

**POPE FRANCIS' GENERAL AUDIENCE: On the Parable of the Good Shepherd.**

Rome, May 4, 2016. Zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

We all know the image of the Good Shepherd, who carries the lost sheep on His shoulders. This icon has always represented Jesus' solicitude towards sinners and the mercy of God, who is not resigned to lose anyone. Jesus narrates the parable to make us understand that His closeness to sinners should not scandalize but, on the contrary, should spur in everyone a serious reflection on the way we live our faith. The narration sees, on one hand, the sinners that approach Jesus to hear Him and, on the other, the suspicious Doctors of the Law and the scribes who move away from Him because of His behavior. They move away because Jesus approaches the sinners. They were proud, they were arrogant; they considered themselves just.

Our parable unfolds around three figures: the shepherd, the lost sheep and the rest of the flock. However, the only one who acts is the shepherd, not the sheep. Hence, the shepherd is the only true protagonist and everything depends on him. A question introduces the parable. "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it?" (Luke 15:4). It is a paradox that induces to doubt the action of the shepherd: is it wise to abandon the ninety-nine for one sheep and, what is more, not in the safety of the sheepfold, but in the desert? According to the biblical tradition, the desert is a place of death where it is difficult to find food and water, without shelter and at the mercy of wild beasts and robbers. What can ninety-nine vulnerable sheep do? The paradox continues nevertheless, saying that, having found the sheep, the shepherd "lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing, and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' (v. 6). It seems, therefore, that the shepherd does not go back to the desert to recuperate the whole flock! Inclined to the one sheep, he seems to forget the other ninety-nine. But in reality, it is not so. The teaching Jesus wishes to give us is, rather, that no sheep can be lost. The Lord cannot be resigned to the fact that even one person alone can be lost. God's action is that of one who goes in search of his lost children to then celebrate and enjoy with all finding them again. It is an unstoppable desire: not even ninety-nine sheep can stop the shepherd and keep him closed in the sheepfold. He could reason thus: "I weigh the matter: I have ninety-nine, I have lost one, but it is no great loss." Instead, he goes to seek it because each one is very important for him, and that one is the neediest, the most abandoned, the most discarded, and he goes to find it. We are all advised: the style with which God acts is mercy towards sinners and He is absolutely faithful to this mercy: nothing and no one will be able to deter Him from His will of salvation. God does not know our present throwaway culture. God has nothing to do with this. God does not discard any person. God loves all, He seeks all, one by one! He does not know the word "discard the people," because He is all love and all mercy.

The Lord's flock is always on the way: it does not possess the Lord. We cannot delude ourselves, imprisoning Him in our schemes and our strategies. The shepherd will be found there where the lost sheep is. Therefore, the Lord is to be sought where He wishes to meet us, not where we presume to find Him! In no other way will the flock come together again other than by following the way traced by the shepherd's mercy. While he looks for the lost sheep, he incites the ninety-nine to participate in the reunification of the flock. Then, not only the sheep carried on the shoulders, but the whole flock will follow the shepherd to his home, to celebrate with "friends and neighbors."

We must reflect often on this parable, because there is always some one in the Christian community who is missing and has gone away and left his place empty. Sometimes this is discouraging and leads us to believe that it is an inevitable loss, a sickness without remedy. It is then that we run the danger of shutting ourselves in a sheepfold, where there will not be the smell of the sheep, but the stink of the closed! And Christians? We must not be closed, because we will have the stink of closed things. Never! It is necessary to go out and not to be closed in on ourselves, in small communities, in the parish, considering ourselves "the just." This happens when the missionary impetus is lacking, which leads us to encounter others. In Jesus' vision, there are no definitively lost sheep, but only sheep to be found again. We must understand this well: no one, for God, is definitively lost. Never! God seeks us up to the last moment. Think of the good thief; but only in Jesus' vision no one is definitively lost. The perspective, therefore, is altogether dynamic, open, stimulating and creative. It drives us to go out in search, to undertake a path of fraternity. No distance can keep the shepherd far away, and no flock can renounce a brother. To find one who is lost is the joy of the shepherd and of God, but it is also the joy of the whole flock! We are all sheep that have been found again and gathered by the Lord's mercy, called to gather the whole flock together with Him!



