

THE GENERAL AUDIENCE OF POPE FRANCIS: On Reconciling

'This Year of Mercy is a good occasion to meet again, to embrace and forgive one another and to forget the bad things.'

Rome, Jan 27, 2016

THE HOLY FATHER'S CATECHESIS

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

In Sacred Scripture, God's mercy is present throughout the history of the people of Israel.

The Lord accompanies, with His mercy, the path of the Patriarchs; He gives them children despite the condition of sterility, He leads them by ways of grace and reconciliation, as the story of Joseph and his brothers shows (Cf. *Genesis* 37-50). And I think of how many brothers who have estranged themselves from their family and do not speak to one another. But this Year of Mercy is a good occasion to meet again, to embrace and forgive one another and to forget the bad things. However, as we know, life in Egypt became hard for the people. And it was in fact, when the Israelites were about to succumb, that the Lord intervened and brought about salvation.

In the Book of Exodus, one reads: "A long time passed, during which the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their bondage and cried out, and from their bondage their cry for help went up to God.

God heard their moaning and God was mindful of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God saw the Israelites, and God knew...." (2:23-25). Mercy cannot remain indifferent in face of the suffering of the oppressed, of the cry of one subjected to violence, reduced to slavery, condemned to death. It is a painful reality that afflicts every age, including our own, and which often makes us feel impotent, tempted to harden our heart and think of something else. God, instead, "is not indifferent" (Message for the Day of Peace 2016, 1), He never looks away from human pain. The God of mercy responds and takes care of the poor, of those who cry their desperation. God listens and intervenes to save, inspiring men capable of hearing the groan of suffering and of working in favor of the oppressed.

This is how the story of Moses begins, as mediator of liberation for the people. He confronts the Pharaoh to persuade him to let Israel leave; and then he guides the people, through the Red Sea and the desert, to freedom. Moses, whom Divine Mercy saved from death in the waters of the Nile when he was newly born, becomes the mediator of that same mercy, enabling the people to be born to freedom, saved from the waters of the Red Sea. And in this Year of Mercy, we can also do the work of being mediators of mercy with works of mercy to come close, to give relief, to create unity. So many good things can be done.

God's mercy acts always to save. It is the opposite of the work of those who always act to kill: for instance, those who make wars. Through his servant Moses, the Lord guided Israel in the desert as if it were a child; He educated it to faith and made covenant with it, creating a very strong bond of love, as that of a father with a son and of a husband with a wife.

Divine mercy reaches that much. God proposes a particular, exclusive and privileged relation of love. When He gives Moses instructions regarding the covenant, He says: "Now, if you obey me completely and keep my covenant,* you will be my treasured possession among all peoples, though all the earth is mine. You will be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." (*Exodus* 19:5-6).

God certainly already possesses the whole earth, as He created it, but the people become for Him a different, special possession: His personal "reserve of gold and silver," as that which King David affirmed he gave for the construction of the Temple.

Well, we become so for God by receiving His covenant and letting ourselves be saved by Him. The Lord's mercy renders man precious, as a personal richness that belongs to Him, which He guards and with which He is pleased.

These are the wonders of Divine Mercy, which reaches fulfilment in the Lord Jesus, in that "new and eternal covenant" consummated in His Blood, which with forgiveness destroys our sin and renders us definitively children of God (Cf. 1 *John* 3:1), precious jewels in the hands of the good and merciful Father. And if we are children of God and have the possibility of having this inheritance – that of goodness and mercy – in our dealings with others, let us ask the Lord that in this Year of Mercy we also do things of mercy; open our heart to reach everyone with works of mercy. the merciful inheritance that God the Father has given us.

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.

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

The Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time January 31, 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:

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

Responsorial:

Psalms 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17

Second Reading:

First Corinthians 12:31--13:13

Gospel:

Luke 4:21-30

Lectionary Readings for the week of January 31, 2016

Monday: 2 Samuel 15:13-14, 30; 16:5-13;
Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday: Malachi 3:1-4;
Hebrews 2:14-18; Luke 2:22-40

Wednesday: 2 Samuel 24:2,9-17;
Mark 6:1-6

Thursday: 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12;
Mark 6:7-13

Friday: Sirach 47:2-11;
Mark 6:14-29

Saturday: 1 Kings 3:4-13;
Mark 6:30-34

Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even while you are listening.' And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, 'This is Joseph's son, surely?' But he replied, 'No doubt you will quote me the saying, "Physician, heal yourself," and tell me, "We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own country." ' And he went on, 'In truth I tell you, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country. 'There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah's day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a town in Sidonia. And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many suffering virulent skin-diseases in Israel, from these was cured -- only Naaman the but none of Syrian.' When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him off the cliff, but he passed straight through the crowd and walked away.



