

Pope Francis' Morning Homily: You Can't Have a Closed Heart If You Want to Understand Jesus Urges Faithful to Examine: How Is My Faith in Christ?"

Rome, January 26, 2017, Deborah Lubov, Zenith.org

In order to understand Jesus, we cannot have closed hearts, but rather need those that are courageous and forward-looking.

Pope Francis stressed this during his daily morning Mass at Casa Santa Marta as he asked those gathered to ask themselves to consider their own faith in Christ, reported Vatican radio. "How is my faith in Jesus Christ?" he urged them to reflect, as he reflected on today's readings. Recalling today's Gospel from St. Mark, which recounted the miraculous healing of a paralytic in Capernaum, Francis stressed that "no one can buy faith," for it is a "gift that changes our life."

Must Open our Hearts

In order to really understand Jesus, he underscored, we cannot have a "closed heart," and rather, need to follow the path of forgiveness and humility.

To illustrate what it means to really have faith, the Pope turned to the people of Capernaum, who were ready to do anything to get closer to Jesus, taking whatever risks may have come their way. So confident they were in Him and His healing, they overcrowded and surrounded the home where the Lord would heal. He also reminded them that the roof had to be opened for the paralyzed man to be lowered into the home.

Need for Courageous, Forward-looking Hearts

"They had faith," the Pope exclaimed, "the same faith as that lady who, also in a crowd, arranged to touch the hem of Jesus' garment, Jesus' robe, when he was going to the house of Jairus, that she too might be healed, He observed this was the same faith of the centurion, who wished for his servant to be healed.

"Strong faith, courageous, forward-looking," the Holy father said, "hearts to faith."

Closed Hearts Cannot Understand Jesus

In the paralytic story, the Jesuit Pope said, "Jesus goes a step further," of not just healing, but forgiving.

"There were those there who had their hearts closed, but accepted – up to a point – that Jesus was a healer – but forgiving sins is strong! This man is over the top! He has no right to say this, because only God can forgive sins."

Only Jesus knew what they were thinking, the Pope reflected, and said: "I am God"? – No, He did not say that. (He said) "Why are you thinking these things? Because you know that the Son of Man has the power – this is what makes him special – to forgive sins: "Arise, take up your mat and be healed."

The Holy Father observed that here, "Jesus begins to speak the language that at some point will discourage people, some of disciples who followed him – for, hard is this language, when he speaks of eating his body as a way of salvation."

All doubt: but are you a disciple that stays, or goes away?

He urged those gathered to reflect whether Jesus does, really, change their lives. When Jesus shows up with a power greater than that of a man, "To give that forgiveness, to give life, to recreate humanity, even His disciples doubt, and (some of them) go away." Jesus asked a small group, "Do you also want to go away?"

"Faith in Jesus Christ: how is my faith in Jesus Christ? Do I believe that Jesus Christ is God, the Son of God? And has this faith been life changing? Does my faith make this year of grace begin in my heart, this year of pardon, this year of growing in nearness to the Lord?"

No One Deserves Faith

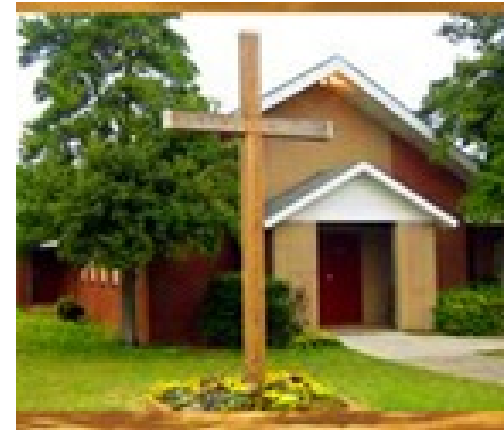
Faith is a gift, the Pope stressed, noting, No one "deserves" faith nor can buy it. Therefore, we are to always be humble, repent and pray: "Forgive me, Lord. You are God. You "can" forgive my sins."

The Pontiff prayed that the Lord "make us grow in faith." The people, he noted, sought Jesus in order that they might hear Him, because he spoke "with authority, not as the scribes speak." Also, he added, they followed Him because He healed people, because he performed miracles – but in the end, "these people, after seeing this, went away and they were all amazed, and glorified God."

