

## Pope Francis' Homily at Mass in Holguín, Cuba

"Jesus' love goes before us, his look anticipates our needs."

Holguín, September 21, 2015 (ZENIT.org)

We are celebrating the feast of the apostle and evangelist Saint Matthew. We are celebrating the story of a conversion. Matthew himself, in his Gospel, tell us what it was like, this encounter which changed his life. He shows us an "exchange of glances" capable of changing history.

On a day like any other, as Matthew, the tax collector, was seated at his table, Jesus passed by, saw him, came up to him and said: "Follow me". Matthew got up and followed him.

Jesus looked at him. How strong was the love in that look of Jesus, which moved Matthew to do what he did! What power must have been in his eyes to make Matthew get up from his table! We know that Matthew was a publican: he collected taxes from the Jews to give to the Romans. Publicans were looked down upon and considered sinners; as such, they lived apart and were despised by others. One could hardly eat, speak or pray with the likes of these. For the people, they were traitors: they extorted from their own to give to others. Publicans belonged to this social class.

Jesus, on the other hand, stopped; he did not quickly take his distance. He looked at Matthew calmly, peacefully. He looked at him with eyes of mercy; he looked at him as no one had ever looked at him before. And this look unlocked Matthew's heart; it set him free, it healed him, it gave him hope, a new life, as it did to Zacchaeus, to Bartimaeus, to Mary Magdalene, to Peter, and to each of us. Even if we do not dare raise our eyes to the Lord, he looks at us first. This is our story, and it is like that of so many others. Each of us can say: "I, too, am a sinner, whom Jesus has looked upon". I ask you, in your homes or in the Church, to be still for a moment and to recall with gratitude and happiness those situations, that moment, when the merciful gaze of God was felt in our lives.

Jesus' love goes before us, his look anticipates our needs. He can see beyond appearances, beyond sin, beyond failures and unworthiness. He sees beyond our rank in society. He sees beyond this, to our dignity as sons and daughters, a dignity at times sullied by sin, but one which endures in the depth of our soul. He came precisely to seek out all those who feel unworthy of God, unworthy of others. Let us allow Jesus to look at us. Let us allow his gaze to run over our streets. Let us allow that look to become our joy, our hope.

After the Lord looked upon him with mercy, he said to Matthew: "Follow me." Matthew got up and followed him. After the look, a word. After love, the mission. Matthew is no longer the same; he is changed inside. The encounter with Jesus and his loving mercy has transformed him. He leaves behind his table, his money, his exclusion. Before, he had sat waiting to collect his taxes, to take from others; now, with Jesus he must get up and give, give himself to others. Jesus looks at him and Matthew encounters the joy of service. For Matthew and for all who have felt the gaze of Jesus, other people are no longer to be "lived off", used and abused. The gaze of Jesus gives rise to missionary activity, service, self-giving. Jesus' love heals our short-sightedness and pushes us to look beyond, not to be satisfied with appearances or with what is politically correct.

Jesus goes before us, he precedes us; he opens the way and invites us to follow him. He invites us slowly to overcome our preconceptions and our reluctance to think that others, much less ourselves, can change. He challenges us daily with the question: "Do you believe? Do you believe it is possible that a tax collector can become a servant? Do you believe it is possible that a traitor can become a friend? Do you believe it is possible that the son of a carpenter can be the Son of God?" His gaze transforms our way of seeing things, his heart transforms our hearts. God is a Father who seeks the salvation of each of his sons and daughters.

Let us gaze upon the Lord in prayer, in the Eucharist, in Confession, in our brothers and sisters, especially those who feel excluded or abandoned. May we learn to see them as Jesus sees us. Let us share his tenderness and mercy with the sick, prisoners, the elderly and families in difficulty. Again and again we are called to learn from Jesus, who always sees what is most authentic in every person, which is the image of his Father.

I know the efforts and the sacrifices being made by the Church in Cuba to bring Christ's word and presence to all, even in the most remote areas. Here I would mention especially the "mission houses" which, given the shortage of churches and priests, provide for many people a place for prayer, for listening to the word of God, for catechesis and community life. They are small signs of God's presence in our neighborhoods and a daily aid in our effort to respond to the plea of the apostle Paul: "I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (cf. Eph 4:1-3).

I now turn my eyes to the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, whom Cuba embraced and to whom it opened its doors forever. I ask Our Lady to look with maternal love on all her children in this noble country. May her "eyes of mercy" ever keep watch over each of you, your homes, your families, and all those who feel that they have no place. In her love, may she protect us all as she once cared for Jesus.

