

Pope Francis' Easter Vigil Homily

"Let us not forget his words and his works, otherwise we will lose hope"

Rome, March 27, 2016. Zenith.org

"Peter ran to the tomb" (Lk 24:12). What thoughts crossed Peter's mind and stirred his heart as he ran to the tomb? The Gospel tells us that the eleven, including Peter, had not believed the testimony of the women, their Easter proclamation. Quite the contrary, "these words seemed to them an idle tale" (v. 11). Thus there was doubt in Peter's heart, together with many other worries: sadness at the death of the beloved Master and disillusionment for having denied him three times during his Passion.

There is, however, something which signals a change in him: after listening to the women and refusing to believe them, "Peter rose" (v. 12). He did not remain sedentary, in thought; he did not stay at home as the others did. He did not succumb to the somber atmosphere of those days, nor was he overwhelmed by his doubts. He was not consumed by remorse, fear or the continuous gossip that leads nowhere. He was looking for Jesus, not himself. He preferred the path of encounter and trust. And so, he got up, just as he was, and ran towards the tomb from where he would return "amazed" (v. 12). This marked the beginning of Peter's resurrection, the resurrection of his heart. Without giving in to sadness or darkness, he made room for hope: he allowed the light of God to enter into his heart, without smothering it.

The women too, who had gone out early in the morning to perform a work of mercy, taking the perfumed ointments to the tomb, had the same experience. They were "frightened and bowed their faces", and yet they were deeply affected by the words of the angel: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" (v. 5).

We, like Peter and the women, cannot discover life by being sad, bereft of hope. Let us not stay imprisoned within ourselves, but let us break open our sealed tombs to the Lord so that he may enter and grant us life. Let us give him the stones of our rancor and the boulders of our past, those heavy burdens of our weaknesses and falls. Christ wants to come and take us by the hand to bring us out of our anguish. This is the first stone to be moved aside this night: the lack of hope which imprisons us within ourselves. May the Lord free us from this trap, from being Christians without hope, who live as if the Lord were not risen, as if our problems were the center of our lives.

We see and will continue to see problems both within and without. They will always be there. But tonight it is important to shed the light of the Risen Lord upon our problems, and in a certain sense, to "evangelize" them. Let us not allow darkness and fear to distract us and control us; we must cry out to them: the Lord "is not here, but has risen!" (v. 6). He is our greatest joy; he is always at our side and will never let us down.

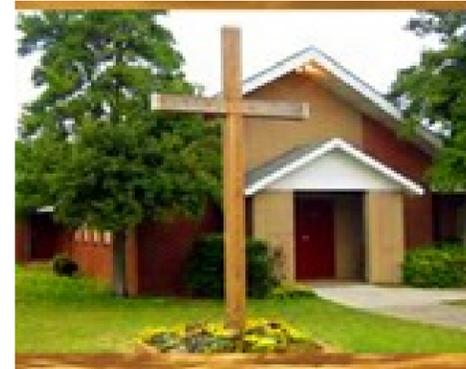
This is the foundation of our hope, which is not mere optimism, nor a psychological attitude or desire to be courageous. Christian hope is a gift that God gives us if we come out of ourselves and open our hearts to him. This hope does not disappoint us because the Holy Spirit has been poured into our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5). The Paraclete does not make everything look appealing. He does not remove evil with a magic wand. But he pours into us the vitality of life, which is not the absence of problems, but the certainty of being loved and always forgiven by Christ, who for us has conquered sin, death and fear. Today is the celebration of our hope, the celebration of this truth: nothing and no one will ever be able to separate us from his love (cf. Rom 8:39).

The Lord is alive and wants to be sought among the living. After having found him, each person is sent out by him to announce the Easter message, to *awaken and resurrect hope* in hearts burdened by sadness, in those who struggle to find meaning in life. There is so necessary today. However, we must not proclaim ourselves. Rather, as *joyful servants of hope*, we must announce the Risen One by our lives and by our love; otherwise we will be only an international organization full of followers and good rules, yet incapable of offering the hope for which the world longs.

How can we strengthen our hope? The liturgy of this night offers some guidance. It teaches us to remember the works of God. The readings describe God's faithfulness, the history of his love towards us. The living word of God is able to involve us in this history of love, nourishing our hope and renewing our joy. The Gospel also reminds us of this: in order to kindle hope in the hearts of the women, the angel tells them: "Remember what [Jesus] told you" (v. 6). Let us not forget his words and his works, otherwise we will lose hope. Let us instead remember the Lord, his goodness and his life-giving words which have touched us. Let us remember them and make them ours, to be sentinels of the morning who know how to help others see the signs of the Risen Lord.

