

Pope Francis' General Audience and Catechesis

The Pope reflects on the theme:

"The Mass Is Prayer." Rome, November 15, 2017, zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

We continue with the catecheses on the Holy Mass. To understand the beauty of the Eucharistic Celebration, I want to begin with a very simple aspect: the Mass is prayer, rather, it's the prayer par excellence, the highest, the most sublime and, at the same time, the most "concrete." In fact, it's the encounter of love with God through His Word and the Body and Blood of Jesus. It's an encounter with the Lord. However, first we must answer a question. What is prayer really? It is first of all dialogue, personal relationship with God. And man was created as being in personal relationship with God, who finds his fulfillment only in the encounter with his Creator. The journey of life is towards the definitive encounter with the Lord.

The Book of Genesis affirms that man was created in the image and likeness of God, who is Father and Son and Holy Spirit, a perfect relationship of love, which is unity. From this we are able to understand that all of us have been created to enter into a perfect relationship of love, in a continuous giving and receiving of ourselves to thus be able to find the fullness of our being.

When Moses received God's call in front of the burning bush, he asked Him his Name. And what did God answer? "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14). In its original meaning, this expression expresses presence and favor, and, in fact, immediately after God adds: "The Lord, the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (v. 15). Thus Christ also, when He calls His disciples, He calls them so that they will be with Him. Therefore, this is the greatest grace: to be able to experience that the Mass, the Eucharist is the privileged moment to be with Jesus and, through Him, with God and with brothers.

To pray, as every true dialogue, is also to be able to remain in silence, — in dialogues there are moments of silence —, in silence together with Jesus. And when we go to Mass, perhaps we arrive five minutes early and we begin to chat with the one who is next to us. However, it's not the moment to chat: it's the moment of silence to prepare oneself to dialogue. It's the moment to recollect oneself in the heart to prepare oneself for the encounter with Jesus. Silence is so important! Remember what I said last week: we are not going to a show; we are going to an encounter with the Lord, and silence prepares us and accompanies us. We remain in silence together with Jesus. And from God's mysterious silence gushes His Word, which resounds in our heart. Jesus Himself teaches us how it is really possible "to be" with the Father and He demonstrates it with His prayer. The Gospels show us Jesus who withdraws to places apart to pray. The disciples seeing this, His intimate relationship with the Father, feel the desire to be able to participate in it, and they ask Him: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). We heard it in the First Reading at the beginning of the Audience. Jesus answers that the first thing necessary to go to pray is to be able to say "Father." Let's be careful: if I'm not capable of saying "Father," I'm not capable of praying. We must learn to say "Father," namely, to put ourselves in His presence with filial confidence. However, to be able to learn, it is necessary to recognize humbly that we are in need of being instructed, and to say with simplicity: Lord, teach me to pray.

This is the first point: to be humble, to recognize ourselves children, to rest in the Father, to trust Him. To enter the Kingdom of Heaven it's necessary to make oneself little as children, in the sense that children know how to trust, they know that someone will take care of them, of what they will eat, of what they will wear and so on (Cf. Matthew 6:25-32). This is the first attitude: trust and confidence, as a child towards his parents' to know that God remembers you and takes care of you, of you, of me, of all.

The second predisposition, which is also proper to children, is to let oneself be surprised. A child always asks a thousand questions because he wants to discover the world, and he marvels even at small things, because everything is new to him. To enter in the Kingdom of Heaven it is necessary to let oneself be surprised. I ask, in our relationship with the Lord, in prayer, do we let ourselves be surprised or do we think that prayer is to talk to God as parrots do? No, it's to trust and to open one's heart to let oneself be surprised. Do we let ourselves be surprised by God who is always the God of surprises? Because the encounter with the Lord is always a living encounter, it's not a museum encounter. It's a living encounter and we go to Mass not to a museum. We go to a living encounter with the Lord.

In the Gospel there is talk of a certain Nicodemus (John 3:1-21), an elderly man, an authority in Israel, who goes to Jesus to get to know Him, and the Lord speaks to him of the need to be "born anew" (Cf. v. 3). But what does it mean? Can one be "reborn"? Is it possible to have again the taste, the joy, the wonder of life even in face of so many tragedies? This is a fundamental question of our faith and this is the desire of every true believer: the desire to be born anew, the joy of beginning again. Do we have this desire? Do each one of us always have the desire to be born anew to encounter the Lord? Do you have this desire? In fact, it can be easily lost because, given so much activity, so many projects to implement, at the end there is little time left and we lose sight of what is fundamental: our life of the heart, our spiritual life, our life which is encounter with the Lord in prayer.