**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@Atlanticbbn.net.

# St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

## SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

*Numbers 11:25-29*

Responsorial:

*Psalms 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14*

Second Reading:

*James 5:1-6*

Gospel:

*Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48*

## Lectionary Readings for the week of September 27th

Monday: *Zechariah 8:1-8;*

*Luke 9:46-50*

Tuesday: *Daniel 7:9-10,13-14;*

*John 1:47-51*

Wednesday: *Nehemiah 2:1-8;*

*Luke 9:57-62*

Thursday: *Nehemiah 8:1-4a,5-6,*

*7b-12; Luke 10:1-12*

Friday: *Baruch 1:15-22;*

*Matthew 18:1-5,10*

*Today's Missal*

## Twenty Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time September 27, 2015

### 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.*

### Fr. Emmanuel Andinam: Administrator

*John said to him, 'Master, we saw someone who is not one of us driving out devils in your name, and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him.' But Jesus said, 'You must not stop him; no one who works a miracle in my name could soon afterwards speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us. 'If anyone gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, then in truth I tell you, he will most certainly not lose his reward. 'But anyone who is the downfall of one of these little ones who have faith, would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone hung round his neck.' Mark 9:38-42*



**Mass Times:** Weekdays Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:15 AM, First Friday Benediction after Mass  
Weekend Saturday 4:00 PM, Sunday 7:00 AM and 11:15 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 (Insight to the scriptures)

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

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

**Facebook @stgerardaiken, Emergency number for Father 803 637-2027**

**Just two weeks away, The Rosary Rally (America Needs Fatima) October the 10<sup>th</sup>**



**Pray for our sick:**  
 Gary Gilbert  
 Leonard Saunders  
 Shirley Paige  
 William and Jackie Cobbs  
 Woody Alexander  
 Lena Mickens  
 Rosa Johnson  
 Brenda Ligons  
 Meg Schaeffer  
 Joe Fulmer  
 Patricia Bailey

**Promoting Parish Stewardship**  
 Stewards create a community – the Church. In that community we share our gifts, our time, our talents, our treasures. Baptism unites us in our faith. We cherish as our mission the mission of the Church to proclaim and teach, to serve and make holy.

*Mass Intentions 9/26-9/27*  
 4:00 PM, 7:00 AM and 11:15 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions.

**Pastoral Council:**  
 Wayman Johnson,  
 Chairman  
 Payson Borst  
 Jacqueline Brown  
 Fredrick Cadek  
 Nancy Durden  
 Marge Glauser  
 Janet Menefee  
 Gregory Wright  
 Joan Hesik

**Sunday Offering September 20th**  
 Collection \$2,454.00  
 Needed \$2,612.00  
 Short \$158.00  
 Attendance 128

*Our Song of Praise is 480 H*  
*For the Beauty of the Earth*  
*The Offertory Hymn is 760 H*  
*One Bread, One Body*  
*The Communion Hymn is CHOIR*  
*Te Deum (Hymn of Praise)*  
*The Gathering Hymn 683 H*  
*All Are Welcome*

**Finance Council:**  
 Robert Erikson,  
 Chairman  
 Leon Gagnon and  
 Anna Marie Key,  
 Auditors.  
 Lisa Solenberger

*Stewardship a way of life*



**Lay Ministers**

	<b>Saturday October 3</b>	<b>Sunday October 4</b>	<b>Sunday October 4</b>
	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:15 AM Mass
<b>Lector:</b>	Daine Begic	Denise Gelinis	Richardean Paige
<b>E E Minister:</b>	Pam Ziomek	Roger Gelinis	Jacqueline Brown
	<b>Saturday October 10</b>	<b>Sunday October 11</b>	<b>Sunday October 11</b>
	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:15 AM Mass
<b>Lector:</b>	Joan Hesik	Mary Kay L'Esperance	Sheila Wagner
<b>E E Ministers:</b>	Barbara Dixon	Gerard L'Esperance	Jeanette Coleman
<b>Refreshments October 4</b>	<b>Counters October 4</b>		
<b>Open</b>	<b>Open</b>		



**GOOD NEWS**  
 It's not too late to come to Bible Study, with Father Emmanuel, this and every Friday at 10 am. Learn and understand the scriptures.

Dinner & Dance Fundraiser

The Knights of Columbus is hosting a steak dinner and dance on November 7/2015, from 6:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus home on 1003 Spaulding Drive in Aiken. The meal will consist of a ribeye steak, baked potato, salad, bread, and dessert. Music will be provided by a local DJ, and a silent auction will also be held at the dinner. The dinner and dance will cost \$20 per person. All money raised will go to the Columbus H.O.P.E. Foundation to support the Special Olympics in Aiken. Tickets can be bought from the following Knights:

Randall Brown - 803-292-1353, Steve Graft - 803-640-2178, Greg Wright - 803-641-7354, Mark Krajc - 803-507-7521

Many hands make easy work for all! We are one parish. Support your parish. We need parishioners from all three Masses working together to make our Fall Festival/Bazaar successful. Need someone from each of the Masses to work on the Fall Festival Committee. Call the office if you can join the committee. Also need all to make an effort to get items donated for a silent auction and vendors. If you can, contact the businesses you frequent and request a donation for the silent auction. This is an example of support one can provide.

We hope you all plan to attend the Festival and mark off some time on your calendar, **November 7, 2015 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM**, if you can't support it all day. Let's unite and support our Parish, St Gerard of Aiken!

**Columbus HOPE Foundation (Helping Other People Every Day)** Sincere thanks to our parishioners here at St. Gerard and to ST. Mary's and Our Lady of the Valley and for their generosity. The Columbus HOPE Foundation Tootsie Roll drive was very successful. **2,409.37** was collected at the three churches, this money along with the upcoming Tootsie Roll drive will help people in our community with Intellectual Disabilities, and also help support the Special Olympics of Aiken. Once Again, Thank You For your Generosity.