Dear brothers and sisters, Christ is risen! Let us open our hearts to hope and go forth. May the memory of his works and his words be the bright star which directs our steps in the ways of faith towards the Easter that will have no end.

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

Divine Mercy Sunday April 3, 2016

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*

Fr. Emmanuel Andinam: Administrator

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Acts 5:12-16

Responsorial:

Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Second Reading:

Revelation 1:9-11, 12-13, 17-19

Gospel:

John 20:19-31

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of April 3, 2016

Monday: Isaiah 7:10-14;

Hebrews 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38

Tuesday: Acts 4:32-37;

John 3:7-15

Wednesday: Acts 5:17-26;

John 3:16-21

Thursday: Acts 5:27-33;

John 3:31-36

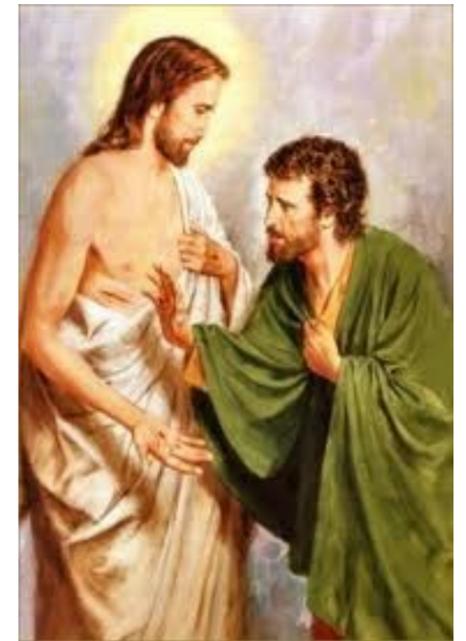
Friday: Acts 5:34-42;

John 6:1-15

Saturday: Acts 6:1-7;

John 6:16-21

*Eight days later the disciples
were in the house again and
Thomas was with them. The
doors were closed, but Jesus
came in and stood among them.
'Peace be with you,' he said.
Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put
your finger here; look, here are
my hands. Give me your hand;
put it into my side. Do not be
unbelieving any more but
believe.' Thomas replied, 'My
Lord and my God!' Jesus said to
him: You believe because you
can see me. Blessed are those
who have not seen and yet
believe. John 20:26-29*



Mass Times: Weekdays Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:15 AM,

First Friday Benediction after Mass

Weekend Saturday 4:00 PM, Sunday 7:00 AM and 9:00 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:** Sundays 10:30 AM, **RCIA:** Tuesdays 10:00 AM

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** 803 637-2027



Pray for our sick:
 Gary Gilbault
 Marge Glouser
 Leonard Saunders
 Shirley Paige
 William and Jackie Cobbs
 Woody Alexander
 Lena Mickens
 Rosa Johnson
 Brenda Ligons
 Joe Fulmer

*We are all given different gifts
 for the work God sets before us.
 These many and varied gifts
 enable stewards to recognize
 their unique role*



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

Mass Intentions

4:00 PM -7:00 AM -9:00 AM
 Masses are said for your own personal intentions.

Weekend Offering
March 26-27, 2016

Collection	\$1,570.00
Needed	\$2,612.00
Under	\$1,042.00
Easter	\$1,688.00
Attendance	not available

Stewardship a way of life

<i>The Gathering Hymn</i>	305 H
<i>This is the Day</i>	
<i>The Offertory Hymn is</i>	74 M
<i>Alleluia, Alleluia (Hymn to Joy)</i>	
<i>The Communion Hymn is</i>	511 H
<i>There's A Wideness in God's Mercy</i>	
<i>Our Song of Praise is</i>	75 M
<i>Alleluia, Let the Holy Anthem Rise OR</i>	576 BB
<i>Alleluia #1</i>	



	Lay Ministers	Sunday April 10	Sunday April 10
Saturday April 9	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	9:00 AM Mass
Lector:	Joan Hesik	Mary Kay L'Esperance	Sheila Wagner
E E Ministers:	Jerry Schaeffer	Gerard L'Esperance	Wayman Johnson
Saturday April 16	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	9:00 AM Mass
Lector:	Tami Schaeffer	Denise Gelinas	Patricia Hayes
E E Ministers:	Jerry Schaeffer	Roger Gelinas	Jeanette Coleman



Refreshments April 3	Refreshments April 10	Refreshments April 17
Shirley Paige/Anna Marie Key	Jean Schodowski/Jeanette Coleman	Jackie Brown/Rosa DiStefano

It has been suggested that I remind folks that because of the Mass time change that breakfast/brunch type foods are preferable as refreshments. Thank You.

