

## POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Hoping Against Hope

'When God promises, He brings to fulfillment what He promises. He never fails in His Word'

Rome, March 29, 2017, zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

The passage of Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans that we just heard, gives us a great gift. In fact, we are used to acknowledging Abraham as our Father in the faith. Today the Apostle makes us understand that Abraham is also for us *Father in hope*; not only *Father of faith* but *Father in hope*. And this because in his story we can already receive an announcement of the Resurrection, of the new life that overcomes evil and death itself.

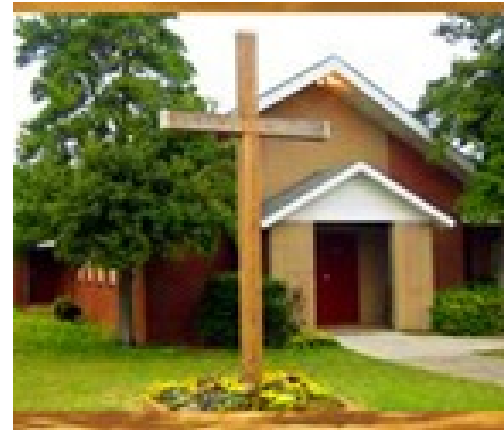
The text states that Abraham believed in the God "Who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (*Romans 4:17*), and then it specifies: "He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about 100 years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb" (*Romans 4:19*). See, this is the experience that we are also called to live. The God who reveals Himself to Abraham is the God who saves, the God who makes us come out of despair and of death, the God who calls to life. In Abraham's story everything becomes a hymn to God who liberates and regenerates, everything becomes prophecy. And it becomes so for us, for us who now recognize and celebrate the fulfillment of all this in the mystery of Easter. In fact, God "raised Jesus from the dead" (*Romans 4:24*), so that, in Him, we can also pass from death to life. And truly Abraham can now well say of himself "Father of many nations," in as much as he shines as proclamation of a new humanity – us! –, rescued by Christ from sin and death and introduced once and for all in the embrace of God's love.

At this point, Paul helps us set on fire the very close bond *between faith and hope*. He affirms, in fact, that Abraham "hoped against hope" (*Romans 4:18*). Our hope is not governed by human reasoning, expectations and reassurances; it is manifested where there is no more hope, where there is nothing more in which to hope, precisely as it happened for Abraham, in face of his imminent death and the sterility of his wife Sarah. The end was approaching them, they could not have children and, in that situation, Abraham believed and had hope against all hope. And this is great! Great hope is rooted in faith, and precisely because of this it is able to go beyond all hope. Yes, because it is not founded on our word, but on the Word of God. So, in this sense also, we are called to follow Abraham's example who, although in face of the evidence of a reality that seemed avowed to death, trusted God, "fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised" (*Romans 4:21*). I would like to ask you a question: we, all of us, are we convinced of this? Are we convinced that God loves us, and that He is ready to bring to fulfillment all that He has promised us? But Father, how much does this cost? There is only one price: "open the heart." Open your hearts and this strength of God will lead you forward, He will do miraculous things and teach you what hope is. This is the only price: to open the heart to faith and He will do the rest.

This is the paradox and, at the same time, the strongest, highest element of our hope! A hope founded on a promise that, from the human point of view seems uncertain and unpredictable, but which does not fail not even in face of death, when the one who promises is the God of the Resurrection and of life. This is not promised by just anyone! He who promises is the God of the Resurrection and of life.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, today let us ask the Lord for the grace to remain founded not so much on our securities, on our capacities, but on the hope that flows from God's promise, as true children of Abraham. When God promises, He brings to fulfillment what He promises. He never fails in His word. And then our life will assume a new light, in the awareness that He who resurrected His Son will also resurrect us and render us truly one with Him, together with all our brethren in the faith. All of us believe. Today we are in the Square, we praise the Lord, we will sing the Our Father, then we will receive the Blessing . . . but this passes. But this is also a promise of hope. If our heart is open today, I assure you that we will all meet in Heaven's Square, which never ever passes. This is God's promise and this is our hope, if we open our hearts. 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:

Ezekiel 37:12-14(34A)

Responsorial:

Psalm 130:1-2,3-4,5-6,7-8

Second Reading:

Romans 8:8-11

Gospel:

John 11:1-45

Today's Missal

### Lectionary Readings for the week of April 2, 2017

Monday: Daniel 13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62;

John 8:1-11

Tuesday: Numbers 21:4-9;

John 8:21-30

Wednesday: Daniel 3:14-20,91-92,95;

John 8:31-42

Thursday: Genesis 17:3-9;

John 8:51-59

Friday: Jeremiah 20:10-13;

John 10:31-42

Saturday: Ezekiel 37:21-28;

John 11:45-56

## The Fifth Sunday of Lent April 2, 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.*



*Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." Do you believe this?" John 11:21-26*

**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

*“When we live a life of gratitude, being thankful for the gifts we have been given, we really do see that God is providing all that we need”.*  
*Archbishop Carlson*



**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 & 11:00 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions.

**Weekend Offering**  
**March 26, 2017**  
 Collection \$1,996.10  
 Needed \$2,612.00  
**Under \$615.90**  
 Attendance 119

*Stewardship a way of life*

*The Gathering Hymn 102 M*  
*The Glory of These 40 Days*  
*The Offertory Hymn is 282 H*  
*Down at the Cross*  
*The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 755 H*  
*I Am the Bread of Life*  
*Our Song of Praise is 114 M*  
*From the Depths We Cry to Thee*



**Palm Sunday Weekend**  
**Saturday April 8**  
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass  
 Lector: Tami Scheaffer  
 E E Ministers: Jerry Scheaffer

**Lay Ministers**  
**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

**Easter Weekend**  
**Saturday April 15**  
 7:00 PM Vigil Mass  
 Lector: Joan Hesik  
 E E Ministers: Ellen Heim

**Sunday April 16**  
 7:00 AM Mass  
 Denise Gelinas  
 Roger Gelinas

**Sunday April 16**  
 11:00 AM Mass  
 Paula Thurston  
 Wayman Johnson

Refreshments April 2  
 Jackie Cobbs/Rosa DiStefano

Refreshments April 9  
 Jackie Brown/Jeanette Coleman

Refreshments April 16  
 Jean Schodowski/Richardean Paige

*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*



Father would like to introduce new members of The St. Gerard family. Dr. & Mrs Charles Cooper. Dr. Cooper is a dentist who works part time in Estill, SC and is an Air Force Veteran. Charles is an ordained deacon. He will be assisting Father and Deacon Joe from time to time. The Coopers moved here this February.



**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

*Easter Lilly memorials are \$10. 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. And please have them into the office by 4-10-17 (Palm Sunday) Thank you, Mike*

**No Daily Mass on Tuesday April 11<sup>th</sup>,  
 Father will be at The Chrism Mass in Charleston**

**Volunteer Corner:**  
**Thank you to Marge Glauser for all her hard work on the racial divide workshop. Thanks to Deacon Charles Cooper for volunteering to assist Father Emmanuel and Deacon Joe.**

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. Sign up 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



**Choir practice for Easter will be at 4:00 PM on April 4**

**Stations of The Cross are on this Wednesday at 6:30 PM** Soup and bread supper served following stations.

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

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.

**Finance Council:** Meeting April 11 @ 4:00 PM  
**Parish Council:** Meeting April 11 @ 6:00 PM

**National Black Catholic Congress XIII**  
 Registration is still open! The Congress will be held in Orlando, Florida on July 6th-9th, 2017. Father Emmanuel has appointed Wayman and Rosa Johnson to represent St. Gerard at the conference. The Diocese's Ethnic Ministries Office has granted the registration scholarship to The Johnson Family. Thank you for representing us and congratulations.

**Father will be gone 24 April-14 May. No Daily Masses during that time. Weekend Masses at regular times.**

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

Separated or divorced? You don't want to miss the Journey of Hope Conference for Divorce Recovery coming to Charleston August 4th - 6th at the Charleston Marriott. Great speakers, wonderful food and fellowship. A special Easter Season registration rate will be available starting Easter Sunday April 16th through the 30th.  
 Visit [JourneyOfHopeConference.Com](http://JourneyOfHopeConference.Com) for details and to register.

**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@atlanticbnn.net. You should follow this advice for Nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities also.