

Dear Brother Bishops,

I am happy to be able to share these moments of pastoral reflection with you, amid the joyful celebrations for the World Meeting of Families.

For the Church, the family is not first and foremost a cause for concern, but rather the joyous confirmation of God's blessing upon the masterpiece of creation. Every day, all over the world, the Church can rejoice in the Lord's gift of so many families who, even amid difficult trials, remain faithful to their promises and keep the faith!

I would say that the foremost pastoral challenge of our changing times is to move decisively towards recognizing this gift. For all the obstacles we see before us, gratitude and appreciation should prevail over concerns and complaints. The family is the fundamental locus of the covenant between the Church and God's creation. Without the family, not even the Church would exist. Nor could she be what she is called to be, namely "a sign and instrument of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race" (*Lumen Gentium*, 1).

Needless to say, our understanding, shaped by the interplay of ecclesial faith and the conjugal experience of sacramental grace, must not lead us to disregard the unprecedented changes taking place in contemporary society, with their social, cultural – and now juridical – effects on family bonds. These changes affect all of us, believers and non-believers alike. Christians are not "immune" to the changes of their times. This concrete world, with all its many problems and possibilities, is where we must live, believe and proclaim.

Until recently, we lived in a social context where the similarities between the civil institution of marriage and the Christian sacrament were considerable and shared. The two were interrelated and mutually supportive. This is no longer the case. To describe our situation today, I would use two familiar images: our neighborhood stores and our large supermarkets.

There was a time when one neighborhood store had everything one needed for personal and family life. The products may not have been cleverly displayed, or offered much choice, but there was a personal bond between the shopkeeper and his customers. Business was done on the basis of trust, people knew one another, they were all neighbors. They trusted one another. They built up trust. These stores were often simply known as "the local market".

Then a different kind of store grew up: the supermarket. Huge spaces with a great selection of merchandise. The world seems to have become one of these great supermarkets; our culture has become more and more competitive. Business is no longer conducted on the basis of trust; others can no longer be trusted. There are no longer close personal relationships. Today's culture seems to encourage people not to bond with anything or anyone, not to trust. The most important thing nowadays seems to be follow the latest trend or activity. This is even true of religion. Today consumerism determines what is important. Consuming relationships, consuming friendships, consuming religions, consuming, consuming... Whatever the cost or consequences. A consumption which does not favor bonding, a consumption which has little to do with human relationships. Social bonds are a mere "means" for the satisfaction of "my needs". The important thing is no longer our neighbor, with his or her familiar face, story and personality.

The result is a culture which discards everything that is no longer "useful" or "satisfying" for the tastes of the consumer. We have turned our society into a huge multicultural showcase tied only to the tastes of certain "consumers", while so many others only "eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table" (*Mt* 15:27).

This causes great harm. I would say that at the root of so many contemporary situations is a kind of impoverishment born of a widespread and radical sense of loneliness. Running after the latest fad, accumulating "friends" on one of the social networks, we get caught up in what contemporary society has to offer. Loneliness with fear of commitment in a limitless effort to feel recognized.

Should we blame our young people for having grown up in this kind of society? Should we condemn them for living in this kind of a world? Should they hear their pastors saying that "it was all better back then", "the world is falling apart and if things go on this way, who knows where we will end up?" No, I do not think that this is the way. As shepherds following in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, we are asked to seek out, to accompany, to lift up, to bind up the wounds of our time. To look at things realistically, with the eyes of one who feels called to action, to pastoral conversion. The world today demands this conversion on our part. "It is vitally important for the Church today to go forth and preach the Gospel to all: to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance or fear. The joy of the Gospel is for all people: no one can be excluded" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 23)

We would be mistaken, however, to see this "culture" of the present world as mere indifference towards marriage and the family, as pure and simple selfishness. Are today's young people hopelessly timid, weak, inconsistent? We must not fall into this trap. Many young people, in the context of this culture of discouragement, have yielded to a form of unconscious acquiescence. They are paralyzed when they encounter the beautiful, noble and truly necessary challenges which faith sets before them. Many put off marriage while waiting for ideal conditions, when everything can be perfect. Meanwhile, life goes on, without really being lived to the full. For knowledge of life's true pleasures only comes as the fruit of a long-term, generous investment of our intelligence, enthusiasm and passion.