The Legion of Mary
 1:30 PM Fridays



Ask Cathy Ciani about membership

After the Aisle: Strengthening Marriage and Family Conference
 will be Saturday, April 16, 2016 at St. Mary Help of Christians Church located on 138 Fairfield St. SE, Aiken SC 29801 from 8:30 am -3:00 pm.
 The event is being co-sponsored by the Office of Family.
 The cost is \$35 per couple (includes continental breakfast and lunch) Check-in begins at 7:30 am in St. Angela Hall located at 118 York St. SE. Holy Mass will be at 8:30 am in the church. To register or for more information, please email stmarys-aiken.org or familylife@catholic-doc.org.

It is spring and it is time to clean up and clean out the church and the campus. Please join us in this effort. I will print a list of projects and a date in the bulletin in two weeks so you will know what to expect and when.



Please pray for father's Prison ministry.	Finance Council meeting 4/5/16 @ 4:00 PM
	Parish Council meeting 4/12/16 @ 6:30 PM

Be a good steward, make sure the church is secured prior to leaving after Mass.

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

Volunteer Corner

Thank you to all who assisted with Holy Week Masses /Services. Especially the people that filled in for me while was gone. And the young people for serving and providing the 7:00 AM music. Also the people that work in the thrift shop, we thank you

The 15th annual Regional Stewardship Conference

for the Atlanta Province is approaching soon (Saturday – April 30th – Charlotte, NC). This event is a combined effort of the Archdiocese of Atlanta and the Dioceses of Charleston, Charlotte, Raleigh, and Savannah. This gathering is certain to provide inspiration, information, and incentives for promoting stewardship in all areas of parish life. Please register early in order to give the conference planners enough time to reproduce materials and arrange the meeting space. The host hotel is the Hilton Charlotte University Place. They are holding a block of rooms at \$129 for attendees. This great bargain for the hotel registration ends on March 29, 2016. To insure a room at the conference rate, please make your reservation early and be sure to mention the program name: Regional Stewardship Conference. Our keynote speaker, Leisa Anslinger, Co-Director of Catholic Life and Faith, she will present the "Joy of Living as a Steward" Living as stewards is a wonderful and compelling way of life as disciples of Jesus Christ. How may we help one another to grow as good and faithful stewards? How might we encourage others to embrace stewardship as a way of life? Let us build bridges to one another and to the people we encounter, drawing all to a faith-filled, fruitful way of life!
<http://sestewardship.weconnect.com/>

Thank you and please continue the generous contributions on Feed The Valley Weekend This Weekend

We are attempting to update all parish registrations and volunteer missions information. This is to assure that we give accurate information to the diocese and in an attempt to prepare to start a new directory. I know some of you have done this recently but I ask you to bare with us in this effort. Please pick up a registration form from the rear of the church, complete it and return it to the church office. To date we have only received 29 forms. Thanks for your help in this endeavor.

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Center
Yard Sale
April 30, 2016
9:00 am -2:00 pm
2443 Augusta Rd
Gloversville, SC 29828

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Center will be hosting a yard sale with various items for sale. All proceeds will go to support the Center's various programs such as utility and medication assistance, food pantry, and GED Program.

ACTS is partnering with the Augusta/Aiken Warrior Project (AWP) to provide available assistance to local Warriors of all service branches, regardless of era of service or wounded status. Please ask any veterans (especially post-9/11 veterans) to contact ACTS at ph#803.642.5919 They served us now let's help ACTS serve them.

Knights of Columbus Academic Scholarships

Each year the Aiken Knights of Columbus, Council #3684, awards scholarship assistance to eligible applicants. Scholarships are based solely on demonstrated ability and will be awarded based on: school grades, standardized test scores, quality of the. Essay submitted, letters of recommendation, and community or extracurricular involvement. With few exceptions, scholarship assistance will require a minimum grade average of B or 3.00 in high school and 1600 or higher SAT scores (or equivalent). All scholarship applications must be received by April 30, 2016. All scholarships awarded are renewable up on re-application; provided a recipient maintains a B or 3.00 grade average, and is a worthy campus citizen. Scholarship interviews may be an integral part of the evaluation. For more information or an application form, call Tom Meisner at (803) 649-4721 or Chuck Goergen at (803) 649-4097.

Show your thanks for all your blessings by giving back. 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 usatvolunteer@actsofaiken.org, or call 803.649.3800 for more information.

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 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: stgerardscatholi@Atlanticbnn.net.