Praise

Praise: the proof that I believe Jesus Christ is God in my life, that He was sent to me to "forgive me" is praise; if I have the ability to praise God, Praise the Lord. This is free – praise is *gratis*." He noted the Holy Spirit gives us this feeling and ability to express this, bringing us to say: "You are the only God." The Pontiff concluded, praying that the Lord "makes us grow in our faith in Jesus Christ, God, who forgives us, who gives us a year of grace – and this faith leads us to praise

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:

Zechariah 9:9-10(100A)

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 145:1-2,8-9,10-11,13-14

Second Reading:

Romans 8:9,11-13

Gospel:

Matthew 141:25-30

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for Week of July 9, 2017

Monday: *Genesis 28:10-22a;*

Matthew 9:18-26

Tuesday: *Genesis 32:23-33;*

Matthew 9:23-33

Wednesday: *Genesis 41:55-57; 42:5-7a,*
17-24a; Matthew 10:1-7

Thursday: *Genesis 44:18-21,23b*
29;45:1-5; Matthew 10:7-15

Friday: *Genesis 46:1-7,28-30;*
Matthew 10:16-23

Saturday: *Genesis 49:29-32; 50:15-26a;*
Matthew 10:24-33

The Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 9, 2017

Mission Statement

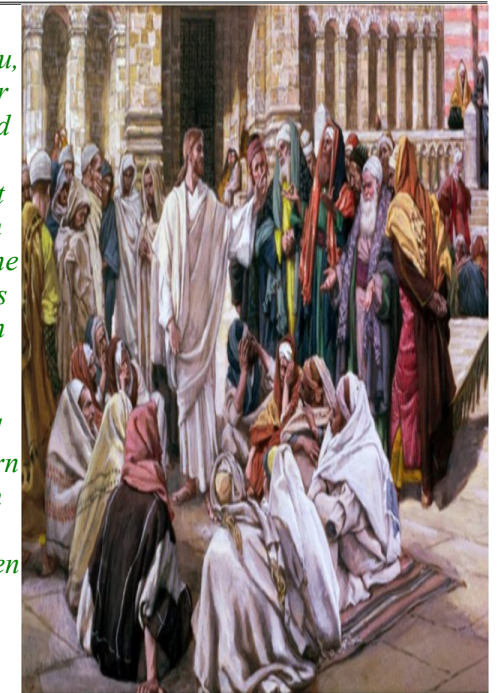
Called to be a People for Others

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.*

At that time Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 'Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Matthew 141:25-30



Mass Times: Weekdays Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:15 AM,
First Friday Benediction after Mass
Weekend Saturday Vigil 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: Contact Deacon Joe 843 743-8779

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
 Rosa Johnson
 Brenda Ligons
 Joe Fulmer
 Jean Schodowski
 Agnes Beckert
 Dick Smoot

“Christian stewards respond in a particular way to the call to be a disciple. Stewardship has the power to shape and mold our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live.” (SDR, 42)



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
 Art Wagner
 Clyde Hall

Mass Intentions:
 4:00 PM, 7:00 & 11:00 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions.

The Gathering Hymn 535 BB
Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens
The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 328 BB
Taste and See
The Offertory Hymn 595 BB
All Good Gifts
Our Song of Praise is 546 BB
Sing to the Mountains



Weekend Offering
July 2, 2017
 Collected \$3,422.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
Over \$810.00
 Attendance 154
Stewardship a way of life

	Lay Ministers	Saturday July 15	Sunday July 16	Sunday July 16
		4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:00 AM Mass
Lector:		Joan Hesik	Mary Kay L'Esperance	Cathy Ciani
E E Ministers:		Ellen Heim	Gerard L'Esperance	Jackie Brown
		Saturday July 22	Sunday July 23	Sunday July 23
		4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:00 AM Mass
Lector:		Diane Begic	Denise Gelinas	Janet Menefee
E E Ministers:		Ellen Heim	Roger Gelinas	Mary Rose
Refreshments July 9	Refreshments July 16	Refreshments July 23		
Jackie Brown/Jeanette Coleman	Matt Fitzpatrick/Rosa DiStefano	Sheila Wagner/Patricia Hayes		

