

POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Saints, Witnesses and Companions of Hope.

'We can be Saints because the Lord helps us; It is He who helps us'

Rome, June 21, 2017. Zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

On the day of our Baptism, the invocation of the Saints resounded for us. At that moment many of us were children, carried in our parents' arms. Shortly before carrying out the anointing with the oil of the catechumens, symbol of God's strength in the fight against evil, the priest invited the whole assembly to pray for those who were about to receive Baptism, invoking the intercession of the Saints. That was the first time, in the course of our life, in which we were gifted with this company of "older" brothers and sisters — the Saints — who passed by our same way, who knew our toils and live for ever in God's embrace. The Letter to the Hebrews describes this company that surrounds us with the expression "*multitude of witnesses*" (12,[\[1\]](#)). The Saints are thus: a multitude of witnesses.

In the fight against evil, we Christians do not despair. Christianity cultivates *an incurable confidence*; it does not believe that the negative and disintegrating forces can prevail. The last word on the history of man is not hatred, it is not death, it is not war. In every moment of life we are helped by God's hand and also by the discreet presence of all believers that "have preceded us with the sign of faith" (Roman Canon). Their existence tells us first of all that the Christian life is not an unattainable ideal. And, at the same time, it comforts us: we are not alone, the Church is made up of innumerable brethren, often anonymous, that have preceded us and that, by the action of the Holy Spirit, are involved in the affairs of those that are still down here.

The invocation of the Saints at Baptism is not the only one that marks the way of the Christian life. When an engaged couple consecrate their love in the Sacrament of Marriage, invoked again for them — this time as a couple — is the intercession of the Saints. And this invocation is source of confidence for the two young people who begin the "journey" of conjugal life. One who truly loves has the desire and the courage to say "for ever," — "for ever" — but knows that he/she has need of Christ's grace and the help of the Saints, to be able to live marital life forever. Not as some say: "while love lasts." No: forever! Otherwise, it is better if they do not get married. — either for ever or not at all. Therefore, in the nuptial liturgy the presence of the Saints is invoked. And in difficult moments it is necessary to have the courage to raise one's eyes to Heaven, thinking of the many Christians who went through tribulation and kept their Baptismal garments white, washing them in the Blood of the Lamb (Cf. *Revelation 7:14*): thus says the Book of Revelation. God never abandons us: every time we are in need one of His Angels will come to help us rise again and to infuse consolation in us — "Angels" sometimes with a human face and heart, because God's Saints are always here, hidden in our midst. This is difficult to understand and also to imagine, but the Saints are present in our life. And when someone invokes a Saint it is precisely because he/she is close to us.

Priests also keep the memory of an invocation of Saints pronounced over them. It is one of the most touching moments of the liturgy of Ordination. The candidates lie on the ground with their face on the floor. And the whole assembly, led by the Bishop, invokes the intercession of the Saints. A man would remain crushed under the weight of the mission entrusted to him, but hearing that the whole of Paradise is behind him, that God's grace will never be lacking because Jesus is always faithful, then one can leave serene and heartened. We are not alone.

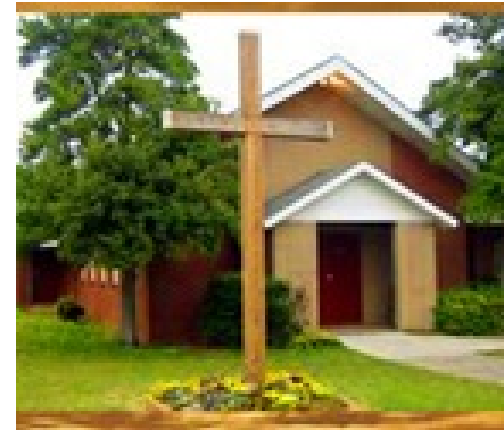
And what are we? We are dust that aspires to Heaven. Our strength is weak, but powerful is the mystery of the grace that is present in the life of Christians. We are faithful to this earth, which Jesus loved in every instant of His life, but we know and want to hope in the transfiguration of the world, in its definitive fulfillment where, finally, there will be no more tears, evil or suffering.

