

**POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Apostolic Visit to Africa**

'Please don't exclude this possibility of becoming a missionary, to bring love, humanity and faith to other countries'

Vatican City, December 02, 2015 (ZENIT.org)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

In the past days, I undertook my first Apostolic Visit to Africa. Africa is beautiful! I thank the Lord for this great gift of His, which enabled me to visit three countries: first Kenya, then Uganda and finally the Central African Republic. I express again my gratitude to the civil authorities and to bishops of these nations for having received me, and I thank all those who collaborated in so many ways. I send you my heartfelt thank you!

Kenya is a country that represents well the global challenge of our time: to protect Creation by reforming the development model, so that it is fair, inclusive and sustainable. All this finds confirmation in Nairobi, the largest city of East Africa: [It also finds confirmation] here and everywhere. The coexistence between wealth and misery is a scandal; it is an embarrassment for humanity. In Nairobi, in fact, there is the headquarters of the United Nations Office for the Environment, which I visited. In Kenya, I met the authorities and diplomats, and also the inhabitants of a populous district. I met with leaders of the different Christian denominations and of other religions, priests and consecrated persons, and also with young people. So many young people! In every occasion I encouraged them to treasure the great richness of the country: natural and spiritual richness, constituted by resources of the earth, by the new generations and by the values that make up the wisdom of the people. In this context, so dramatically important today, I had the joy of bringing Jesus' word of hope: "Be strong in the faith, be not afraid." This was the motto of the visit. A word that is lived every day by so many humble and simple persons, with noble dignity; a word witnessed tragically and heroically by the young people of the University of Garissa, killed last April 2nd because they were Christians. Their blood is the seed of peace and fraternity for Kenya, for Africa and for the whole world.

Then, in Uganda my visit happened in the sign of the martyrs of that country, 50 years after their historic canonization by Blessed Paul VI. Therefore, the motto was: "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). A motto that presupposes the immediately preceding words: "You will have the strength of the Holy Spirit," because it is the Spirit that animates the heart and hands of missionary disciples. And the whole visit in Uganda unfolded in the fervor of the witness animated by the Holy Spirit. Witness, in an explicit sense, is the service of catechists, whom I thanked and encouraged in their commitment, which often involves their families, too. A witness of charity, which touched me in the House of Nalukilongo, but which many communities and associations give, too, as they serve the poorest, disabled and sick. The witness of young people who, despite the difficulties, guard the gift of hope and seek to live according to the Gospel, not according to the world, but going against the current. Witnesses are the priests, the consecrated men and women who renew day after day their total "yes" to Christ and dedicate themselves joyfully to the service of the Holy People of God. And there is another group of witnesses, but I will speak about them later. All this manifold witness, animated by the Holy Spirit Himself, is leaven for the whole society, as the effective work carried out in Uganda demonstrates in the fight against AIDS and the reception of refugees.

The third stage of the trip was in the Central African Republic, in the geographic heart of the Continent; it is, in fact, the heart of Africa. This visit was truly my first intention, because that country is attempting to come out of a very difficult period of violent conflicts and much suffering in the population. Therefore, I wished to open precisely there, at Bangui, a week ahead of time, the first Holy Door of the Jubilee of Mercy, as a sign of faith and hope for those people, and, symbolically, for all the African populations, most in need of liberation and comfort. Jesus' invitation to the disciples: "Let us go across to the other side" (Luke 8:22) was the motto for Central Africa. "To go to the other side" means, in the civil sense, to leave behind war, divisions, and misery and to choose peace, reconciliation and development. However, this presupposes a "passage" that happens in the consciences, in the attitudes and in the intentions of persons. And, decisive at this level is the contribution of the religious communities. Therefore, I met with the Evangelical and Muslim Communities, sharing prayer and the commitment to peace. With priests and consecrated persons, but also with young people, we shared the joy of feeling that the Risen Lord is with us 'in the boat,' and it is He who guides it to the other side. And finally, in the last Mass at the Bangui Stadium, on the feast of the Apostle Andrew, we renewed our commitment to follow Jesus, our hope, our peace, and Face of Divine Mercy. That last Mass was wonderful: it was full of young people, a stadium of young people! However, more than half of the population of the Central African Republic are minors. They are less than 18 years old: a promise to go forward!

I would like to say a word about the missionaries. Men and women who have left their homeland, everything ... They went there as youths, leading a life of so much, so much work, sometimes sleeping on the ground. At a certain moment, I met a Sister at Bangui who was Italian. One could see she was elderly: "How old are you?" I asked. "81" – "But not so much, two [years] older than me." This sister was there since she was 23-24 years old: her whole life! And, like her, so many others. She was with a little girl. And the girl said to her in Italian: "Grandmother." And the sister said to me: "But I, in fact, am not from here, but from the neighboring country, Congo, but I came in a canoe with this girl." So the missionaries are courageous. "And what do you do, Sister?" "I am a nurse, but then I studied a bit here and became an obstetrician and I made 3,280 children be born," she said to me. A whole life for life, for the life of others. And there are so many, so many like this sister: so many sisters, so many priests, so many religious who consume their life to proclaim Jesus Christ. It's beautiful to see this; it's beautiful.

