

Pope's Homily at Final Mass of Mexico Trip

"The human tragedy that is forced migration is a global phenomenon today"

Feb 17, 2016, Zenith.org

In the second century Saint Irenaeus wrote that the glory of God is the life of man. It is an expression which continues to echo in the heart of the Church. The glory of the Father is the life of his sons and daughters. There is no greater glory for a father than to see his children blossom, no greater satisfaction than to see his children grow up, developing and flourishing. The first reading that we have just heard points to this. The great city of Nineveh, was self-destructing as a result of oppression and dishonor, violence and injustice. The grand capital's days were numbered because the violence within it could not continue. Then the Lord appeared and stirred Jonah's heart: the Father called and sent forth his messenger. Jonah was summoned to receive a mission. "Go", he is told, because in "forty days Nineveh shall be overthrown" (*Jon 3:4*). Go and help them to understand that by the way they treat each other, ordering and organizing themselves, they are only creating death and destruction, suffering and oppression. Make them see this is no way to live, neither for the king nor his subjects, nor for farm fields nor for the cattle. Go and tell them that they have become used to this degrading way of life and have lost their sensitivity to pain. Go and tell them that injustice has infected their way of seeing the world. "Therefore, go Jonah!". God sent him to testify to what was happening, he sent him to wake up a people intoxicated with themselves.

In this text we find ourselves before the mystery of divine mercy. Mercy, which always rejects wickedness, takes the human person in great earnest. Mercy always appeals to the latent and numbed goodness within each person. Far from bringing destruction, as we so often desire or want to bring about ourselves, mercy seeks to transform each situation from within. Herein lies the mystery of divine mercy. It seeks and invites us to conversion, it invites us to repentance; it invites us to see the damage being done at every level. Mercy always pierces evil in order to transform it.

The king listened to Jonah, the inhabitants of the city responded and penance was decreed. God's mercy has entered the heart, revealing and showing wherein our certainty and hope lie: there is always the possibility of change, we still have time to transform what is destroying us as a people, what is demeaning our humanity. Mercy encourages us to look to the present, and to trust what is healthy and good beating in every heart. God's mercy is our shield and our strength.

Jonah helped them to see, helped them to become aware. Following this, his call found men and women capable of repenting, and capable of weeping. To weep over injustice, to cry over corruption, to cry over oppression. These are tears that lead to transformation, that soften the heart; they are the tears that purify our gaze and enable us to see the cycle of sin into which very often we have sunk. They are tears that can sensitize our gaze and our attitude hardened and especially dormant in the face of another's suffering. They are the tears that can break us, capable of opening us to conversion.

This word echoes forcefully today among us; this word is the voice crying out in the wilderness, inviting us to conversion. In this Year of Mercy, with you here, I beg for God's mercy; with you I wish to plead for the gift of tears, the gift of conversion. Here in Ciudad Juárez, as in other border areas, there are thousands of immigrants from Central America and other countries, not forgetting the many Mexicans who also seek to pass over "to the other side". Each step, a journey laden with grave injustices: the enslaved, the imprisoned and extorted; so many of these brothers and sisters of ours are the consequence of a trade in human beings.

We cannot deny the humanitarian crisis which in recent years has meant migration for thousands of people, whether by train or highway or on foot, crossing hundreds of kilometers through mountains, deserts and inhospitable zones. The human tragedy that is forced migration is a global phenomenon today. This crisis which can be measured in numbers and statistics, we want instead to measure with names, stories, families. They are the brothers and sisters of those expelled by poverty and violence, by drug trafficking and criminal organizations. Being faced with so many legal vacuums, they get caught up in a web that ensnares and always destroys the poorest. Not only do they suffer poverty but they must also endure these forms of violence. Injustice is radicalized in the young; they are "cannon fodder", persecuted and threatened when they try to flee the spiral of violence and the hell of drugs, and what about the many women whose lives have been unjustly torn apart?

Let us together ask our God for the gift of conversion, the gift of tears, let us ask him to give us open hearts like the Ninevites, open to his call heard in the suffering faces of countless men and women. No more death! No more exploitation! There is still time to change, there is still a way out and a chance, time to implore the mercy of God.

