

## POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On Lent, Journey of Hope

'Lent is the sacramental sign of our journey from slavery to freedom, ever to be renewed — a journey that is certainly demanding, as it is right that it should be, because love is demanding, but it is a journey full of hope.

Rome, March 1, 2017 zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

On this day, Ash Wednesday, we enter the liturgical Season of Lent. And as we are carrying out a series of catecheses on Christian hope, I would like to present *Lent* to you today as a *journey of hope*.

In fact, this perspective is immediately evident if we think that the Church instituted Lent as a time of preparation for Easter and, therefore, the whole meaning of these forty days *draws light from the paschal mystery*, to which it is oriented. We can imagine the Risen Lord, who calls us to come out of our darkness, and we set out on the way to Him, who is the Light. And Lent is a journey towards the Risen Jesus, it is a period of penance, also of mortification, but not as an end in itself, rather geared to make us rise again with Christ, to renew our baptismal identity, namely, to be reborn again "from on high," from the love of God (cf. *John 3:3*). See why Lent is, by its nature, a time of hope.

To understand better what this means, we must refer to the fundamental experience of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, narrated by the Bible in the Book that bears this name: *Exodus*. The point of departure is the condition of slavery in Egypt, oppression, forced labor. However, the Lord has not forgotten His people and His promise: He calls Moses and, with a powerful arm, has the Israelites leave Egypt and guides them through the desert to the land of freedom. During this journey from slavery to freedom, the Lord gives the Israelites the Law, to educate them to love Him, only Lord, and to love one another as brothers. Scripture shows that the exodus was long and troubled: it lasted symbolically 40 years, namely, the lifetime of a generation. A generation that, in face of the trials of the journey, was always tempted to regret Egypt and to turn back. We also know the temptation to turn back, all of us. But the Lord remains faithful and those poor people, led by Moses, arrived at the Promised Land. The whole of this journey was undertaken *in hope*: the hope of reaching the Land, and in this sense it is precisely an "exodus," a going out of slavery to freedom. And these 40 days are, for all of us also, a going out from slavery, from sin, to freedom, to the encounter with the Risen Christ. Every step, every effort, every trial, every fall and every recovery, all make sense only within the plan of salvation of God, who wants life for His people and not death, joy and not sorrow.

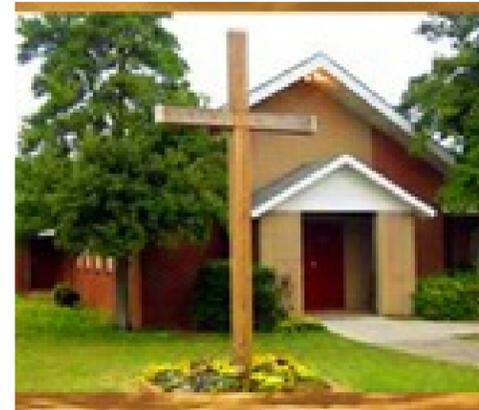
*Jesus' Easter is His exodus*, with which He has opened the way for us to attain full, eternal and blessed life. To open this way, this passage, Jesus had to strip Himself of His glory, humble Himself, be obedient to death and to death on the cross. To open the way for us to eternal life cost Him all His blood, and, thanks to Him, we are saved from the slavery of sin. But this does not mean that He did all and we have nothing to do, that He went through the cross and we "go to Paradise in a carriage." It's not so. Our salvation is certainly His gift, but, because it is a story of love, it requires our "yes" and our participation in His love, as our Mother Mary shows us and, after her, all the Saints.

Lent lives of this dynamic: Christ precedes us with His exodus, and we go through the desert thanks to Him and behind Him. He was tempted for us, and He defeated the Tempter for us, but with Him, we must also face temptations and overcome them. He gives us the living water of His Spirit, and it is for us to draw from His source and drink, in the Sacraments, in prayer, in adoration. He is the light that overcomes the darkness, and we are asked to kindle the little flame that was entrusted to us on the day of our Baptism.

In this sense, Lent is a "sacramental sign of our conversion" (*Roman Missal*, Collect, First Sunday of Lent); one who undertakes the way of Lent is always on the way of conversion. Lent is the sacramental sign of our journey from slavery to freedom, ever to be renewed — a journey that is certainly demanding, as it is right that it should be, because love is demanding, but it's a journey full of hope. Rather, I will say more: the Lenten exodus is the journey in which hope itself *is formed*. The exhaustion of crossing the desert — all the trials, the temptations, the illusions, the mirages . . . —, all this is useful to forge a strong, solid hope on the model of that of the Virgin Mary, who in the midst of the darkness of the Passion and Death of her Son continued to believe and to hope in His Resurrection, in the victory of God's love.

Let us enter Lent today with a heart open to this horizon. Feeling ourselves part of the people of God, we begin with joy this journey of hope.

