

POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Weeping & Hope

'The tears generated hope. And this is not easy to understand, but it is true'

Rome, January 4, 2017. Zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

In today's catechesis I would like to contemplate with you the figure of a woman who speaks to us of hope lived in weeping – hope lived in weeping. It is Rachel, wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph and Benjamin, she that, as the Book of Genesis recounts, died in giving birth to her second-born, namely, Benjamin.

The prophet Jeremiah makes reference to Rachel when addressing the Israelites in exile to console them, with words full of emotion and poetry; namely, he takes up Rachel's weeping but gives hope:

Thus says the Lord: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not" (*Jeremiah 31:15*). In these verses, Jeremiah presents this woman of his people, the great matriarch of his tribe, in a reality of sorrow and weeping, but at the same time with a prospect of unimaginable life. Rachel, who in the Genesis account died giving birth and assumed that death so that her son could live now, instead, is represented by the prophet as alive at Ramah, there where the deported gathered, weeping for her children who in a certain sense are dead by going into exile; children that, as she herself says, "are not," have gone for ever.

And, because of this, Rachel does not want to be consoled. Her refusal expresses the depth of her sorrow and the bitterness of her weeping. In face of the tragedy of the loss of children, a mother is unable to accept words or gestures of consolation, which are always inadequate, but capable of soothing the pain of a wound that cannot and will not be healed — a sorrow proportionate to the love.

Every mother knows all this; and there are so many mothers, also today, who weep, who are not resigned to the loss of a child, inconsolable in face of a death that is impossible to accept. Rachel encloses in herself the sorrow of all the mothers of the world, of all times, and the tears of every human being who weeps for irreparable losses.

This refusal of Rachel, who does not want to be consoled, teaches us also how much delicacy is required in face of others' sorrow. To speak of hope to one who is desperate requires sharing his despair, to dry a tear from the face of one who is suffering requires uniting our sorrow to his. Only thus will our words be really capable of giving some hope. And if I cannot say such words — weeping, sorrowing, then silence is better — a caress, a gesture and no words.

And God, with His delicacy and His love, responds to Rachel's weeping with true not feigned words thus, in fact, Jeremiah's text proceeds:

"Thus says the LORD: 'Cease your cries of weeping, hold back your tears! There is compensation for your labor— oracle of the LORD—they shall return from the enemy's land. There is hope for your future—oracle of the LORD—your children shall return to their own territory.'" (*Jeremiah 31:16-17*). In fact, because of the mother's weeping, there is hope again for the children, who will live again.

This woman, accepted death at the moment of giving birth, so that her son could live ... she and her weeping are now the origin of a new life for her exiled children, [who are] prisoners, far from their homeland. To Rachel's sorrow and bitter weeping, the Lord responds with a promise that can now be for her a motive for true consolation: the people will be able to return from exile and live in faith, and free, their relation with God. The tears generated hope. And this is not easy to understand, but it is true. Many times in our life tears sow hope; they are seeds of hope.

As we know, this text of Jeremiah was later taken up by the evangelist Matthew and applied to the massacre of the innocents (cf. 2:16-18). A text that puts us before the tragedy of the killing of vulnerable human beings, to the horror of power that scorns and does away with life. The children of Bethlehem died because of Jesus. And He, innocent Lamb, would then die in turn for all of us. The Son of God entered in the pain of men. We must not forget this.

When someone turns to me and asks me difficult questions, for instance: "Tell me, Father, why do children suffer?" I truly do not know what to answer. I just say: "Look at the Crucified: God has given us His Son, He suffered, and perhaps you will find an answer there. " But answers from here [he points to his head] there are none. Only by looking at God's love that gives His Son, who offers His life for us, can indicate some way of consolation. And because of this we say that the Son of God entered in the pain of men; He shared and accepted death; His Word is definitively word of consolation, because it is born of weeping.

And on the Cross it is He, the dying Son, who gives new fecundity to His Mother, entrusting her to the disciple John and rendering her Mother of the believing people. Death is conquered, and thus Jeremiah's prophecy reaches fulfillment. Mary's tears also, as those of Rachel, generated hope and new life. Thank you.