May the Lord give to all of us *the hope of being Saints*. However, one of you might ask me: "Father, can one be a Saint in everyday life?" Yes, one can. "But does this mean that we have to pray the whole day?" No, it means that one must do one's duty the whole day: pray, go to work, look after the children. However, everything must be done with the heart open to God, so that work — also in sickness and in suffering, also in difficulties — is open to God, and thus we can become Saints. May the Lord give us the hope of being Saints. We must not think it is something difficult, that it is easier to be delinquent than Saints! No. We can be Saints because the Lord helps us; It is He who helps us.

It is the great gift that each one of us can give the world. May the Lord give us the grace to believe so profoundly in Him that we become images of Christ for this world. Our history is in need of "mystics": of persons that reject all domination, that aspire to charity and fraternity; men and women who live accepting also a portion of suffering, because they take charge of others' toil. However, without these men and women the world would not have hope. Therefore, I wish you — and I wish also for myself — that the Lord give us the hope of being Saints.

Thank you!

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:

Jeremiah 20:10-13(94A)

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 69:8-10, 14,17,33-35

Second Reading:

Romans 5:12-15

Gospel:

Matthew 10:26-33

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for Week of June 25, 2017

Monday: *Genesis 12:1-9;*

Matthew 7:1-5

Tuesday: *Genesis 13:2,5-18;*

Matthew 7:6, 12-14

Wednesday: *Genesis 15:1-122,17-18;*

Matthew 7:15-20

Thursday: *Acts 12:1-11;*

2 Timothy 4:6-8,17-18; Matthew 16:13-19

Friday: *Genesis 17:1,9-10,15-22;*

Matthew 8:1-4

Saturday: *Genesis 18:1-15;*

Matthew 8:5-15

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 Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time June 25, 2017

Mission Statement

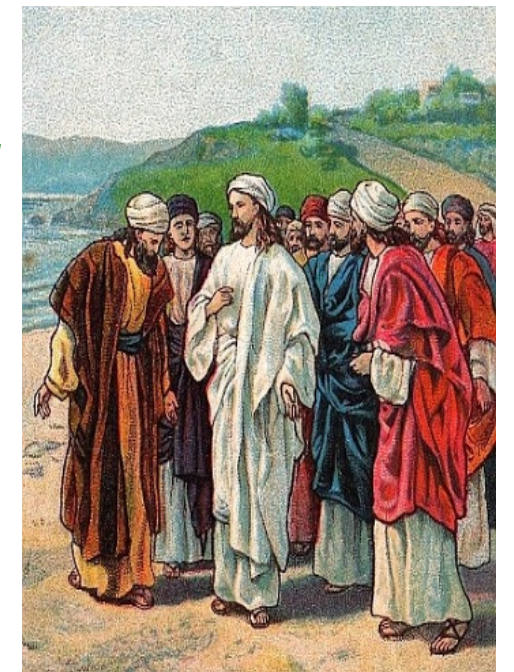
Called to be a People for Others

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.*

*Everyone who acknowledges
me before others I will
acknowledge before my
heavenly Father. But
whoever denies me before
others, I will deny before my
heavenly Father.*

Matthew 10:32-32



Pray for our sick:
 Judy Riley
 Marge Glauser
 Leonard Saunders
 Shirley Paige
 William and Jackie Cobbs
 Woody Alexander
 Rosa Johnson
 Brenda Lignons
 Joe Fulmer
 Jean Schodowski
 Agnes Beckert

“Jesus asks us to commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talent, and our treasure as an outward sign of the love and gratitude we have for Him.” Bishop of Bismarck ND



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:
 Robert Erikson, Chairman
 Leon Gagnon and Anna Marie Key, Auditors
 Art Wagner
 Clyde Hall