# 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:

*Genesis 2:7-9;3:1-7(22A)*

Responsorial:

*Psalms 51:3-4,5-6,12-13,17*

Second Reading:

*Romans 5:12-19*

Gospel:

*Matthew 4:1-11*

Today's Missal

### Lectionary Readings for the week of March 5, 2017

Monday: *Leviticus 19:1-2,11-18;*

*Matthew 25:31-46*

Tuesday: *Isaiah 55:10-11;*

*Matthew 6:7-15*

Wednesday: *Jonah 3:1-10;*

*Luke 11:29-32*

Thursday: *Esther C:12,14-16,23-25;*

*Matthew 7:7-12*

Friday: *Ezekiel 18:21-28;*

*Matthew 5:20-26*

Saturday: *Deuteronomy 26:16-19;*

*Matthew 5:43-48*

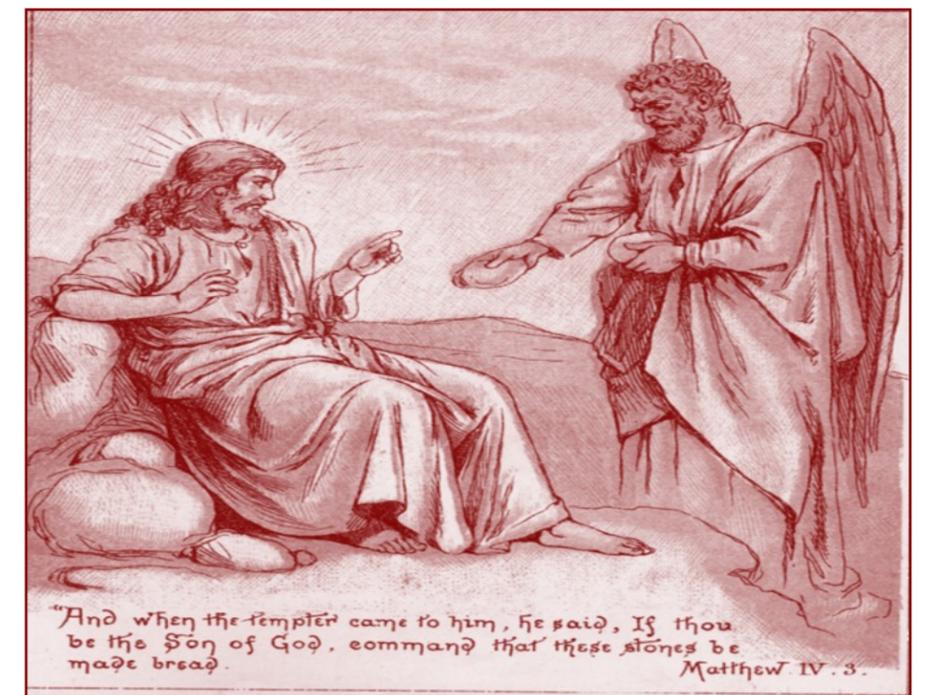
## The First Sunday of Lent March 5, 2017

### 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.*



**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

*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 is said in memory of William Beckert's 106<sup>th</sup> Birth Day  
 From: The Beckerts, 7:00 AM and 11:00 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions.

**Weekend Offering**  
**February 26, 2017**

Collection	\$2,457.00
Needed	\$2,612.00
<b>Under Attendance</b>	<b>\$155.00</b> 148

*Stewardship a way of life*

*Our Song of Praise is 114 M*  
*From the Depths We Cry to Thee*  
*The Offertory Hymn is 113 M*  
*Again We Keep This Solemn Fast*  
*The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 585 H*  
*On Eagle's Wings*  
*The Gathering Hymn 116 M*  
*Forty Days and Forty Nights*



**Saturday March 11**  
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass  
 Lector: Diane Begic  
 E E Ministers: Ellen Heim

**Lay Ministers**  
**Sunday March 12**  
 7:00 AM Mass  
 Mary Kay L'Esperance  
 Gerard L'Esperance

**Sunday March 12**  
 11:00 AM Mass  
 Janet Menefee  
 Jackie Brown

**Saturday March 18**  
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass  
 Lector: Joan Hesik  
 E E Ministers: Barbara Dixon

**Sunday March 19**  
 7:00 AM Mass  
 Denise Gelinas  
 Roger Gelinas

**Sunday March 19**  
 11:00 AM Mass  
 Lisa Solenberger  
 Mike Solenberger

Refreshments March 5  
 Matt Fitzpatrick/Rosa DiStefano

Refreshments March 12  
 Sheila Wagner/Patricia Hayes

Refreshments March 19  
 Shirley Paige/Anna Marie Key

*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.  
 Sign up to bring soup and/or bread. Sheet in the lobby

*Second Collection is for Black and Indian home missions. Feed the Valley weekend*

*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*



**Family Charitable Outreach:**  
 Contact Marge Glauser or the office.

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

**Correction/Date Change:** **Parish Council:** Meeting March 21 @ 6:00 PM  
**Finance Council:** Meeting March 21 @ 4:00 PM

**Volunteer Corner:**  
 Deacon Joe and Payson Borst have volunteered to start a men's group and a woman's group. Please contact the office if interested in helping or joining.

**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@atlanticbnn.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 [http://sccatholic.org/downloads/ethnic\\_ministry/braxton\\_racialstudyguide.pdf](http://sccatholic.org/downloads/ethnic_ministry/braxton_racialstudyguide.pdf) Highlights from the previous session can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/V30whmceTwI>.

**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-xii.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](mailto:rmcnamara@catholic-doc.org) or 864.331.2627

Choir practice for Easter will be starting soon. Days and times TBA

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](mailto: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

**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](mailto:stgerardscatholi@atlanticbnn.net). You should follow this advice for Nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities also.

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](mailto:grace4healing@gmail.com) This could be the right time for you!