I would like to say a word to young people. But, there are few, because birth seems to be a luxury in Europe: zero birth rate, 1% birth rate. But I address young people: think what you are doing with your life. Think of this sister and so many like her, who have given their life, and so many have died there. Missionary work is not to engage in proselytism: this sister said to me that Muslim women go to them because they know that the sisters are good nurses and that they look after one well, and they do not engage in catechesis to convert them! They give witness then, they catechize anyone who so wishes. But witness: this is the great heroic missionary work of the Church. To proclaim Jesus Christ with one's life! I turn to young people: think of what you want to do with your life. It is the moment to think and to ask the Lord to make you hear His will. However, please don't exclude this possibility of becoming a missionary, to bring love, humanity and faith to other countries. Do not engage in proselytism: no. Those who seek something else do so. The faith is preached first with witness and then with the word, slowly.

Let us praise the Lord together for this pilgrimage in the land of Africa and let us allow ourselves to be guided by his key-words: "Be strong in the faith, be not afraid"; "You will be my witnesses"; Let us go across to the other side."

# St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

## SUNDAY READINGS

**First Reading:**

*Baruch 5:1-9*

**Responsorial:**

*Psalms 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6*

**Second Reading:**

*Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11*

**Gospel**

*Luke 3:1-6*

**Immaculate Conception:**

*Genesis 3:9-15,20;*

*Psalms 98:1,2-3ab,3cd-4*

*Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12*

*Luke 1:26-38*

## Lectionary Readings for the week of

December 6, 2015

Monday: Isaiah 35:1-10;

*Luke 5:17-26*

Wednesday: Isaiah 40:25-31;

*Matthew 11:28-30*

Thursday: Isaiah 41:13-20;

*Matthew 11:11-15*

Friday: Isaiah 48:17-19;

*Matthew 11:16-19*

*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](mailto:stgerardscatholi@atlanticbbn.net)

**Facebook** @stgerardaiken,

**Emergency number for Father 803 637-2027**

## The Second Sunday of Advent December 6, 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**

*The word of God came to John  
the son of Zechariah, in the  
desert. He went through the  
whole Jordan area proclaiming a  
baptism of repentance for the  
forgiveness of sins, as it is  
written in the book of the sayings  
of Isaiah the prophet: A voice of  
one that cries in the desert:  
Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight! Let  
every valley be filled in, every  
mountain and hill be levelled,  
winding ways be straightened  
and rough roads made smooth,  
and all humanity will see the  
salvation of God.*







**Pray for our sick:**

Gary Gilbert  
Marge Glouser  
Leonard Saunders  
Shirley Paige  
William and Jackie Cobbs  
Woody Alexander  
Lena Mickens  
Rosa Johnson  
Brenda Ligon  
Joe Fulmer  
Patricia Bailey  
Shirley Acosta

*During Advent we receive constant reminders that Jesus and his ministry are gifts of God. We did not and do not earn them. They flow to us from the grace of God. During this season of giving, let us remember the most important gift we have received – being children of God. As God’s children, it’s important that we express our love for others as well.*

**Mass Intentions**

4:00 PM, 7:00 AM and 11:15 AM  
Masses will be said for your own personal intentions.

The Gathering Hymn 240 H/22M  
On Jordan's Bank  
The Offertory Hymn is 34 M  
Hurry, the Lord Is Near  
The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 379 BB  
City of God  
Our Song of Praise is 231H/20 M  
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



**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  
Art Wagner

**Sunday Offering November 29th**

Collection \$2,296.08  
Needed \$2,612.00  
Under \$316.00  
Attendance 118  
Stewardship a way of life

**Lay Ministers**

	<b>Saturday December 12</b> 4:00 PM Vigil Mass Lector: Tami Schaeffer E E Minister: Jerry Schaeffer	<b>Sunday December 13</b> 7:00 AM Mass Denise Gelinax Roger Gelinax	<b>Sunday December 13</b> 11:15 AM Mass Janet Menefee Jacqueline Brown	
	<b>Saturday December 19</b> 4:00 PM Vigil Mass Lector: David Didimamoff E E Ministers: Ellen Heim	<b>Sunday December 20</b> 7:00 AM Mass Mary Kay L'Esperance Gerard L'Esperance	<b>Sunday December 20</b> 11:15 AM Mass Patricia Hayes Jeanette Coleman	
	<b>Refreshments December 13</b> Jackie Cobb/Rosa Johnson	<b>Counters December 13</b> Nancy Durden/Anne Marie Key		

