

POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Holy Year of Mercy

'Nothing is more important to choose than "what pleases God most," namely, His mercy, His love, His tenderness, His embrace, His caresses!'

Vatican City, December 09, 2015 (ZENIT.org)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning.

Yesterday, I opened here, in Saint Peter's Basilica, the Holy Door of the Jubilee of Mercy, after having opened it already in the Cathedral of Bangui in the Central African Republic. Today, I would like to reflect together with you on the meaning of this Holy Year, responding to the question: Why a Jubilee of Mercy? What does this mean?

The Church is in need of this extraordinary moment. I do not say: this extraordinary moment is good for the Church. I say: the Church is in need of this extraordinary moment. In our age of profound changes, the Church is called to offer her particular contribution, rendering visible the signs of the presence and closeness of God. And the Jubilee is a favorable time for all of us because, by contemplating the Divine Mercy, which surpasses every human limitation and shines on the darkness of sin, we can become more convinced and effective witnesses.

To turn one's look to God, our Merciful Father, and to brothers in need of mercy, means to focus our attention on the essential content of the Gospel: Jesus, Mercy made flesh, which renders visible to our eyes the great mystery of the Trinitarian Love of God. To celebrate a Jubilee of Mercy means to put again at the center of our personal life and of that of our communities what is specific to the Christian faith, namely Jesus Christ, the merciful God.

Therefore, a Holy Year to live mercy. Yes, dear brothers and sisters, this Holy Year is offered to us to experience in our life the sweet and gentle touch of the forgiveness of God, his presence at our side and His closeness especially in moments of greatest need.

Therefore, this Jubilee is a privileged moment for the Church to learn to choose only "what pleases God most." And, what is it that "pleases God most"? To forgive His children, to have mercy on them, so that they also, in turn, can forgive their brothers, shining as torches of God's mercy in the world. This is what pleases God most. In a book that he wrote on Adam, Saint Ambrose takes up the history of the creation of the world and says that every day, after having made something, -- the moon, the sun or the animals -- "God saw that this was good." However, when he made man and woman, the Bible says: "He saw that this was very good." Saint Ambrose wonders: "But why does He say "very good"? Why is God so happy after the creation of man and woman? Because, finally, He had someone to forgive. This is beautiful: God's joy is to forgive; God's being is mercy. Therefore, in this year, we must open our hearts so that this love, this joy of God fills all of us with this mercy. The Jubilee will be a "favorable time" for the Church if we learn to choose "what pleases God most," without yielding to the temptation of thinking that there is something else that is more important or a priority. Nothing is more important to choose than "what pleases God most," namely, His mercy, His love, His tenderness, His embrace, His caresses!

The necessary work of renewal of the institutions and the structures of the Church is also a means that must lead us to have the living and vivifying experience of God's mercy, which alone can guarantee that the Church is that city placed on the mountain that cannot remain hidden (cf. Matthew 5:14). Only a merciful Church shines! If we were to forget, even for a moment, that mercy is "what pleases God most," every effort of ours would be in vain, because we would become slaves of our institutions and of our structures, no matter how renewed they are. But we would always be slaves.

"To feel strongly in us the joy of being found again by Jesus, who as Good Shepherd came to find us because we were lost" (Homily in the First Vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday, April 11, 2015): this is the objective that the Church sets for herself this Holy Year. Thus, we will reinforce in ourselves the certainty that mercy can really contribute to the building of a more human world. Especially in these our times, in which forgiveness is a rare guest in the ambits of human life, the call to mercy is more urgent, and this in every place: in society, in institutions, in work and also in the family.

