

POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Hope That Doesn't Disappoint

'It is easy to say: God loves us. We all say it. But think a moment: is every one of us capable of saying: I am certain that God loves me? It is not so easy to say it, but it is true ... This is the root of our security, the root of hope'

Rome February 15, 2017 zenit.org

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

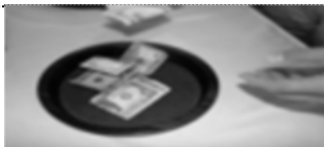
As children we are taught that it is not a good thing to boast. In my land, we call those who boast "peacocks." And that is right, because to boast of what one is or of what one has, in addition to being a certain pride, also betrays a lack of respect in relations with others, especially towards those who are more unfortunate than us. In this passage of the Letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul surprises us, in as much as for a good two times he exhorts us to boast. Hence, of what is it right to boast? — because if he exhorts us to boast, it is right to boast of something. And how is it possible to do this without offending, others, without excluding anyone?

In the first case, we are invited to *boast of the abundance of grace of which we are pervaded in Jesus Christ*, through faith. Paul wants to make us understand that, if we learn to read everything in the light of the Holy Spirit, we realize that everything is grace! Everything is gift! In fact, if we pay attention, to act – in history as well as in our life – it is not only us but first of all God <who acts>. He is the absolute protagonist, who creates everything as a gift of love, who weaves the plot of his plan of salvation and who brings it to fulfilment for us in His Son Jesus. We are asked to acknowledge all this, to receive it with gratitude and to make it become a motive of praise, of blessing and of great joy. If we do this, we are in peace with God and we experience freedom. And this peace is then extended to all environments and to all relations of our life: we are in peace with ourselves, we are in peace with the family, with our community, at work and with the persons we meet every day on our path.

However, Paul exhorts us to *boast also in tribulations*. This is not easy to understand. This is more difficult for us and it might seem to have nothing to do with the condition of peace just described. Instead, it constitutes the most authentic, the truest presupposition. In fact, the peace that the Lord offers and guarantees to us is not understood as the absence of worries, disappointments, failings, of motives of suffering. If it were so, should we succeed in being in peace that moment would soon end and we would fall inevitably into dejection. Instead, the peace that flows from faith is a gift: it is the grace of experiencing that God loves us and is always beside us; He does not leave us alone not even for an instant of our life. And, as the Apostle states, this generates patience, because we know that, also in the harshest and most distressing moments, the mercy and goodness of the Lord are greater than anything and nothing will tear us from His hands and from communion with Him.

See then why Christian hope is solid, see that it *does not disappoint*. It never disappoints. Hope does not disappoint! It is not founded on what we can do or be, and even less so on what we can believe. Its foundation, that is, the foundation of Christian hope is what is most faithful and certain that can be, namely the love that God Himself has for each one of us. It is easy to say: God loves us. We all say it. But think a moment: is every one of us capable of saying: I am certain that God loves me? It is not so easy to say it, but it is true. It is a good exercise to say to oneself: God loves me. This is the root of our security, the root of hope. And the Lord has effused His Spirit abundantly in our hearts as maker and guarantor, precisely so that it can nourish faith within us and keep this hope alive. And this certainty: God loves me. "But in this awful moment?" – God loves me. "And <He loves> me who have done this bad and evil thing?" – God loves me. No one takes this certainty away. And we should repeat it as a prayer: God loves me. I am certain that God loves me. I am certain that God loves me. Now we understand why the Apostle Paul exhorts us to boast always of all this. I boast of the love of God because He loves me. The hope we have been given does not separate us from others, and even less so does it lead us to discredit and marginalize them. Instead, it is an extraordinary gift of which we are called to make ourselves "channels" for all, with humility and simplicity. And then our greatest boast will be that of having as Father a God who does not have preferences, who does not exclude anyone, but who opens His house to all human beings, beginning with the least and the estranged, so that as His children we learn to console and support one another. And do not forget: hope does not disappoint.

**Second Collection this week For:
Bishops Annual Appeal**



If you attend St. Gerard on a regular basis and feel welcome, Why not consider becoming a member. We would love to have you. Feel free to talk to a member or call the office 649-3203.

Please ask any veterans (especially post-9/11 veterans) to contact ACTS at ph#803.642.5919
They served us now let's help ACTS serve them.