As pastors, we bishops are called to collect our energies and to rebuild enthusiasm for making families correspond ever more fully to the blessing of God which they are! We need to invest our energies not so much in rehearsing the problems of the world around us and the merits of Christianity, but in extending a sincere invitation to young people to be brave and to opt for marriage and the family. Here too, we need a bit of holy *parrhesia*! A Christianity which "does" little in practice, while incessantly "explaining" its teachings, is dangerously unbalanced. I would even say that it is stuck in a vicious circle. A pastor must show that the "Gospel of the family" is truly "good news" in a world where self-concern seems to reign supreme! We are not speaking about some romantic dream: the perseverance which is called for in having a family and raising it transforms the world and human history.

A pastor serenely yet passionately proclaims the word of God. He encourages believers to aim high. He will enable his brothers and sisters to hear and experience God's promise, which can expand their experience of motherhood and fatherhood within the horizon of a new "familiarity" with God (*Mk* 3:31-35).

A pastor watches over the dreams, the lives and the growth of his flock. This "watchfulness" is not the result of talking but of shepherding. Only one capable of standing "in the midst of" the flock can be watchful, not someone who is afraid of questions, contact, accompaniment. A pastor keeps watch first and foremost with prayer, supporting the faith of his people and instilling confidence in the Lord, in his presence. A pastor remains vigilant by helping people to lift their gaze at times of discouragement, frustration and failure. We might well ask whether in our pastoral ministry we are ready to "waste" time with families. Whether we are ready to be present to them, sharing their difficulties and joys.

Naturally, experiencing the spirit of this joyful familiarity with God, and spreading its powerful evangelical fruitfulness, has to be the primary feature of our lifestyle as bishops: a lifestyle of prayer and preaching the Gospel (*Acts* 6:4). By our own humble Christian apprenticeship in the familial virtues of God's people, we will become more and more like fathers and mothers (as did Saint Paul: cf. *1 Th* 2:7,11), and less like people who have simply learned to live without a family. Our ideal is not to live without love! A good pastor renounces the love of a family precisely in order to focus all his energies, and the grace of his particular vocation, on the evangelical blessing of the love of men and women who carry forward God's plan of creation, beginning with those who are lost, abandoned, wounded, broken, downtrodden and deprived of their dignity. This total surrender to God's *agape* is certainly not a vocation lacking in tenderness and affection! We need but look to Jesus to understand this (cf. *Mt* 19:12). The mission of a good pastor, in the style of God – and only God can authorize this, not our own presumption! – imitates in every way and for all people the Son's love for the Father. This is reflected in the tenderness with which a pastor devotes himself to the loving care of the men and women of our human family.

For the eyes of faith, this is a most valuable sign. Our ministry needs to deepen the covenant between the Church and the family. Otherwise it becomes arid, and the human family will grow irremediably distant, by our own fault, from God's joyful good news.

If we prove capable of the demanding task of reflecting God's love, cultivating infinite patience and serenity as we strive to sow its seeds in the frequently crooked furrows in which we are called to plant, then even a Samaritan woman with five "non-husbands" will discover that she is capable of giving witness. And for every rich young man who with sadness feels that he has to calmly keep considering the matter, an older publican will come down from the tree and give fourfold to the poor, to whom, before that moment, he had never even given a thought.

May God grant us this gift of a renewed closeness between the family and the Church. The family is our ally, our window to the world, and the evidence of an irrevocable blessing of God destined for all the children who in every age are born into this difficult yet beautiful creation which God has asked us to serve!

Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats offer you a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment; where women and men can express their post-abortive emotions to begin the process of restoration and healing.

Our next retreat in SC is October 9-11, 2015 in Greenville. For more information, please contact Christy at 803 554 6088 or Kathy at 803 546 6010 or grace4healing@gmail.com Now is the time.

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Genesis 2:18-24(140B)

Responsorial:

Psalms 128:1-2,3,4-5,6

Second Reading:

Hebrews 2:9-11

Gospel:

Mark 10:2-16

Lectionary Readings for the week of October 4th

Monday: *Jonah 1:1-2:2,11;*

Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday: *Jonah 3:1-10;*

Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday: *Jonah 4:1-11;*

Luke 11:1-4

Thursday: *Malachi 3:13-20b;*

Luke 11:5-13

Friday: *Joel 1:13-15;2:1-2;*

Luke 11:15-26

Today's Missal

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 one week away, The Rosary Rally (America Needs Fatima) October the 10th

Twenty Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time October 4, 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

*And they were bringing children
to him, that he might touch them;
and the disciples rebuked them.
But when Jesus saw it he was
indignant, and said to them,
"Let the children come to me,
do not hinder them; for to such
belongs the kingdom of God.
Truly, I say to you, whoever
does not receive the kingdom
of God like a child shall not
enter it." And he took them
in his arms and blessed them,
laying his hands upon them.*



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



Stewards appreciate all they have been given. Their response is service. Their reward is the joy of knowing they are disciples building the kingdom of God as part of God's plan.

