

POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Hope Founded in the Word

Rome, March 22, 2017. Zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

For some weeks now, the Apostle Paul has been helping us to understand better in what Christian hope consists. And we said that it was not optimism, it was something else. And the Apostle helps us to understand this. Today he does so by approaching it from two altogether important attitudes for our life and our faith experience: "*perseverance*" and "*consolation*" (vv. 4,5). They are mentioned twice in the passage of the Letter to the Romans that we just heard: first in reference to the Scriptures and then to God Himself. What is their most profound, truest meaning? And in what way do they throw light on the reality of hope? These two attitudes: perseverance and consolation.

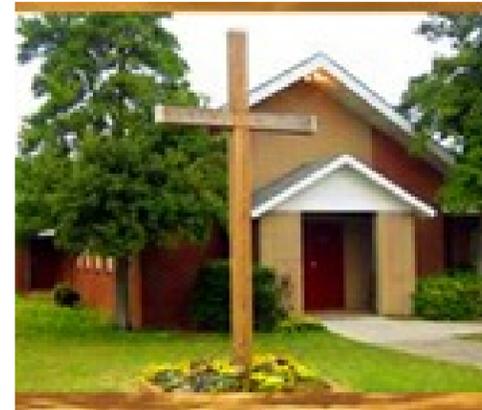
We can describe *perseverance* in fact as *patience*: it is the capacity to endure, to carry on one's shoulders, "support," to remain faithful, even when the burden seems to be too great, unbearable, and we are tempted to judge negatively and to abandon everything and everyone. *Consolation*, instead, is the grace to be able to receive and show in every situation, even in those largely marked by disappointment and suffering, the compassionate presence and action of God. Now Saint Paul reminds us that particularly *the Scriptures*, namely, the Bible, transmit to us perseverance and consolation (v. 4). In fact, in the first place, the Word of God leads us to turn our gaze to Jesus, to know Him better and to be conformed to Him, to be ever more like Him. In the second place, the Word reveals to us that the Lord is truly "the God of perseverance and of consolation" (v. 5), who is always faithful to His love for us, namely, that He is perseverant in His love for us, He does not tire of loving us! He is perseverant: He always loves us! And He who takes care of us, covering our wounds with the caress of His goodness and His mercy, that is, He consoles us. He does not tire of consoling us, either.

Understood in this perspective also is the Apostle's initial affirmation: "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (v.1). This expression "we who are strong" might seem presumptuous, but, in the logic of the Gospel, we know that it is not so, rather, it is in fact the contrary, because our strength does not come from ourselves, but from the Lord. One who experiences in his life the faithful love of God and His consolation is able, more than that, has the duty to be close to weaker brothers and take on their frailty. If we are close to the Lord we will have that strength to be close to the weakest, to the neediest and to console them and give them strength. This is what it means. We can do this without being pleased with ourselves but feeling ourselves simply as a "channel" that transmits the Lord's gifts; and thus become concretely a "*sowers*" of hope. This is what the Lord asks us, with that strength and capacity to console and to be sowers of hope. And today it is necessary to sow hope, but it is not easy . . .

The fruit of this lifestyle is not a community in which some are "series A," namely, the strong, and others "series B", namely, the weak. Instead, as Saint Paul says, the fruit is "to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus" (v. 5). The Word of God nourishes *a hope that is translated concretely in sharing, in mutual service*. Because even one who is "strong" finds himself sooner or later experiencing frailty and the need of others' comfort and, vice versa, in weakness one can always offer a smile or a hand to a brother in difficulty. And it is such a community that "with one spirit and one voice renders glory to God" (cf. v. 6). However, all this is possible if Christ and his Word are put at the center, because He is "strong. He is the one who gives us strength, who gives us patience, who gives us hope, who gives us consolation. He is the "strong brother," who takes care of each one of us: all of us, in fact, are in need of being carried on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd and of feeling enveloped by His tender and solicitous gaze.

Dear friends, we can never thank God enough for the gift of His Word, which is rendered present in the Scriptures. It is there that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed as "God of perseverance and of consolation." And it is there that we realize that our hope is not founded on our capacities and our strength, but on God's support and on the faithfulness of His love, that is, on God's strength and consolation. 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:

1 Samuel 16:1b,6-7,10-13a(31A)

Responsorial:

Psalms 23:1-3a,3b-4,5,6

Second Reading:

Ephesians 5:8-14

Gospel:

John 9:1-41

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of March 26, 2017

Monday: Isaiah 65:17-21;

John 4:43-54

Tuesday: Ezekiel 47:1-9,12;

John 5:1-16

Wednesday: Isaiah 49:8-15;

John 5:17-30

Thursday: Exodus 32:7-14;

John 5:31-47

Friday: Wisdom 2:1a,12-22;

John 7:1-2,10,25-30

Saturday: Jeremiah 11:18-20;

John 7:40-53

The Fourth Sunday of Lent March 26, 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.