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

Father Emmanuel O. Andinam: Pastor
Joseph A. Dennis: Deacon

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Leviticus 19:1-2,17-18(79A)

Responsorial:

Psalms 103:1-2,3-4,8,10,12-13

Second Reading:

1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Gospel:

Matthew 5:38-48

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of February 19, 2017

Monday: Sirach 1:1-10;

Mark 9:14-29

Tuesday: Sirach 2:1-11;

Mark 9:30-37

Wednesday: 1 Peter 5:1-4;

Matthew 16:13-19

Thursday: Sirach 5:1-8;

Mark 9:41-50

Friday: Sirach 6:5-17;

Mark 10:1-12

Saturday: Sirach 17:1-15;

Mark 10:13-16

The Seventh Sunday In Ordinary Time February 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.*



You have heard how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer no resistance to the wicked. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if someone wishes to go to law with you to get your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone requires you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks you, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away. You have heard how it was said, You will love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike. For if you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Do not even the tax collectors do as much? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Do not even the gentiles do as much? You must therefore be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.' Matthew 5:38-48

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:** Sundays 10:00 AM

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

*Lord Jesus, Create in us a new heart.
 Pour your Spirit upon us so that we
 may do the will of the Father.
 Nourish us with your Eucharist and
 heal us of sin. Let our commitment to
 stewardship be a sign of our love for you.
 Amen*



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

Weekend Offering
February 11-12, 2017

Collection	\$2,634.00
Needed	\$2,612.00
Over	\$22.00
BAA Refund	\$802.00
Attendance	124

Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 134 M
Holy, Holy, Holy
The Offertory Hymn is 528 H
Come By Here, My Lord
The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 495 H
Amazing Grace
Our Song of Praise is 661 H
I've Got Peace Like A River



Lector: Tami Schaeffer
 E E Ministers: Mary Rose

Lay Ministers
Saturday 25 February
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Mary Kay L'Esperance
 Gerard L'Esperance

Sunday 26 February
 11:00 AM Mass
 Paula Thurston
 Jeanette Coleman



Lector: David Didmamoff
 E E Ministers: Jerry Schaeffer

Saturday 4 March
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Denise Gelinas
 Roger Gelinas

Sunday 5 March
 11:00 AM Mass
 Cathy Ciani
 Wayman Johnson

Refreshment February 19
 Jean Schodowski/Richardean Paige

Refreshment February 26
 Jackie Brown/Jeanette Coleman

Refreshment March 5
 Matt Fitzpatrick/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*



The Brown Scapular
St. Gerard's has scheduled Consecration of the Brown Scapular to Mary's Service. This Sunday at 2:00 PM please feel free to come.
(for those who wear a Brown Scapular, Mary's promise to us is that "Whoever dies clothed in this Scapular shall not suffer eternal fire.")
Please come to Bible Study on Fridays at 10:00 AM Father brings the true perspective to the scriptures. Please try to attend.

REST IN PEACE

Long-time, active St Gerard parishioner, Kit Little, has passed away at the age of 99, at the end of January. She had been living in recent years close to her daughters in North Carolina. For those who remember her: 1209 Carolina Ave. Durham, N C 27705

Dear Saint Gerard Family, Thank you for your support over the past several months, embracing Dottie and I as your own and accepting me into your service as a deacon. Thank you for your kind gift of the stole and dalmatic to commemorate the ordination and wear in service to you. Please know that when I am on the altar, teaching, serving the parish behind the scenes, and serving others in Christ's name, I bring all of you with me and multiply your own efforts with my own through our Lord and the Blessed Mother. Many blessings to you as we learn to be Christ to each other. In Christ, Deacon Joe

We will have Stations of The Cross on Wednesdays during Lent starting on March 8, time and details TBA

Volunteer Corner:
 Thank you to all that helped with Deacon Joe's reception after Mass Sunday

Parish Council: Meeting March 14 @ 6:00 PM
Finance Council: No meeting scheduled

The Columbia, SC Curia of The Legion Of Mary is holding a half day retreat at St. Gerard on Saturday February 25 from 12:30 PM till 3:00 PM. Confession 3:00 PM - 3:30 PM, Followed by 4:00 PM Mass. Full Schedule to be published in next weeks bulletin.

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 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
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>.

Jesus Wept . John 11:35
GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

St. Mary's has an ongoing grief support group that meets on Wednesdays. The 13-week program uses Griefshare, a special, lay-led weekly seminar and support group that embraces a biblical, Christ-centered approach to grieving. Please join us for help and encouragement after the death of a loved one. We provide a safe and loving environment to encourage sharing and exchanging of concerns and feelings as you are comfortable. This group is open to anyone in our community, regardless of Church affiliation. Please pass the information along to anyone you know who might need it. People may join the group at any point during the 13 weeks; each session stands alone. The meetings are held downstairs in Smith Hall from 3:30 until 5:00 pm but we join for coffee and fellowship any time after 3:00. The registration fee is \$20 and scholarships are available. Registration information is available at the St. Mary Parish Office. Please contact Bette Ross at 803.649-4777 or bross@stmarys-aiken.org for additional information or questions.

I will turn their mourning into joy; I will console and gladden them after their sorrows
 — Jeremiah 31:13

Lector Development
 Lector study guides are available in the sacristy for those that were unable to attend the first training session. Please pick up yours the next time you are at church. Please read the preface, pages vii-x. The next sessions will be February 21 at 10 AM and Feb 23 at 6 PM. All lectors should attend one of the sessions and prepare by being familiar with pages 3-13 and reflect on the questions on pages 14 and 15.

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.

Family Charitable Outreach:
 Someone in need? Maybe we can help.
 Contact Marge Glauser or the office.