Someone, of course, could object: "But Father, should not the Church do something more in this Year? It's right to contemplate God's mercy, but there are many urgent needs!" It's true, there is much to do and I, for one, never tire of recalling it. But it is necessary to keep in mind that, at the root of the forgetfulness of mercy, there is also self love. In the world, this takes the form of the exclusive search of one's interests, of pleasures and honors joined to the desire to accumulate riches, while the life of Christians is often crossed by hypocrisy and worldliness. All these things are contrary to mercy. The motions of self-love, which render mercy foreign in the world, are so many and numerous that we are often unable to recognize them as limitations and as sin. See why it is necessary to recognize ourselves sinners, to reinforce in us the certainty of Divine Mercy. "Lord, I am a sinner; come with your mercy." This is a most beautiful prayer. It's an easy prayer to say every day: "Lord, I am a sinner; come with your mercy."

Dear brothers and sisters, I hope that, in this Holy Year, each one of us will experience God's mercy, to be witnesses of "what pleases Him most." Is it of the naive to believe that this can change the world? Yes, humanly speaking it is of the foolish, but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Corinthians 1:25).

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

The Third Sunday of Advent December 13, 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

When all the people asked him, 'What must we do, then?' he answered, 'Anyone who has two tunics must share with the one who has none, and anyone with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors, too, who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than the appointed rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!' A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to wonder whether John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, who is more powerful than me, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'



SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Zephaniah 3:14-18

Responsorial:

Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6

Second Reading:

Philippians 4:4-7

Gospel:

Luke 3:10-18

Lectionary Readings for the week of December 13, 2015

Monday: Numbers 24:2-7,15-17a; Matthew 21:23-27

Tuesday: Zephaniah 3:1-2,9-13; Matthew 21:28-32

Wednesday: Isaiah 45:6c-8,18,21b-25; Luke 7:18b-23

Thursday: Genesis 49:2,8-10; Matthew 1:1-17

Friday: Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25

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@atlanticbnn.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 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 Masses will be said for your own personal intentions. 11:15 AM Mass for John Lauer/ My Loving Jesus

The Gathering Hymn 746 H

Baptized in Water

The Offertory Hymn is 28 M

See How the Virgin Waits for Him

The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 48 M

The Whole World Is Waiting for Love

Our Song of Praise is 231H/20 M

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 December 6, 2015

Collection \$2,640.00
Needed \$2,612.00
Over \$28.00
Attendance 134

Stewardship a way of life

Lay Ministers

	Saturday December 19	Sunday December 20	Sunday December 20	
	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:15 AM Mass	
Lector:	David Didimamoff	Mary Kay L’Esperance	Patricia Hayes	
E E Ministers:	Ellen Heim	Gerard L’Esperance	Jeanette Coleman	
	Saturday December 26	Sunday December 27	Sunday December 27	
	4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:15 AM Mass	
Lector:	No Mass	Denise Gelinas	Richardean Paige	
E E Minister:	No Mass	Roger Gelinas	Marge Glauser	
Refreshments December 20	Counters December 20			
Sheila Wagner/Patricia Hayes	Nancy Durden/Mary Rose			
Second Collection for:		Thursday December 24	Friday December 25	
Retirement Fund for religious		4:00 PM Christmas Vigil	11:15 AM Christmas Mass	
		Lector: Joan Hesik	Patricia Hayes	
		E E Ministers: Roger Gelinas	Mary Rose	

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.

CONSIDER A TAX DEDUCTABLE YEAR END DONATION TO ST GERARD

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. 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. 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!

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

Volunteer Corner

There will be a catered supper for all volunteers and ministries. A date will be set soon and invitations will be sent out. Sorry about the delay.

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. Only one week left. Thank you.

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

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

"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.

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

The next parish council meeting has not been scheduled yet.

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.

Someone has changed the set up on the organ. We can’t get it to play like it should. If anyone knows about this please give us a hand in figuring it out. Thanks

You should check out this web site www.DynamicCatholic.com John M. Kelly (Catholic Author)
The program is Best Advent Ever Rediscover Mercy

Christmas Mass intentions are available. There are Christmas Cards in the pews and in the hallway. All donations go toward our renovation fund. Intention slips are enclosed. All intentions will be placed on the Altar on Christmas.

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@Atlanticcbbn.net.