When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam"—which means Sent—, so he went and washed, and came back able to see. John 9:6-7

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
 Mary Welsh

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

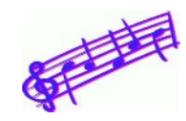
Finance Council:
 Robert Erikson, Chairman
 Leon Gagnon and Anna Marie Key, Auditors
 Lisa Solenberger, Secretary
 Art Wagner

Mass Intentions
 4:00 PM & 7:00 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions. 11:00 AM for the soul of Theresa McCoola from The Lacombe

Weekend Offering
March 19, 2017

Collection \$2088.50
 Needed \$2,612.00
Under \$ 523.50
 Attendance 105
Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 601 H
 The King of Love My Shepherd Is
 The Offertory Hymn is 653 H
 If You Believe and I Believe
 The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 495 H
 Amazing Grace
 Our Song of Praise is 650 H
 Go Down, Moses




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

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

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


Saturday April 8
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Lector: Tami Scheaffer
 E E Ministers: Jerry Scheaffer

Sunday April 9
 7:00 AM Mass
 Mary Kay L'Esperance
 Gerard L'Esperance

Sunday April 9
 11:00 AM Mass
 Richardean Paige
 Jeanette Coleman

Refreshments March 26
 Janet Menefee/Joan Laombe

Refreshments April 2
 Jackie Cobbs/Rosa DiStefano

Refreshments April 9
 Jackie Brown/Jeanette Coleman

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 today, as a thank you for all the people with ministries in our parish (volunteers) but especially for our four youths that were Confirmed on the 14th. Daniel, Kamilia, Philip and Sophia. Join us.

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

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



Holy Week Mass Times: 13-16 April
 Holy Thursday; 6:00 PM, Good Friday; 3:00 PM,
 Saturday Easter Vigil; 7:00 PM, Easter Sunday 7:00 and 11:00 AM

Volunteer Corner:
 At the last Parish Council meeting several members volunteered to be on committees. The various committees that we need to form should not be filled with just Parish Council members. This is the responsibility of us all. For more information on our needs call the office or talk to a Council member.

This year we would like to have 12 parishioners available to have their feet washed at Holy Thursday Mass. Please don't wait till the last minuet to sign up. Men, woman and children are invited to participate in this celebration of that night in the upper room. Sheet is in the lobby.

Family Charitable Outreach:
 Contact Marge Glauser or the office.

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@atlanticcbbn.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 www.sccatholic.org/downloads/ethnic_ministry/braxton_racialstudyguide.pdf Highlights from the previous session can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/V30whmceTwI>.

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

From Joan Lacombe
 Earth Day Inside & Out Join us as we explore the relationships between Nature, Poetic Voice & Visual Arts April 21st-23rd, 2017
 Weekend Schedule Friday April 21st, 6pm—8pm: Reception Winners of PMP Lit Prize 2017 Announced
 Saturday April 22nd, 10am—3pm: Earth Day Celebration with Poetry & Visual Arts Please bring a poem to share Sunday April 23rd, 2pm—5pm: Poetry Basics: Learn how to deliver poetry at the mic
 Where: Aiken County Historical Museum
 433 Newberry Street SW, Aiken, S.C.
 All events are FREE and Open to Public RSVP is required for free lunch on April 22nd, (no exceptions!)
 For more information Call (855)790-7700 or email us info@poetrymattersproject.org

The Knights of Columbus
 Are asking you to help save local lives! Shephard Community Blood Center will conduct a Blood Drive
 At the New Saint Mary Help of Christian Church On Fairfield Street.
 Saturday, April 1st from 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
 Sunday, April 2nd from 7:45am - 1:30 pm
TEARS CAN'T SAVE SOME ONES LIFE, But your Blood can.
 Many things in this world can wait but a transfusion of your blood to a dying patient cannot.
 Please give someone that chance.
 Every Donor is a Hero!
 Each donor will receive a free T-Shirt and free Lipid Profile After your 3rd donation in a calendar year.
 Bring a picture ID, Drivers license or donor card!
 Donors should drink plenty of water prior to donating.

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

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.

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!