

'Martyrs have the certain hope that nothing and no one can separate them from the love of God'

Rome, June 28, 2017. Zenith.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

Today we reflect on *Christian hope as strength of the martyrs*. When, in the Gospel, Jesus sends His disciples on mission, He does not deceive them with mirages of easy success; on the contrary, He warns them clearly that the proclamation of the Kingdom of God entails always opposition. And he even uses an extreme expression: "You will be hated — hated — by all for my name's sake" (*Matthew 10:22*). Christians love, but they are not always loved. Jesus puts Himself immediately before this reality: in a more or less strong measure, the confession of faith happens in an atmosphere of hostility.

Christians, therefore, are "counter current" men and women. It is normal, because the world is marked by sin, which manifests itself in various forms of egoism and injustice. One who follows Christ walks in the opposite direction. Not out of a controversial spirit, but out of fidelity to the logic of the Kingdom of God, which is the *logic of hope*, and is translated in a style of life based on Jesus' indications.

The first indication is *poverty*. When Jesus sends His own on mission, it seems He puts more care in "stripping" them than in "clothing" them! In fact, a Christian who is not humble and poor, detached from riches and power and above all detached from himself, is not like Jesus. A Christian goes on his way in this world with the essential for the way, but with his heart full of love. The true defeat for him or for her is to fall into the temptation of a vendetta or of violence, responding to evil with evil. Jesus says to us: "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves" (*Matthew 10:16*) – hence, without claws, without weapons. Rather, a Christian must be prudent, sometimes even sly: these are virtues accepted by the evangelical logic, but violence never. Evil methods cannot be shared [used] to defeat evil.

The Gospel is the sole strength of a Christian. In times of difficulty, we must believe that Jesus is before us, and does not cease to accompany His disciples. Persecution is not a contradiction of the Gospel, but part of it: if they persecuted our Master, how can we hope that we will be spared the fight? However, in the midst of the whirlwind a Christian must not lose hope, thinking that he has been abandoned. Jesus reassures His own saying: "even the hairs of your head are all numbered" (*Matthew 10:30*). As if to say that none of man's sufferings, not even the most minute and hidden, are invisible to God's eyes. God sees, and He certainly protects, and He will offer His rescue. There is in fact in our midst Someone who is stronger than evil, stronger than the mafias, than dark conspiracies, than one who profits on the skin of the desperate, than one who crushes others with arrogance . . . Someone who always listens to the voice of Abel's blood, which cries from the earth.

Therefore, Christians must always be found on the "other side" of the world, that chosen by God: not persecutors but persecuted; not arrogant but meek; not vendors of smoke but submitted to truth; not impostors but honest.

This fidelity to Jesus' style – style of hope – to death, would be called by the first Christians with a most beautiful name: *martyrdom*, which means "witness." There were many other possibilities offered by the vocabulary: it could be called heroism, abnegation, self-sacrifice. And instead, the Christians of the first hour called it with a name that has the perfume of discipleship. Martyrs do not live for themselves, they do not fight to affirm their own ideas, and they accept having to die only out of fidelity to the Gospel. Martyrdom is not even the supreme ideal of the Christian life because above it is charity, namely love of God and of neighbor. The Apostle Paul says it very well in the hymn of charity, understood as love of God and love of neighbor. The Apostle Paul says it very well in the hymn of charity: "If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 *Corinthians 13:3*). Repugnant to Christians is the idea that suicide attackers can be called "martyrs": there is nothing in their end that comes close to the attitude of children of God.

Sometimes, reading the histories of the many martyrs of yesterday and of today – that are more numerous than the martyrs of the early times –, we remain astonished in face of the fortitude with which they faced their trial. This fortitude is sign of the *great hope* that animated them: the certain hope that nothing and no one could separate them from the love of God given to us in Jesus Christ (Cf. *Romans 8:38-39*).

May God give us always the strength to be His witnesses. May He give us the strength to live Christian hope especially in the hidden martyrdom of doing well and with love our duties of every day.

Thank you.

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:

2 Kings 4:8-11,14-16a(97A)

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 89:2-3,16-17,18-19

Second Reading:

Romans 6:3-4,8-11

Gospel:

Matthew 10:37-42

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for Week of July 2, 2017

Monday: Ephesians 2:19-22;
John 20:24-29

Tuesday: Genesis 19:15-29;
Matthew 8:23-27

Wednesday: Genesis 21:5,8-20a;
Matthew 8:28-34

Thursday: Genesis 22:1b-19;
Matthew 9:1-8

Friday: Genesis 23:1-4,19;24:1-8,62-67;
Matthew 9:9-13

Saturday: Genesis 27:1-5,15-29;
Matthew 9:14-17

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**

The Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 2, 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.*



*"Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,
and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;
and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not
worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his
life for my sake will find it.*

Matthew 10:37-39



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 AM Masses are said for your own personal intentions. 11:00 AM Mass for Eric Wagner and family

Weekend Offering
June 25, 2017
 Collected \$ 2,197.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
Under \$415.00
 Attendance 122
 Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 415 BB
All Are Welcome
The Offertory Hymn 717 BB
Take Up Your Cross
The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 624 BB
Whatever You Do
Our Song of Praise is 581 BB
Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory (Verses 1 and 4)



Lector: Linda Cooper
E E Ministers: Pam Ziomek
Saturday July 15
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
Lector: Joan Hesik
E E Ministers: Ellen Heim
 Refreshments July 2
Vacant

Saturday July 8	Sunday July 9	Sunday July 9
4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:00 AM Mass
Linda Cooper	Denise Gelinas	Paula Thurston
Pam Ziomek	Roger Gelinas	Wayman Johnson
Saturday July 15	Sunday July 16	Sunday July 16
4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	11:00 AM Mass
Joan Hesik	Mary Kay L'Esperance	Cathy Ciani
Ellen Heim	Gerard L'Esperance	Jackie Brown
Refreshments July 2	Refreshments July 9	Refreshments July 16
Vacant	Jackie Brown/Jeanette Coleman	Matt Fitzpatrick/Rosa DiStefano

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



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. We need your help!!

Our first Men's and Woman's groups meeting/program was well received with about 25 parishioners attending. We had food, a film with discussion, and a message from Deacon Joe. Our next program/meeting will be this Monday, July 3 at 7 PM. The topic will be the Stephen Ministry and will feature a guest speaker. We encourage you to attend.

The Diocese of Charleston has begun to prepare for our Bicentennial in 2020. Bishop Guglielmo asks all parishioners to complete a brief online survey. Go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CharlestonMAP> The Spanish survey link - <https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/EncuestaCharleston> Please complete by July 5th

This is feed the valley weekend. Thanks for you support.

Volunteer Corner:
 Thank you to all of you for helping with the fall festival planing and individuals getting donations.

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 reached 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 or the office.

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

Become a Creighton Model Fertility Care Practitioner
 The Diocese will host its sixth Creighton Model Fertility Care Practitioner Education Program in Greenville, SC for those interested in teaching others how to use the natural family planning method. Applications are currently being accepted for the 13-month practitioner program. Making it easier for students to leave jobs and families for the training, Education Phase I will be conducted over two, 4-day weekends: September 8 - 11, 2017 and September 22 - 25, 2017. Education Phase II will be held March 13 - 18, 2018. For more information and to request an application, please contact Kelli Ball, Diocesan NFP Coordinator, at kellihball@gmail.com or (803) 807-0158.

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 Monday, July 10th 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