First of all, I wanted to thank you for your faithful support this past year. By donation of your time, talents and treasure you have helped us to continue to be a vibrant and active parish. It doesn't matter whether you have given \$5 or \$5,000 in this past year—or given one or 100 or more hours of talent, all helps our parish. For you who do not know me, I am Wayman Johnson and have served as the Pastoral Council chairman the past two years. I first began attending St Gerard in 1976. It has been such a joy to be a part of St Gerard over all these years! Through the years St Gerard has been a stable parish but challenged. During these years I've seen St Gerard grow from six families and one Mass on Sunday to where we are now with two Sunday Masses and Mass on Saturday and Tuesday through Friday during the week. It's still such a magical, spirit filled place, such a unique and wonderful resource. It's a parish that we grow to count on, a community that supports itself – as result of our Commitment to our parish family and then, naturally, to one another. As Christmas approaches, we ask that you remember St Gerard in your holiday plans. While shopping for gifts and gatherings with loved ones, please consider setting aside part of your budget to support St Gerard with a tax-deductible charitable donation. I am wearing a red blazer. Our collections are in the red most weeks. If you read the Sunday offering section of the bulletin you will notice that our collections are often below what the parish needs. Now is the season we give thanks to God for all He has done for us this past year and throughout our lives. It is also a good time to begin considering how we might give back some of our wealth or assets to Him through His Church with a special year-end gift of cash. Your generous, tax-deductible donation to St Gerard enables us to continue to be a vibrant and active parish and be a community that supports itself. Any amount you can share will be greatly appreciated! Thank you.

The Mass for The Feast of The Immaculate Conception will be on December 8th at 8:15 AM. We will have a penance service at 6:30 PM on December 15th. This will consist of readings, Psalms and The Act of Contrition. Father will grant absolution. The Christmas Mass schedule will be (Christmas Vigil at 4:00 PM Christmas Eve) and (Christmas Mass at 11:15 AM Christmas Day). **No 4:00 PM Mass on Saturday December 26th.**

**COLLECTION FOR ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE RECTORY**

As you know, our Rectory is in the process of being renovated. This work has been on-going for the last six month. The goal is to be done early next year. Upon the completion, there will be many items needed to furnish the rectory, such as furniture, kitchen items, linens, towels, etc. Donations for these items are needed. If you would like to make a donation, please place it in an envelope and put it in the collection basket. Please indicate on the envelope "Donation for Rectory Items". If you want to designate what your donation should be used for, please note that on the envelope as well. No donation to small. Thank you for your support of our parish community.

**Volunteer Corner**

There will be a catered supper for all volunteers and ministries. A date will be set next week and invitations will be sent out.

Anyone that wants to buy Poinsettias for the Altar this Christmas, you may donate \$10 and designate "for poinsettias" and your intention will be in the Christmas bulletin. Please get donations in As Soon As Possible. Thank you.

Christmas Choir practice will be on Tuesdays from 6:00 PM to 7:15 PM December 8th and 22nd. Practice on the December 15th will follow the Penance service

**"Door of Mercy" at St. Mary Help of Christians**

As part of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy called by Pope Francis, Bishop Guglielmone has established a church in each deanery as a pilgrimage church with a Holy Door for local pilgrims. One of the doors of Old St. Mary's church (on the corner of Park Ave. and York St. in Aiken) will be designated as the Door of Mercy for the Aiken Deanery for the entire Jubilee Year. All are invited to a bilingual, English/Spanish, solemn opening of the Holy Door on Sunday, December 13. Gather at 6:30pm in front of the new St. Mary's Church, 138 Fairfield St. SE. A candlelight procession to Old St. Mary's will precede the solemn opening of the Holy Door. For more information, call St. Mary Help of Christians 803-649-4777

Show your thanks for all your blessings by giving back. Sign up this holiday season to become an ACTS volunteer. ACTS is in desperate need of volunteers to serve in our Resale Store and Client Room assisting clients with their clothing vouchers. Shifts are available Monday thru Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Commit to as few or as many hours and/or days as fit your schedule. It's not only rewarding but fun, as well! Just e-mail us at volunteer@actsofaiken.org, or call 803.649.3800 for more information.

**The next parish/finance councils meeting is 8 December at 6:30 PM.**

The Salvation Army needs help at the shelter on Park Ave. They are losing older people that have been helping with serving lunch. We already have at least one parishioner helping. Please if you have the time to help call Rose at 641-4149 or call Mary Welsh at 648-2140. Feed God's children.

**Next Weekend**

**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 youth track. Follow this event and others on the web at [sccatholic.org/ethnic-ministries](http://sccatholic.org/ethnic-ministries)

**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.

**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 [stgerardscatholic@Atlanticcbbn.net](mailto:stgerardscatholic@Atlanticcbbn.net).

If you found sun glasses, in the church building, last Sunday please call the office.

Begin 2016 with Praise, Worship and Eucharistic Adoration  
Featuring



Audrey Assad

Free of Charge Live Praise and Worship Concert  
St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church  
4921 Columbia Road  
Grovetown, Georgia

7:00 PM, Friday January 8th  
Following Daily Mass at 6:00 PM

Our Lady of The Valley still needs food donations. All food collected here at St. Gerard is donated to OLV. Please continue to be generous. If you know of someone that needs The Blessed Sacrament brought to their home or hospital please call the office.

**Bible study will continue through Advent.**

**10:00 AM on Fridays**