please consider participating or leading one of the following ways: Raffle, Bake Sale, Youth Activities, Set Up, Clean Up, Food Service, Registration, Cash Handling, Vendor Coordinator, Signs, Artwork, as well as may more opportunities. The next meeting is scheduled for at the parish. Contact the church office or Deacon Joe at josephadennis@yahoo.com or 843-743-8779. We need your help, your time, and your talents in order to be a success.

Your Spiritual Guide to the HOLY LAND & Holy Sites

Our Vision is to assist Catholics/Christians have a truly spiritual and meaningful pilgrimage experience while touring the Holy Land and other major religious sites in Europe, call us at **1-844-400-9559**

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, Deja MS Pringle 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.

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