Just as in Jonas' time, so too today may we commit ourselves to conversion; may we be signs lighting the way and announcing salvation. I know of the work of countless civil organizations working to support the rights of migrants. I know too of the committed work of so many men and women religious, priests and lay people in accompanying migrants and in defending life. They are on the front lines, often risking their own lives. By their very lives they are prophets of mercy; they are the beating heart and the accompanying feet of the Church that opens its arms and sustains.

This time for conversion, this time for salvation, is the time for mercy. And so, let us say together in response to the suffering on so many faces: In your compassion and mercy, Lord, have pity on us ... cleanse us from our sins and create in us a pure heart, a new spirit (cf. *Ps 50*).

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

The Second Sunday Of Lent February 21, 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
embracing the enriching diversity of our community of faith.*

Fr. Emmanuel Andinam: Administrator

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

Responsorial:

Psalms 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14

Second Reading:

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Gospel:

Luke 9:28-36

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of February 21, 2016

Monday: 1 Peter 5:1-4;

Matthew 16:13-19

Tuesday: Isaiah 1:10,16-20;

Matthew 23:1-12

Wednesday: Jeremiah 18:18-20;

Matthew 20:17-28

Thursday: Jeremiah 17:5-10;

Luke 16:19-31

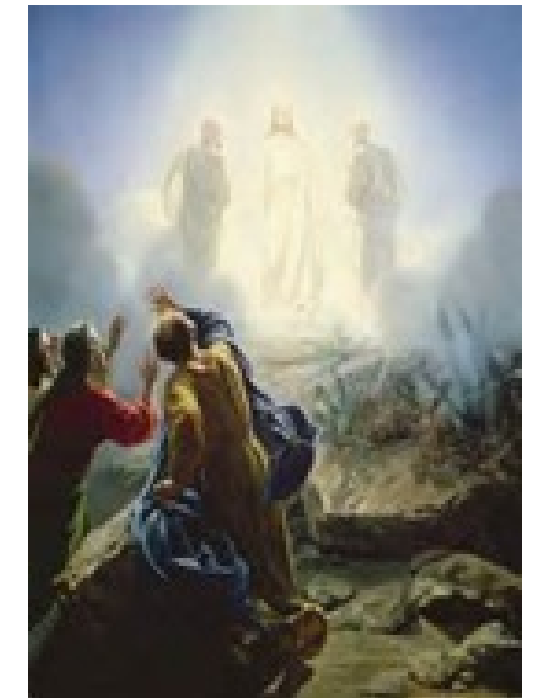
Friday: Genesis 37:3-4'12-13a, 17b-28a;

Matthew 21:33-43'45-46

Saturday: Micah 7:14-15,18-20;

Luke 15:1-3,11-32

*Jesus took Peter, John, and James
and went up the mountain to pray.
While he was praying his face
changed in appearance and his
clothing became dazzling white.
And behold, two men were
conversing with him, Moses and
Elijah, who appeared in glory and
spoke of his exodus that he was
going to accomplish in Jerusalem.
Peter and his companions had been
overcome by sleep, but becoming
fully awake, they saw his glory and
the two men standing with him. As
they were about to part from him,
Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is
good that we are here; let us make
three tents, one for you, one for
Moses, and one for Elijah." He did
not know what he was saying.*



Luke 9:28-33

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**



Pray for our sick:

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

Lent offers stewards the opportunity to rise from the daily deaths of sinfulness and indifference. We can use this season to open our hearts, to share, to listen, and to notice those in need around us. Support of our parish and the Bishop's Appeal are excellent ways to show your stewardship.



Pastoral Council:

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

Mass Intentions

4:00 PM - 7:00 AM - 11:15 AM Masses are said for your own personnel intentions.