In truth, the Lord surprises us by showing us that He loves us also in our weaknesses. "Jesus Christ [. . .] is the victim of expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). This gift, source of true consolation — but the Lord forgives us always — this consoles, it's a true consolation, it's a gift that is given to us through the Eucharist, that nuptial banquet in which the Bridegroom meets our frailty. Can I say that when I go to Communion in the Mass, the Lord encounters my frailty? Yes! We can say it because this is true! The Lord encounters our frailty to take us back to our first calling: that of being in the image and likeness of God. This is the environment of the Eucharist; this is prayer.

Please pray for The St. Gerard Parishioners that died this year. Judy Riley, Lena Mickens, Dick Smoot and Anita Vachon.

Remember to write the names of your deceased loved ones in 'The Book of The Names of The Dead' if they are not already written there. So we may pray for them. The book is in the rear of the church.

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

Fr. Emmanuel O. Andinam: Administrator
Joseph A. Dennis: Deacon

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20,30-31(157A)

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 128:1-2,3,4-5

Second Reading:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

Gospel:

Matthew 25:14-30

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for

Week of November 19, 2017

Monday: *1 Maccabees 1:10-15,41-43,54*
57,62-63;

Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday: *2 Maccabees 6:18-31;*

Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday: *2 Maccabees 7:1,20-31;*

Luke 19:11-28

Thanksgiving: *Sirach 50:22-24;*

Psalm 113:1-2,3-4,5-6,7-8;

1 Corinthians 1:3-9;

Luke 17:11-19

Friday: *1 Maccabees 4:36-37,52-59;*

Luke 19:45-48 ;

The Thirty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time November 19, 2017

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.



But his master answered him, "You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have got my money back with interest. So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he has. As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth."

Matthew 25:26-30



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

First Friday Benediction after Mass

Weekend Saturday **Vigil 4:00 PM**, Sunday **8:00 AM and 11:00 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 No Bible Study during Advent, **CCD:** No Class at this time

RCIA: Contact Deacon Joe 843 743-8779

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 803 341-5933**



Pray for our sick:
 Marge Glauser
 Leonard Saunders
 Shirley Paige
 William and Jackie Cobbs
 Woody Alexander
 Rosa Johnson
 Brenda Ligons
 Joe Fulmer
 Jean Schodowski
 Janet Menefee



"Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted." - MATTHEW 23:12

Pastoral Council:
 David Didimamoff, Chairperson
 Janet Menefee, Vice Chair
 Payson Borst
 Jacqueline Brown
 Fredrick Cadek
 Joan Hesik
 Gregory Wright
 Patricia Hayes
 Matt Fitzpatrick

Finance Council:
 Clyde Hall, Chairman
 Anna Marie Key & Patricia Miles, Auditors
 Agnes Beckert, Secretary
 Art Wagner
 Michele Bullington

Mass Intentions:
 4:00 PM & 8:00 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions.
 11:00 AM Mass is for The dearly departed.

Weekend Offering
 November 12, 2017


Collected \$2,132.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
Under \$480.00

Attendance 152
 Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 208 BB
Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
The Offertory Hymn is 397 BB
Christ Be Beside Me
The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 511 BB
We Have Been Told
Our Song of Praise is 603 BB



Lay Ministers

	Saturday November 25 4:00 PM Vigil Mass Lector: Linda Cooper E E Ministers: Ellen Heim	Sunday November 26 7:00 AM Mass Mary Kay L'Esperance Gerard L'Esperance	Sunday November 26 11:00 AM Mass Janet Menefee Mary Rose
	Saturday December 2 4:00 PM Vigil Mass Lector: Diane Begic E E Ministers: Barbara Dixon	Sunday December 3 7:00 AM Mass Denise Gelinas Roger Gelinas	Sunday December 3 11:00 AM Mass Sheila Wagner Wayman Johnson

The Advent Penance service is to be held on November 28 at 6:30 PM Please plan to attend.



Religious Education Holiday Schedule: Please note that religious education classes will not meet over Thanksgiving weekend (Sunday November 26) or during the Aiken County School District break (Sundays December 17, 24, and 31).