The next Bazaar Meeting is October 6th at



**Volunteer Corner**  
 Thanks to all the individuals helping with the Bazaar and those buying table spaces.

**Legion of Mary and the Rosary Rally on October 10, 2015**  
 Cathy Ciani is the chair of the Legion and the Rosary Rally. Please call her or the office for information on either one of the above.  
 803 643-9011 or 908 675-1069 (Cathy)  
 803 649-3203 (office)

**Refreshments**  
 In one week we start the new refreshment schedule. Please let me know if you can not participate. And if a weekend is bad for you please contact a replacement. Every body please look at the schedule.

There has been a resignation from the finance council. We need another member. Please contact us if you are interested.

**Help needed** to prepare the rectory for painting. Sweeping, dusting and vacuuming. Call if you can help. Thanks

**Black Catholics' Heritage Celebration, "An Advent Gathering of the Faithful" December 12, 2015 Columbia, SC 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**  
 Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2015 Diocese of Charleston Office of Black Catholics' Heritage Celebration. Our guest homilist and keynote speaker at this year's celebration will be the Most Reverend Joseph N. Perry, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Other highlights of this special day will include a discussion on Bishop Edward Braxton's document "The Racial Divide in the United States: A Reflection for the World Day of Peace 2015" led by the Honorable Arthur C. McFarland, a panel discussion on the World Meeting of Families and the papal visit. There will also be a separate a youth track. Follow this event and others on the web at [sccatholic.org/ethnic-ministries](http://sccatholic.org/ethnic-ministries)

**Have you ever contemplated a devotion to St. Therese of Lisieux, The Little Flower, Patroness of Humility, Doctor of the Church?**  
 On Nov. 13-15th, 2015 the Charleston Theresians are sponsoring the USA Theresian National Conference "Faith on Fire" here in Charleston at the Charleston Marriott, 170 Lockwood Boulevard, 29403. Hear wonderful speakers who will, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, fill you with joy and love. Enjoy beautiful music and join us in meaningful prayers and Holy Mass on Sunday. There will also be a Silent Auction. Registration is \$275. Includes Friday Reception, 3 Meals + Banquet and Registration Fee.  
 If interested or have any questions, please contact Kathy Dornetto at: Email: [kathy3of6k@gmail.com](mailto:kathy3of6k@gmail.com) or call 843-696-4912. Deadline for Registration is Oct. 11th.

**ATTENTION! Voices needed. Once again Joel Scaper, Director of Choral Activities at USC Aiken, will conduct a mass choir to benefit ACTS (Area Churches Together Serving). This is the third year for the Harvest Home Concert and rehearsals began Monday, September 8. The concert will be held on Sunday, November 15 at St. John's United Methodist Church beginning at 4:00 pm. The overall theme will be praise and thanksgiving. We would like to hear as many voices as possible to be representative of as many churches as possible. Joel will be responsible for preparing the choir and the music. Anyone interested is asked to join the Masterworks Chorale in rehearsal on Monday evenings from 7:00 - 8:30 pm in the Etheredge Center, Room 125. There will be seven rehearsals, plus the performance. Please consider joining in support of this event and if you're not a singer, SAVE THE DATE to come enjoy the performance. Attendees will be asked to bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to ACTS and a love offering will be taken up during the intermission, also to be given to ACTS. THANKS! Carla Cloud ACTS Executive Director 649.3800**

**BLOOD DRIVE**  
 Knights of Columbus, and Sheppard Community Blood Center need you to help save local lives. Saturday, October 3rd 10:00 am – 3:00 pm **Mrs. Noel's classroom At the school** will be provided for your convenience. Saving Lives takes All Types **Donate Blood. People can't live without it! Be A Hero, Donate Blood today! Every pint of blood donated gives someone a chance to live. Much of today's medical care depends on a steady supply of blood from healthy donors. Yet only 5% of the eligible donors in the U.S. donate blood. What you do matters to someone. Donors should drink plenty of water prior to donating. After you donate please stay and enjoy the Chocolate Festival. Bring your family, there will be fun and games for all.**

**THE NEED IS CONSTANT. THE GRATIFICATION IS INSTANT.**  
 Thank you  
 Each donor will receive a free T-Shirt and free Lipid Profile  
 After your 3rd donation in a calendar year.  
 Bring a picture ID, Drivers license or donor card

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

**We made it!**  
 100.9% of Bishop Annual Appeal Goal with 42.3% participation. We still have some outstanding pledges. Remember 50% of funds over the goal are returned to the parish.

Fr. Anthony's car part is in Ghana. Fred and Ups will contact him for pick up.  
 If you know of someone that needs The Blessed Sacrament brought to their home or hospital please call the office.

Fr. Emmanuel will be out of the country from the 5th till the 25th of October on a medical mission including a week of vacation. Masses, in his absents will be Fri., Sat and Sun. at regular times. The only change is no Mass on Tues. and Thurs. St. Mary's Aiken is providing priests.