Finance Council:

Robert Erikson,
Chairman
Leon Gagnon and
Anna Marie Key,
Auditors
Lisa Solenberger
Art Wagner

Weekend Offering

February 13-14 2016


Collection	\$2,631.00
Needed	\$2,612.00
Over	\$19.00
Attendance	138

Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn	140 M
God We Praise You	
The Offertory Hymn is	106 M
'Tis Good, Lord, to Be Here	
The Communion Hymn is	CHOIR 107 M
Led by the Spirit	
Our Song of Praise is	102 M
Forty Days and Forty Nights	



Lay Ministers

	Saturday February 27	Sunday February 28	Sunday February 28
	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:15 AM Mass
Lector:	David Didimamoff	Denise Gelinas	Patricia Hayes
E E Ministers:	Mays Rose	Roger Gelinas	Marge Glauser
	Saturday March 5	Sunday March 6	Sunday March 6
	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:15 AM Mass
Lector:	Diane Begic	Mary Kay L'Esperance	Richardean Paige
E. E. Ministers:	Jerry Schaeffer	Gerard L'Esperance	Wayman Johnson
Refreshments	February 21	February 28	Counters February 22
	Richardean Paige/Marilu Alarcon	Marge Glauser/Matt Fitzpatrick	Mary Jo Erikson/Joan Hesik



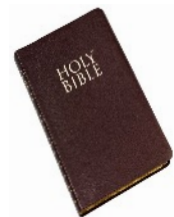
The K of C Lenten Fish Fry will be on Fridays March 4th and 18th from 6 to 8 PM. \$7.00 adults 12 and under \$4.00. Come join the fellowship and have a great meal. Call for reservations (803) 648-3684.

Stations of the Cross Wednesdays at 6:30 PM. Soup Supper after stations during Lent. Sign up sheet is in the hallway.

The Legion of Mary meets Fridays at 1:30 PM here in the church hall.



Bible Study 10:00 AM Fridays



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



Church Community Is Important. Lets get all Masses involved in the renewal of our church.

Confirmation Classes at 10.00 AM Sundays see Jeanette Coleman

There is a box in the rear of the church for donations for the three lady parishioners that are expecting this spring and summer. This is for a gift for each of them to be given the Sunday after Easter.

Volunteer Corner

Thanks to the Eriksons and the Arbuckles for finishing the rectory

Please pray for father's Prison ministry.

Feed The Valley Weekend. Thank you and please continue the generous contributions. On the 1st weekend.

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

The policy for handling the collections has been revised. Any one that is involved with the collections will be contacted and given the policy. This is ushers, sacristans, counters and administrative assistant. The new policy has been reviewed by finance council and approved by the pastor. Orientation will be scheduled soon.

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

South Carolina Catholic Men's Conference, featuring Dr. Ray Guarendi (EWTN), Chad Judice (Author) with Fr. Dwight Longenecker and Fr. Matthew Gray is to be held at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Goose Creek, SC on Saturday, March 5, 2016. This one day event is open to all Catholic men wanting to grow their Catholic faith, deepen their relationship with Christ, and live up to their callings as Catholic men, husbands and fathers. For more info and registration: www.sccatholicmensconf.org or call Tom Monahan at 803 648-9925

Catholic Woman's Conference, featuring Dr. Ray Guarendi (EWTN), Chad Judice (Author) Friday evening March 4th and Saturday March 5th (note: The same location and contact info as the men's conference)

16th ANNUAL MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION sponsored by the Diocese of Charleston- Office of Family Life

This Sunday, at 3:00 pm St. Mary Help of Christian Catholic Church 138 Fairfield St, Aiken SC 29801 The Marriage Anniversary Celebration is an opportunity to honor all married couples especially those in long-term marriages. The married couples will affirm their love and commitment to each other. Most Reverend Robert Guglielmone, Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston will be the main celebrant. The Mass will fulfill the Sunday obligation. (803) 547-5063 or email to FamilyLife@catholic-doc.org "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things." (I Cor 13:7) "Ensure that, like the wine in Cana, the external signs of your wedding feast reveal the presence of the Lord and remind you, and all those presence, of the origin of and reason for your joy". Pope Francis

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.

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: stgerardscatholi@Atlanticbbn.net.

Town Hall II: A Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2016 at 2:00 PM in the church hall. We will have 2 hours to discuss topics. The target subject is renovation of the entire campus. We will also have an open house for the newly remodeled rectory before and after the 4:00 PM mass.