The Legion of Mary is meeting at 1:30 on Fridays. Please consider joining. Call Paula Thurston at 803 226-1120

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

Please pray for Judy Riley. And don't forget Steve.
 Address: C/O Karen Riley 301 East Inlet Rd., Ocean City, NJ 08226

We need money counters!! We count Sunday after the last Mass. We would like to have at least 4 people. We need volunteers as soon as possible. If interested call the office for job description. So far we only have 3 Sundays of 18 covered. I am not permitted to count nor is anyone on the finance council. **We need your help!!**

Second Collection next week (Infirm Priests)
Thanks for you support for feed the valley



Our July Men's and Woman's groups meeting/program was canceled. We will resume in August. Date, time and program to be announced in the coming weeks.

The new ministries schedules are on the bulletin board. Please let me know about any mistakes or changes before I post them. Thanks



Volunteer Corner:
Thanks Mary Jo, Sparky and Brian.
Thanks to Sheila, Mary, Agnes and Veronica for helping Joan with the music.

BLACK CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 5-7, 2017 MIAMI, FLORIDA

The Bowman Francis Ministry team would like to invite you to the fourteen annual Black Catholic Men's conference in Miami Florida October 5-7. This conference invitation is extended to all males and youth males 10-17 years of age. Come to the conference and be blessed to be the best youth you can be in the church, community and world. If you have any concerns you can reach me at 317-523-0900 or check out the ministry at bowmanfrancisministry.com

Fr. Chester Smith FOR BROCHURE: Click link below.
http://www.bowmanfrancisministry.com/men_s_conference

Family Charitable Outreach:
 Contact Marge Glauser-Hall or the office.

If you know of someone that needs The Blessed Sacrament brought to their home or hospital please call the office.

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

The Unity Initiative is having the 2nd annual Aiken Unity Day Festival on July 22nd from 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM at Perry Memorial Park. Music and fun is the theme. This event brings youth and law enforcement closer together.

There will be a Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend on the following dates: St. Andrew, Clemson on July 29-30, St. Michael, Murrell's Inlet on October 7-8, and All Saints, Lake Wylie on November 11-12. Please see the web site at: www.cee-sc.org for more information and to register.

Planning continues for the Saint Gerard annual Fall Festival. Although it is scheduled for October, there is much work to be done. Our parish's health and growth are contingent on the success of the festival. You have been very responsive to Fathers request for assistance in the past with this event and parish needs and this year is no exception. To be blunt, now is not the time for resting and the success of this event and the parish depends on the participation of all in whatever way you can. There are many aspects of the event, all of which need volunteers and people to take the lead. Please consider participating or leading one of the following ways: Raffle, Bake Sale, Youth Activities, Set Up, Clean Up, Food Service, Registration, Cash Handling, Vendor Coordinator, Signs, Artwork, as well as may more opportunities. The next meeting is scheduled for July 10 at 7:00 PM at the parish. Contact the church office or Deacon Joe at josephadennis@yahoo.com or 843-743-8779. We need your help, your time, and your talents in order to be a success.

International Rosary
 An International Rosary for Our Lady of Fatima will be held at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church in Fort Mill, SC on Thursday, July 13 at 7:00pm. Each decade will be prayed in a different language and all nationalities are welcome! Please bring an international dessert to share following the rosary. For questions, please contact us at familylife@catholic-doc.org.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston Office of Ethnic Ministries invites all to the Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Feast Day Celebration on Saturday, July 15, 2017 at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church 3710 Augusta Road, Greenville, SC 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Please join us as we celebrate the Feast Day of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, patroness of the environment. Father Dwight Longenecker will be the celebrant and homilist for the Mass followed by a presentation and light meal. The program will include speaker Chief Mary Louise Worthy and Cathy Nelson, with the Keepers of the Word Drum Team. An optional tour of the lower church which houses a stained glass window of Saint Kateri will also be available. To register online go to: <https://tekakwitha.eventbrite.com>. For more information and registration, contact the Office of Ethnic Ministries at (864)331-2627 or email rmcnamara@catholic-doc.org