# St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

## The Ascension of The Lord May 8th, 2016

### 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*

**Father Emmanuel Andinam: Administrator**

*and he said to them, 'So it is written that  
the Christ would suffer and on the third  
day rise from the dead, and that, in his  
name, repentance for the forgiveness of  
sins would be preached to all nations,  
beginning from Jerusalem.  
You are witnesses to this.*

*'And now I am sending upon you what the  
Father has promised. Stay in the city,  
then, until you are clothed with the power  
from on high.' Then he took them out as  
far as the outskirts of Bethany, and raising  
his hands he blessed them. Now as he  
blessed them, he withdrew from them and  
was carried up to heaven. They  
worshipped him and then went back to  
Jerusalem full of joy; and they were  
continually in the Temple praising God.*

**Luke 24:46-53**



### SUNDAY READINGS

For The Ascension pg. 95-98 m

#### First Reading:

*Acts 1:1-11*

#### Responsorial:

*Psalms 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9*

#### Second Reading:

*Ephesians 1:17-23*

#### Gospel:

*Luke 24:46-53*

### Lectionary Readings for the week of May 8, 2016

*Monday: Acts 19:1-8;*

*John 16:29-33*

*Tuesday: Acts 20:17-27;*

*John 17:1-11*

*Wednesday: Acts 20:28-38;*

*John 17:11-19*

*Thursday: Acts 22:30; 23:6-11;*

*John 17:20-26*

*Friday: Acts 25:13-21;*

*John 21:15-19*

*Saturday: Acts 1:15-17, 20-26;*

*John 15:9-17*

**Mass Times:** Weekdays Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:15 AM,

First Friday Benediction after Mass

Weekend Saturday 4:00 PM, Sunday 7:00 AM and 9:00 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 10:30 AM during school year,

**RCIA:** Tuesdays 10:00 AM

**Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Funerals:** By Appointment, Contact the office.

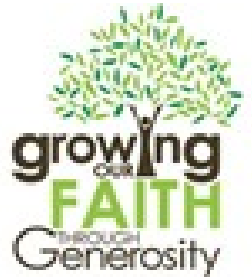
**Contact Us:** Phone 803 649-3203, E-Mail stgerardscatholi@atlanticbbn.net

**Facebook** @stgerardaiken, **Emergency number for Father 803 637-2027**



**Pray for our sick:**  
 Gary Gilbault  
 Marge Glouser  
 Leonard Saunders  
 Shirley Paige  
 William and Jackie Cobbs  
 Woody Alexander  
 Lena Mickens  
 Rosa Johnson  
 Brenda and Ike Ligons  
 Joe Fulmer

Every year we are witness to creation. New life springs up before us. Our joyful appreciation of nature can move us to preserve and safeguard one of God's fundamental gifts to us. God's gift of the world needs stewards to treasure and protect it.



**Pastoral Council:**  
 Wayman Johnson, Chairman  
 Payson Borst  
 Jacqueline Brown  
 Fredrick Cadek  
 Nancy Durden  
 Marge Glauser  
 Janet Menefee  
 Gregory Wright  
 Joan Hesik

**Mass Intentions**  
 4:00 PM, 7:00 AM, and 9:00 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions.

**Weekend Offering**  
 April 30-May 1, 2016  
 Collection \$3,125.90  
 Needed \$2,612.00  
 Over \$513.90  
 Attendance 138  
 Stewardship a way of life

*The Gathering Hymn* 752 H  
*Alleluia, Sing to Jesus*  
*The Offertory Hymn is* 760 H  
*One Bread, One Body*  
*The Communion Hymn is* CHOIR 710 BB  
*On This Day*  
*Our Song of Praise is* 305 H  
*This Is The Day OR* 576 BB Alleluia #1



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

**Lay Ministers**  
**Saturday May 14**  
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass  
 Lector: Tami Schaeffer  
 E E Ministers: Jerry Schaeffer

**Sunday May 15**  
 7:00 AM Mass  
 Mary Key L'Esperance  
 Gerard L'Esperance

**Sunday May 15**  
 9:00 AM Mass  
 Sheila Wagner  
 Jacquiline Brown

**Saturday May 21**  
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass  
 Lector: Diana Begic  
 E E Ministers: Barbara Dixon

**Sunday May 22**  
 7:00 AM Mass  
 Denise Gelinis  
 Roger Gelinis

**Sunday May 22**  
 9:00 AM Mass  
 Janet Menefee  
 Mary Rose



Refreshments May 8  
 Shirley Paige/Anna Marie Key

Refreshments May 15  
 Richardean Paige/Marilu Alarcon

Refreshments May 22  
 Matt Fitzpatrick/?

**The Legion of Mary**  
 1:30 PM Fridays  
 Ask Cathy Ciani about membership



With the arrival of the International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Fatima what better time to join the Legion of Mary.

Please pray for father and his Prison ministry.

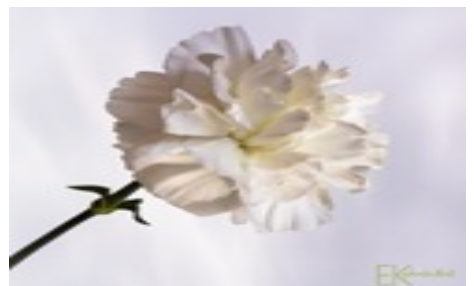
Be a good steward, make sure the church is secured prior to leaving after Mass.

