

POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Rejoicing in Hope

'We can live and do for our brethren is nothing other than a response to what God has done and continues to do for us.

Rome, March 15, 2017. Zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

We know well that the great commandment that the Lord Jesus left us is to love: to love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (cf. *Matthew* 22:37-39), that is, we are called to love, to charity. And this is our highest vocation, our vocation par excellence, and linked to it also is the joy of Christian hope. One who loves has the joy of hope, of arriving to encounter the great love that is the Lord.

In the passage of the Letter to the Romans that we just heard, the Apostle Paul puts us on guard: there is the risk that our charity is hypocritical, that our love is hypocritical. Therefore, we must ask ourselves: when does this happen? And how can we be sure that our love is sincere, that our charity is genuine? That we not feign to do charity or that our love not be a soap opera <but a> sincere, strong love . . .

Hypocrisy can insinuate itself everywhere, also *in our way of loving*. This is verified when ours is a self-interested love, moved by personal interests and how many self-interested loves there are . . . when charitable services, in which it seems that we spend ourselves, are carried out to put ourselves forward or to feel ourselves gratified: "But how good I am!" No, this is hypocrisy!— or again when we look at things that have "visibility" to show off our intelligence or our capacities. Behind all this is a false, deceitful idea, that is to say that, if we love, it is because we are good, as if charity were a creation of man, a product of our heart. Instead, charity is first of all *a grace*, a gift; to be able to love is a gift of God, and we must ask for it. And He gives it willingly, if we ask for it. Charity is a grace: it does not consist in having what we are resonate, but what the Lord gives us and that we freely receive. And, it cannot be expressed in our encounter with others, unless it is first generated from the encounter with Jesus' meek and merciful face.

Paul invites us to acknowledge that we are sinners, and that even our way of loving is marked by sin. At the same time, however, he makes himself bearer of *a new proclamation, a proclamation of hope*: the Lord opens before us a way of liberation, a way of salvation. It is the possibility for us also to live the great commandment of love, to become instruments of God's charity. And this happens when we let our heart be healed and renewed by the risen Christ. The risen Lord who lives among us, who lives with us is able to heal our heart: He does so if we ask for it. It is He who enables us, despite our littleness and poverty, to experience the Father's compassion and to celebrate the wonders of His love. And then we understand that all that we can live and do for our brethren is nothing other than a response to what God has done and continues to do for us. Thus, it is God himself who, dwelling in our heart and in our life, continues to be close and to serve all those we meet every day on our path, beginning from the last and the neediest in whom He first recognizes Himself.

So with these words the Apostle Paul does not want so much to reprove us as, rather, to *encourage and revive hope in us*. All of us, in fact, have the experience of not living fully or as we should the commandment of love. However, this is also a grace, because it makes us understand that of ourselves we are not capable of truly loving: we need the Lord to continually renew this gift in our heart, through the experience of His infinite mercy. And then yes, we will turn to appreciate the little, simple and ordinary things; we will turn to appreciate these little everyday things and will be capable of loving others as God loves them, wishing them well, namely, that they be saints, friends of God, and we will be happy to have the possibility to be close to one who is poor and humble, as Jesus does with each one of us when we are far from Him, to bend down to the feet of brothers, as He, the Good Samaritan, does with each one of us, with His compassion and His forgiveness.

Dear brothers, what the Apostle Paul has reminded us of is the secret to be – I use his words – it is the secret to be "*joyful in hope*" (*Romans* 12:12): joyful in hope. The joy of hope because we know that in every circumstance, even the most adverse, and also through our own failures, God's love does not fail. And then, with our heart visited and inhabited by His grace and His fidelity, we live in joyful hope to reciprocate in brothers, with the little that we possess, the much that we receive every day from Him. Thank you.

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:

Exodus 17:3-7(28A)

Responsorial:

Psalms 95:1-2,6-7,8-9

Second Reading:

Romans 5:1-2,5-8

Gospel:

John 4:5-42

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of March 19, 2017

Monday: *2 Samuel* 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16;

Romans 4:13,16-18,22;

Matthew 1:16,18-21,24a

Tuesday: *Daniel* 3:25,34-43;

Matthew 18:21-35

Wednesday: *Deuteronomy* 4:1,5-9;

Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday: *Jeremiah* 7:23-28;

Luke 11:14-23

Friday: *Hosea* 14:2-10;

Mark 12:28-34

Saturday: *Isaiah* 7:10-14;8:10;

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

The Third Sunday of Lent March 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.*



*Jesus replied: Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again; but no one who drinks the water that I shall give will ever be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will become a spring of water within, welling up for eternal life. **John** 4:13-14*

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

First Friday Benediction after Mass

Weekend Saturday 4:00 PM, Sunday 7:00 AM and 11:00 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:** No Class at this time

RCIA: No Class at this time

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:
 Judy Riley
 Marge Glauser
 Leonard Saunders
 Shirley Paige
 William and Jackie Cobbs
 Woody Alexander
 Lena Mickens
 Rosa Johnson
 Brenda Ligons
 Joe Fulmer
 Sue Hesik

Filled with desire, we respond to Your call for discipleship by shaping our lives in imitation of Christ. We profess that the call requires us to be stewards of Your gifts



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

Finance Council:
 Robert Erikson, Chairman
 Leon Gagnon and Anna Marie Key, Auditors
 Lisa Solenberger, Secretary
 Art Wagner

Mass Intentions
 4:00 PM Mass is said for your own personal intentions.
 7:00 AM Mass is said for Mindy Young From A. Lauer
 11:00 AM is Said for the Soul of Gary Gilbert
 From Marge Glauser