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

Weekend Offering
June 18, 2017
 Collected \$2,510.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
Under \$102.00
 Attendance 124
Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 641 BB
Morning Has Broken 546 BB
The Offertory Hymn 546 BB
Sing to the Mountains
The Communion Hymn CHOIR 328 BB
Taste and See
Our Song of Praise is 27 M
Now Thank We All Our God



	Lay Ministers	Saturday July 1	Sunday July 2	Sunday July 2
		4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:00 AM Mass
Lector:		Diane Begic	Mary Kay L'Esperance	Vacant
E E Ministers:		Mary Rose	Gerard L'Esperance	Jeanette Coleman
		Saturday July 8	Sunday July 9	Sunday July 9
		4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:00 AM Mass
Lector:		Linda Cooper	Denise Gelinas	Paula Thurston
E E Ministers:		Pam Ziomek	Roger Gelinas	Wayman Johnson
Refreshments June 25	Refreshments July 2	Refreshments July 9		
Janet Menefee/Mike Solenberger	Vacant	Jackie Brown/Jeanette Coleman		

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 Diocese of Charleston has begun to prepare for our Bicentennial in 2020. Bishop Guglielmone asks all parishioners to complete a brief online survey. Go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CharlestonMAP> The Spanish survey link - <https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/EncuestaCharleston> Please complete by July 5th



Fall Festival Meeting 7:00 PM June 28

We need money counters. We count Sunday after the last Mass. We would like to have at least 4 people. We need volunteers as soon as possible. If interested call the office for job description. We need your help.

Our first Men's and Woman's groups meeting/program was well received with about 25 parishioners attending. We had food, a film with discussion, and a message from Deacon Joe. Our next program/meeting will be Monday, July 3 at 7 PM. The topic will be the Stephen Ministry and will feature a guest speaker. We encourage you to attend.

Second Collection for Peter's Pence

Volunteer Corner:
Thanks to Clyde Hall for joining the Finance Committee. Thanks to all that are helping with needs assessment.

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 Wednesday, June 28, at 7PM 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.

There will be a Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend on the following dates: St. Andrew, Clemson on July 29-30, St. Michael, Murrell's Inlet on October 7-8, and All Saints, Lake Wylie on November 11-12. Please see the web site at: www.cee-sc.org for more information and to register.

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

Family Charitable Outreach:
 Contact Marge Glauser or the office.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston Office of Ethnic Ministries invites all to the Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Feast Day Celebration on Saturday, July 15, 2017 at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church 3710 Augusta Road, Greenville, SC 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Please join us as we celebrate the Feast Day of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, patroness of the environment. Father Dwight Longenecker will be the celebrant and homilist for the Mass followed by a presentation and light meal. The program will include speaker Chief Mary Louise Worthy and Cathy Nelson, with the Keepers of the Word Drum Team. An optional tour of the lower church which houses a stained glass window of Saint Kateri will also be available. To register online go to: <https://tekakwitha.eventbrite.com>. For more information and registration, contact the Office of Ethnic Ministries at (864)331-2627 or email rmcnamara@catholic-doc.org

International Rosary
 An International Rosary for Our Lady of Fatima will be held at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church in Fort Mill, SC on Thursday, July 13 at 7:00pm. Each decade will be prayed in a different language and all nationalities are welcome! Please bring an international dessert to share following the rosary. For questions, please contact us at familylife@catholic-doc.org.

Become a Creighton Model Fertility Care Practitioner
 The Diocese will host its sixth Creighton Model Fertility Care Practitioner Education Program in Greenville, SC for those interested in teaching others how to use the natural family planning method. Applications are currently being accepted for the 13-month practitioner program. Making it easier for students to leave jobs and families for the training, Education Phase I will be conducted over two, 4-day weekends: September 8 - 11, 2017 and September 22 - 25, 2017. Education Phase II will be held March 13 - 18, 2018. For more information and to request an application, please contact Kelli Ball, Diocesan NFP Coordinator, at kellihball@gmail.com or (803) 807-0158.

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

In Harms' Way: Please remember in your prayers our Nation and loved ones of our parishioners currently serving in harms' way: James Lignons and Robert McHugh. 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.