Perpetual Novena in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Tuesdays at the 8:15 Mass	Thanksgiving Day Mass is at 8:15 AM
The Legion of Mary is meeting at 1:30 on Fridays. Please consider joining. Call Paula Thurston at 803 226-1120	Second collection is for the campaign for human development

Father will be leaving on December 3rd after the 8:00 AM Mass, for his 40th anniversary in Nigeria. We will have a reception here after the 4:00 PM Mass on the 2nd. You may bring wine if you wish. Payson Borst is in charge of the food. If you wish to bring cards or gifts please do so by the 2nd

There will be no daily Masses while father is gone. With the exception of December 8th, The Feast of The Immaculate Conception. Father will return the week of the 18th of December. Father Ernie will fill in during fathers absents.

St Gerard will host it's FIRST Annual Creche Festival the weekend of December 9 and 10. Creches on display will be blessed on Sunday after the masses. If you would like to have your creche in the display or if you have an artificial Christmas tree we can borrow that weekend please contact Dot Dennis at 843-743-8676 or at o2readmore@yahoo.com

On December 9th at 12:00 PM there will be a Mass of thanksgiving for Kamila Alarcon. Quinceanera Reception at 4 PM at Aiken Electric COOP on Wagner road (Hwy 302)

Volunteer Corner:
 Thanks to the finance and parish councils for their energy and resolve.

Thankful

I am thankful for small things--
 a smile from a stranger
 a card that you send
 a hand-written letter
 a call from a friend.

I am thankful for small miracles--
 healing and its ability to teach us patience
 love—too precious to hoard for it will not last until we know some day,
 it is only valuable when given away.

I am thankful for safety
 to live in a comfortable home in a pleasant neighborhood
 and to be somewhere safe with the one I love.

To be safe from hurricanes and floods
 and pray that those who recently lost so much do not lose faith or hope
 and that we may respond to their needs with charity.

I am thankful for smiles
 friends and family and the idea of belonging stories, books, and poetry.

I am thankful for
 all those who helped make me what I am today
 parents, mentors, teachers, friends
 and two brothers and a sister who paved the way for me.

I am thankful
 for the dawn of a new day, another chance to "get it right," and
 to realize that true wealth is not measured by all the things we have
 but by what we give away.

--Joan M. Lacombe
 October 2017

In Harms' Way: Please remember in your prayers our Nation and loved ones of our parishioners currently serving in harms' way: James Ligons, Robert McHugh, Deja MS Pringle and Chris Solenberger. 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.

Phil Perea, a St. Gerard's altar server and member of BSA Troop 115, will be selling Advent Candle Sets as a fundraiser for his troop. Each candle set is \$10 and will be available for pick-up after the 11 AM Mass on Sunday, Dec 3. Please let Phillip know if you would like a candle set by email at philperea@gmail.com, or call 803-552-6242.

"MESSIAH Sing-Along" following in the spirit of One Table Event. Help us bring Handel's Iconic Oratorio to life. Aiken Choral Society is hosting this community concert which provides the music inviting all singers to provide the voices. Come and participate to make this a true community Thanksgiving event. Includes chamber orchestra, harpsichord and organ along with soloists provided. Sunday, 26th at 4 PM. at Aiken's First Baptist Church, 120 Chesterfield Street. Free, no admission fees.

Knights of Columbus, and Sheppard Community Blood Center will host a blood drive
 At Saint Mary Help of Christians Church
 On Fairfield Street.

 Saturday December 9th from 3:30 – 7:00 PM
 Sunday December 10th from 7:45 AM – 1:30 PM
 The Knights of Columbus are in need of your help. This is the time of the year to show the Holiday Spirit. You Can Help Save Someone's Life!
 Open your hearts and donate blood the gift of life. Thank You.

WE WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
 FATZ Café of Aiken,
 Sheppard Community Blood Center, and
 The Knights of Columbus Council No. 3684
 Are offering 9 gift certificates for FATZ Café.
 All donors will be entered into a drawing
 The certificates are for \$25.00 each
 Every Blood Donor is a Hero
 Each donor will receive
 A free T-Shirt,
 Also a free Lipid Profile
 After your 3rd donation in a calendar year.
 Bring a picture ID, Driver's license or donor card!

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. You should follow this advice for Nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities also.

Family Charitable Outreach:
 Contact Marge Glauser-Hall or the office.

If you know of someone that needs The Blessed Sacrament brought to their home or hospital please call the office.

The state of finance at St. Gerard is to be presented to the parish at all 3 Masses. Date TBD