Weekend Offering
March 12, 2017

Collection \$2,862.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
Over \$240.00
 Attendance 131
Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 598 H
 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
 The Offertory Hymn is 726 H
 Lift High the Cross
 The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 493 H
 Amazing Grace Will Always Be
 Our Song of Praise is 661 H
 I've Got Peace Like a River



Saturday March 25
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Lector: Tami Schaeffer
 E E Ministers: Jerry Schaeffer

Lay Ministers
Sunday March 26
 7:00 AM Mass
 Mary Kay L'Esperance
 Gerard L'Esperance

Sunday March 26
 11:00 AM Mass
 Sheila Wagner
 Marge Glauser

Saturday April 1
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Lector: Diane Begic
 E E Ministers: Pam Ziomek

Sunday April 2
 7:00 AM Mass
 Denise Gelinas
 Roger Gelinas

Sunday April 2
 11:00 AM Mass
 Patricia Hayes
 Mary Rose

Refreshments March 19
 Shirley Paige/Anna Marie Key

Refreshments March 26
 Janet Menefee/Joan Laombe

Refreshments April 2
 Jackie Cobbs/Rosa DiStefano

The Legion of Mary is meeting at 1:30 on Fridays. Please consider joining. Please Pray the Rosary.

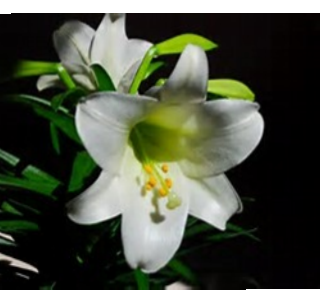
Perpetual Novena in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Tuesdays at the 8:15 Mass



Please come to Bible Study on Fridays at 10:00 AM Father brings the true perspective to the scriptures. Please try to attend.

Stations of The Cross are on Wednesdays during lent from 3/8-4/5 at 6:30 PM Soup and bread supper served following stations.

We are having a supper after the 11 AM Mass on March 26, as a thank you for all the people with ministries in our parish (volunteers) but especially for our three youths that were Confirmed on the 14th. Daniel, Kamilia and Philip. Sign up sheet is in the lobby. Cake provided by the church.



Easter Lilly memorials are \$10. Please have donations and memorials in by 10 April. Memorials will be in bulletin and in the sanctuary for Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. Please put contact number on memorial in case I have questions. Thank you, Mike

Volunteer Corner:
It will soon be spring. If you have ideas for improving the Fall Festival on 16 October please start passing them on . We will soon be having a planing meeting for the Festival. Date and time TBA

BINGO Columbus Club Hall Every Monday at 7:10 PM till 9:00 PM 5 Cards \$ 10.00. Each Additional Card \$2.00 15 Regular Games \$20 Payout 1 Coverall Jackpot \$150 Payout



WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD; A REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE ON PEACE

Date: Saturday, April 1, 2017
Location: St. Gerard Catholic Church, 640 Edrie Street NE, Aiken, SC
Time: 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Hosts: St. Gerard and St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic Churches

This interactive experience will consist of dialogue and reflection on the racial divide in America as a path toward healing and peace. The primary focus will be on the content of a pastoral letter, written by Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Belleville, IL – The Racial Divide in the United States; A Reflection for the World Day of Peace 2015. Facilitated by Kathleen Merritt and staff with the Office of Ethnic Ministries for the Diocese of Charleston. For more information and registration contact St. Gerard Catholic Church; stgerardscatholic@atlanticbbn.net or call 803.649.3203. You must be registered to attend! **Deadline for Registration is March 27, 2017.** Bishop Braxton's paper can be found at http://sccatholic.org/downloads/ethnic_ministry/braxton_racialstudyguide.pdf Highlights from the previous session can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/V30whmceTwI>.

Leonard Saunders is at Gracelynn Residential Care, 203 Jewel St. N., New Ellenton, SC 29809

Choir practice for Easter will be at 4:00 PM on March 14, 21, 28 and April 4

Reconciliation Service for Lent is Thursday 30 March at 6:00 PM

Finance Council: Meeting March 21 @ 4:00 PM
Parish Council: Meeting March 21 @ 6:00 PM

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

National Black Catholic Congress XIII
 Registration is now open! The Congress will be held in Orlando, Florida on July 6th -9th, 2017. Registration is \$350.00 until April 7th. The host hotel is the Hyatt Regency and hotel lodging is \$125.00 ++ per night. If you are planning to attend please let Ethnic Ministries know so that we can include you in our diocesan delegation and keep you updated on our activities and plans. To learn more about Congress XIII visit <https://www.nbccongress.org/congress-xiii.html>. To register visit <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/?eventid=1946670> A limited number of scholarships to cover the registration fee are available through the Office of Ethnic Ministries. The delegates are responsible for the remaining cost of transportation, lodging and meals. Deadline to apply for a scholarship is 3/17/2017. If interested contact us at rmcnamara@catholic-doc.org or 864.331.2627

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 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, 2017. All scholarships awarded are renewable upon reapplication 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.

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.

Rachel's Vineyard Retreats bring spiritual healing and strengthening of faith to individuals who have had or participated in an abortion. Join us on the journey to healing, peace and reconciliation. March 17-19, 2017 in Rock Hill, SC. For information and registration please call Christy 803 554 6088 or Kathy 803 546 6010. Or email grace4healing@gmail.com This could be the right time for you!