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Isaiah 60:1-6 (20ABC)

Responsorial:

Psalms 72:1-2,7-8,10-11, 12-13

Second Reading:

Ephesians 3:2-3a,5-6

Gospel:

Matthew 2:1-12

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of January 8, 2017

Monday: Isaiah 42: 1-4,6-7;
Matthew 3:13-17

Tuesday: Hebrews 2:5-12;
Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday: Hebrews 2:14-18;
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday: Hebrews 3:7-14;
Mark 1:40-45

Friday: Hebrews 4:1-5,11;
Mark 2:1-12

Saturday: Hebrews 4:12-16;
Mark 2:13-17

The Epiphany of The Lord January 8, 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.*

Father Emmanuel Andinam: Administrator

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way. Matthew 2:7-12



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: 9 AM Thursdays

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 and Ike Ligans
 Joe Fulmer

"A Church without charity does not exist" - Pope Francis
 Each new year gives us the opportunity to renew our commitment as disciples of Jesus. We understand that all gifts are entrusted to us by God. We commit ourselves to return those gifts with increase. As stewards we offer our lives in service.



Pastoral Council:
 (Vacant, Chairman)
 Payson Borst
 Jacqueline Brown
 Fredrick Cadek
 Marge Glauser
 Joan Hesik
 Janet Menefee
 Gregory Wright
 Vacant

Mass Intentions
 4:00 PM, 7:00 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions.
 11:00 AM Mass for Stephen Yanak: From Leah Yanak

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

Weekend Offering
December 31 January 1, 2016-17
 Collection \$3,347.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
 Over \$735.00
 Attendance 129
Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 90 M
 The First Noel
 The Offertory Hymn is 82 M
 O Little Town of Bethlehem
 The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 92 M
 We Three Kings
 Our Song of Praise is 89 M
 Songs of Thankfulness and Praise



Lay Ministers

Saturday 14 January
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Lector: Joan Hesik
 E E Ministers: Ellen Heim

Sunday 15 January
 7:00 AM Mass
 Mary Kay L'Esperance
 Gerard L'Esperance

Sunday 15 January
 11:00 AM Mass
 Paula Thurston
 Wayman Johnson

Saturday 21 January
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Lector: David Didimamoff
 E E Ministers: Barbara Dixon/Joe Dennis

Sunday 22 January
 7:00 AM Mass
 Denise Gelinis
 Roger Gelinis

Sunday 22 January
 11:00 AM Mass
 Janet Menefee
 Jackie Brown

Refreshment January 8
 Jackie Brown/Rosa DiStefano

Refreshment January 15
 Jackie Cobbs/Rosa Johnson

Refreshment January 22
 Sheila Wagner/Matt Fitzpatrick

Finance Council Meeting Changed to January 17 at 4:00 PM
Parish Council Meeting Changed to January 17 at 6:00 PM

We need a chair person for our (St. Gerard) Bishop Stewardship Appeal.
Call the office for information on duties.

The Legion of Mary is meeting at 1:30 on Fridays. Please consider joining. Call the office with questions. Please Pray the Rosary.



We are the Hands of Christ

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

Feed the Valley, Thank you and bless your gifts of food.

Diaconate Formation Retreat

Joe Dennis, our deacon candidate has asked for your prayers. He and the diaconate candidate class of 2017 will be on retreat at Mepkin Abbey from January 13 to 15. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will guide them during the retreat and prepare Joe and his classmates for ordination in February.

Volunteer Corner:

Thanks to Marge Glauser for continuing to head the outreach program and on the parish council even through the struggles in her life over the past years.

Dear Friends

At the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Charleston on January 15, 2017 at 3pm. We will celebrate the fact that the vicar of Family Life, Father Jim LeBlanc will be given the title Reverend Monsignor on this occasion.

The goal is to have the contribution tax letters in the mail by 31 January

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 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.

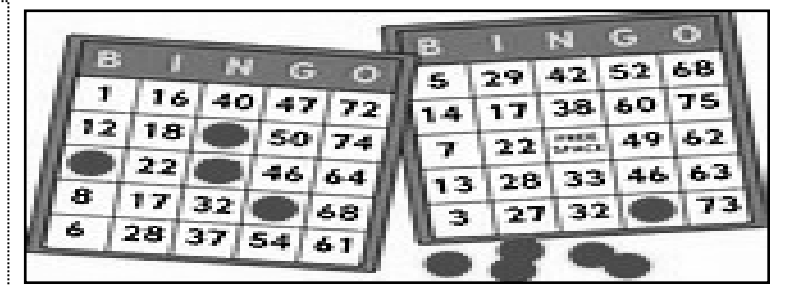
Hospital Visits: If you or a loved one is in Aiken Regional Hospital (ARMC) please let St Gerards know. Remember - ARMC does not inform us of Catholic patients, even if you register as a Catholic; it is up to the patient or family to do so. You can: ask the ARMC Chaplain to call the Catholic church, 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@atlanticbnn.net.

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. Registration forms are in the the church hall lobby.

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



Update: The Simkins' new address #121, 8008 Bass Lake Rd., New Hope, MN 55428 I am told they are doing well.