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](mailto: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 Ligon
 Joe Fulmer
 Patricia Bailey

This month, on the first Sunday, we celebrate that Christ came to all of us, not just the Hebrews. He made us all one body with Him. We were all given different gifts; we all have different yet equally valuable roles to play in the Body of Christ. Ask God how He wants you to use your gifts so that we may all "be one" in this Year of Mercy and support St Gerard Parish.



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 Masses
 are said for your own personnel intentions.
 11:15 AM For Annie Luck, Happy Birthday: A Lauer

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

Weekend Offering
 January 23-24 2016
 Collection \$1,973.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
 Short \$639.00
 Attendance 141
 Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 683 H
All Are Welcome
The Offertory Hymn is 131 M
Blessed By Your Sacrifice
The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 488 BB
Where Charity and Love Prevail
Our Song of Praise is 391 H
Jesus in the Morning



Lay Ministers		
Saturday February 6	Sunday February 7	Sunday February 7
4:00 PM Vigil Mass Lector: Diane Begic E E Ministers: Open	7:00 AM Mass Mary Kay L'Esperance Gerard L'Esperance	11:15 AM Mass Richardean Paige Mary Rose
Saturday February 13 4:00 PM Vigil Mass Lector: Joan Hesik E E Ministers: Barbara Dixon	Sunday February 14 7:00 AM Mass Denise Gelinas Roger Gelinas	Sunday February 14 11:15 AM Mass Sheila Wagner Jacqueline Brown



Refreshments January 31 Jackie Cobb/ Rosa DiStefano
 February 7 Sheila Wagner/Patricia Hayes
 Counters February 7 Mary Jo Erikson/ Sheila Wagner

The Legion of Mary meets Fridays at 1:00 PM here at the church. Please come and sit in and think about joining. We need to pray the Rosary.

Ash Wednesday 2/10/16
 Masses 8:15 AM and 4:00 PM
 Bible Study 10:00 AM Fridays

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



Church Community Is Important

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 upon 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.



The 36th annual Cardinal Newman Lecture to be held February 20th at the Rock Hill Oratory Directions, Schedule and other information can be found at oratorycenter@gmail.com or call 803 327-2097 or write The Oratory center for Spirituality, PO Box 11586, Rock Hill, SC 29731-1586

Volunteer Corner
 Thanks to the Renovation Committee for their work.
 Bob, Brian, Leon and Dennis

Conformation Classes to start on February 7th at 9:30 AM see Jeanette Coleman

Beginning in January, the Rev. Franklin Graham, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, will hold one-day public events in each of our nation's 50 capitals. These are non-partisan, non-political events to bring Christians together and to pray for our nation. The goal is to encourage all believers to stand for Biblical morality and justice during these challenging times.
 DATE: Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2016 TIME: noon to 1 p.m.
 WHERE: Capital Plaza (north side), Columbia
 If you have any questions regarding this event, please contact Michael Acquilano, director of the South Carolina Catholic Conference, at 843-261-0535 or macquilano@catholic-doc.org. Or go to: decisionamericatour.com for additional details.

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)

Finance and Parish Councils meet on February 16th at 4:30 and 6:30 respectively.

16th ANNUAL MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION sponsored by the Diocese of Charleston- Office of Family Life Sunday, February 21, 2016 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 Guglielmo, 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." (1 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

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.

RCIA Team
 Father Emmanuel
 Fred Cadak
 Leon Gagnon
 Greg Wright
 We would like to have some ladies on the team. Please call the office.

RCIA Classes are going to begin very soon and we have one candidate so far. If you know of someone that has expressed an interest in Catholicism let Father know.

Food collections for Our Lady of The Valley have dropped off a little. We will always accept donations but the first weekend of each month will be Feed The Valley Weekend. We would pray for generous donations for the OLV food bank.

Please mark your calendar and spread the word to your ministry, friends and family! The Fat Tuesday dinner will be held in St. Angela Hall Tuesday, February 9 from 5:00-7:00pm Tickets can be picked up at the Parish Office.
 Donations taken at the door.
 If you pick up a ticket and do not need it, please return it to the Parish Office.
 PLEASE spread the word!