Mass Intentions 10/3-10/4
 4:00 PM For the Soul of Carman J. Demeo From: The Pedley's,
 7:00 AM Mass is said for your own personal intentions.
 11:15 For Bill and Jackie Cobbs' health From: A Lauer

Music Liturgy for October 3 and 4, 2015



Our Song of Praise is	486 H
The Offertory Hymn is	420 H
The Communion Hymn is	480 H
The Gathering Hymn	480 H

Let All Things Now Living
 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
 CHOIR 488 BB
 Where Charity and Love Prevail
 For the Beauty of the Earth

Sunday Offering September 27th
 Collection \$1,524.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
Short \$1,088.00
 Attendance 120
Stewardship a way of life

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

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

	Lay Ministers			
	Saturday October 10	Sunday October 11	Sunday October 11	
	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:15 AM Mass	
Lector:	Joan Hesik	Mary Kay L'Esperance	Sheila Wagner	
E E Ministers:	Barbara Dixon	Gerard L'Esperance	Jeanette Coleman	
	Saturday October 17	Sunday October 18	Sunday October 18	
	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:15 AM Mass	
Lector:	Tami Schaeffer	Denise Gelinis	Janet Menefee	
E E Minister:	Jerry Schaeffer	Roger Gelinis	Marge Glauser	
Refreshments October 11	Counters October 11			
Jackie Brown/Rosa DiStefano	Nancy Durden/Peter Schwarz			

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

Picture was taken by the Acosta's son John Riccio Jr. in New York

Fr. Emmanuel will be out of the country from the 5th through 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. Daily Masses will resume October 27th with the Tuesday Mass.

<p>Volunteer Corner</p> <p>Thanks to all that volunteer. We need more parishioners to pitch in and get involved in church projects. We have great people. We need your help to re energize this parish.</p>	<p>If you know of someone that needs The Blessed Sacrament brought to their home or hospital please call the office.</p> <p>The next Bazaar Meeting is October 6th at 6:30 PM</p> <p>There has been a resignation from the finance council. We need another member. Please contact us if you are interested.</p> <p>Help needed to prepare the rectory for painting. Sweeping, dusting and vacuuming. Call if you can help. Thanks</p>	<p>Black Catholics' Heritage Celebration, "An Advent Gathering of the Faithful" December 12, 2015 Columbia, SC 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>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 youth track. Follow this event and others on the web at_sccatholic.org/ethnic-ministries</p>
<p>Legion of Mary and the Rosary Rally on October 10, 2015</p> <p>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 or 803 649-3203 (office)</p>		

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 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

Child Loss Mass on Oct 17

The Diocese of Charleston is sponsoring a Remembrance Mass for Early Child Loss on Saturday, October 17, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. at Blessed Sacrament Church in Charleston, SC. The Mass is open to all who have suffered from the death of a child for any reason such as miscarriage, stillbirth, illness, accident or abortion. Mothers, Fathers, siblings, grandparents, and friends who are seeking God's healing comfort are encouraged to attend. There will be a speaker and reception to follow. For more information, email familylife@catholic-doc.org or call Christy Brown at 803.554.6088.

3rd Marian Eucharistic Conference

Our Featured speakers will focus on seeking to anchor ourselves to the two pillars of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Special Note: The first class relic of Pope St. John Paul II will be displayed.

Featured Speakers: Fr. Frank Pavone, Priests for Life.; Fr. Wade Menezes, CPM, The Fathers of Mercy; Fr. Joseph Wolfe, MFVA, EWTN; Tim Staples, Catholic Answers

General Admission: \$50, Youth: \$25

All are required to register by Nov. 7 by mail. Saturday and Sunday lunches are included. No registration at the door.

Where: St. Joseph's Catholic School, Greenville, SC 29607

Schedule:

<p>Sunday, Nov. 15</p> <p>Doors open - 7:50 a.m.</p> <p>Mass - 8:30 a.m.</p> <p>Conference talks, lunch, Confessions</p> <p>Meet & Greet the Speakers - 3:40 p.m.</p>	<p>Saturday, Nov. 14</p> <p>Doors open - 7:30 a.m.</p> <p>Mass - 8:30 a.m.</p> <p>Conference talks, lunch, Confessions</p> <p>Meet & Greet the Speakers, Book Signing - 5:40 p.m.</p>
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For more information, call (864)354-7160 or go to www.meconferencesc.net

Refreshments

Every body please look at the schedule.

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

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