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

The Finance and parish council meetings are set for Tuesday 10 May Times 4:30 PM Finance Council and 6:30 PM Parish Council

Please keep Leonard Saunders and family in your prayers.

We have a Baptism next week at the 9 AM Mass. Please join us and support the family.



Happy Mothers Day And especially remember Mary The Mother of Christ and of Our Holy Church

Second Collection for: Catholic Charities

Please remember you envelope from the 5th for the Ascension.



**Volunteer Corner**  
 Thank you Marge and Jackie Cobbs for the precious time you give.

Bishop Robert Guglielmone has given his approval for the International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Fatima to visit parishes throughout the South Carolina from April 30 - May 21, 2016. Please find a location near you to meet with Our Lady of Fatima. More detailed information is attached. We know that the Fatima messages is more urgent today than it was first received in 1917. Gratefully in Christ and Our Lady, May 10, 2016 @ St. Marys Help of Christians 803 649-4777 parishoffice@stmarys-aiken.org

The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry is excited to announce the establishment of a Diocesan Missionary Team. The purpose of this groundbreaking program will be to evangelize youth in grades 6 – 12 and help them encounter Christ. Retreats will be offered beginning in September at our parishes and Catholic schools. To learn more or to help with the funding of this dynamic new program, go to <http://sccatholic.org/youth-ministry> see below

**DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENT**  
 To proclaim the "Good News" and draw young people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, which will radically challenge and encourage them to embrace the life and mission of the Catholic Church.  
**DIOCESAN MISSIONARY TEAM VISION**  
 The vision for the Diocesan Missionary Team (DMT) is to reach young people "on the ground" in their parishes and Catholic schools. The DMT will evangelize young people where they are in their faith life. They will do this by offering young people an opportunity to not only hear about the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ but to learn and understand the grace of the truth that will set them free. It is the vision of the DMT that once young people have experienced the transformational grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, they will hunger and thirst to go deeper in their own Catholic faith life.  
**WHY DO WE NEED A DIOCESAN MISSIONARY TEAM?**  
 1. Youth leave the church because they have not encountered Christ and his unending love 2. 80% of Catholics are no longer Catholic by the time they are 23 3. Only 30% of Americans who were raised catholic are still practicing 4. 10% of all adults in America are ex-Catholics

**MERCY CENTER - COLORADO SPRINGS**  
**2016 SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR PERSONAL GROWTH & HEALING**

**The Tour of Mid-Life Transitions**  
 June 13-17 & August 8-12, 2016  
 In Phase One of life each person will be guided by their chosen archetype that helps in creating a personal and professional life-style and identity. By mid-life each person will move into their second archetype and experience a second birth that can lead to wonderment and bliss or if resisted and ignored depression and darkness. How do you cross the "poison river" of mid-life so that the journey to personal and professional transformation can be completed? Learning how to navigate the deep waters of mid-life will be our shared exploration during this week of dare and adventure.  
**Spirituality & Recovery**  
 June 6-10 & August 1-5, 2016  
 All addictions are the absence of a grounded and embodied spirituality. If your drug of choice is food, alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, money, love, gambling, power or control this week long program will take you to the core of your wounded self. Through mandala assessment you will discover what is missing and how to replace it with spirituality and recovery. Understanding how unresolved personal and family grief and trauma can replicate itself in addictive thinking, feeling and behaving will lift the burden of guilt and shame. This program is designed for deep introspective moments, personal assessment and inner explorations while learning how to apply the power of prayer, forgiveness, serenity, achieving virtue and creating personal values that will guide you for a life time.  
 Mercy Center Inc., 520 W Buena Ventura St, Colorado Springs, CO 80907  
 themercycenter@aol.com

ACTS is partnering with the Augusta/Aiken Warrior Project (AWP) to provide available assistance to local Warriors of all service branches, regardless of era of service or wounded status. 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.

Show your thanks for all your blessings by giving back. ACTS is in desperate need of volunteers to serve in our Resale Store and Client Room assisting clients with their clothing vouchers. Shifts are available Monday thru Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Commit to as few or as many hours and/or days as fit your schedule. It's not only rewarding but fun, as well! Just e-mail [usatvolunteer@actsofaiken.org](mailto:usatvolunteer@actsofaiken.org), or call 803.649.3800 for more information.

**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).

Please pick up a registration form from the rear of the church, complete it and return it to the church and place in the box in the rear of the church or bring it to the office. We still have nowhere near all parishioners filling out the forms.

**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.