

Pope Francis' General Audience: On the Blind Man's Healing and Ours

From a beggar to a disciple: this is also our path. We are all beggars, all of us.

Rome, June 15, 2016. Zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

One day, drawing near to the city of Jericho, Jesus wrought the miracle of returning sight to a blind man who was begging on the roadside (cf. *Luke* 18:35-43). Today we want to discern the meaning of this sign, because it also touches us directly. The evangelist Luke says the blind man was sitting by the roadside begging (cf. v. 35). A blind man at that time – but also up to not too long ago – could only live from alms. The figure of this blind man represents many persons who, also today, find themselves marginalized because of a physical or other sort of disadvantage. He is separated from the crowd; he is sitting there while busy people pass by, absorbed in their own thoughts and in many things ... And the road, which could be a place of encounter, is for him, instead, a place of solitude. Such a crowd passes by ... and he is alone.

The image of a marginalized individual is sad, especially in the background of the city of Jericho, the splendid and luxuriant oasis in the desert. We know, in fact, that it was Jericho that the people of Israel reached at the end of their long exodus from Egypt: that city represents the entrance door to the Promised Land. We recall the words that Moses pronounced in that circumstance: "If there is among you a poor man, one of your brethren, in any of your towns within your land which the Lord your God gives you, *you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand* against your poor brother *For the poor will never cease out of the land*; therefore, I command you, you shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in the land" (*Deuteronomy* 15:7.11). The contrast between this recommendation of God's Law and the situation described in the Gospel is striking: while the blind man cried out, invoking Jesus, people rebuked him to silence him, as if he didn't have the right to speak. They had no compassion for him; instead, his shouting annoyed them. How often we are annoyed, when we see so many people on the road – needy, sick people who have nothing to eat. How often we are annoyed when we find ourselves before so many refugees. It's a temptation we all have – I too! It's because of this that the Word of God admonishes us, reminding us that indifference and hostility render us blind and deaf, they impede our seeing our brothers and do not allow us to recognize the Lord in them – indifference and hostility. And sometimes this indifference and hostility become also aggression and insult: "but throw all these out!"; "put them somewhere else!" This aggression is what the people did when the blind man cried out: but you, go away, go on, don't speak, don't shout."

We note an interesting particular. The evangelist says that someone in the crowd explained to the blind man the reason all those people had gathered, saying: "*Jesus of Nazareth is passing by!*" (v. 37). Jesus' passing by is indicated with the same verb with which the Book of Exodus speaks of the passing of the exterminating Angel, who saves the Israelites in the land of Egypt (cf. *Exodus* 12:23). It is the "passing" of Easter, the beginning of the liberation: when Jesus passes by there is always liberation, there is always salvation! Therefore, for the blind man, it was as if *his Easter* was announced. Without allowing himself to be intimidated, the blind man cries out more times to Jesus, recognizing Him as the Son of David, the awaited Messiah that, according to the prophet Isaiah, opened the eyes of the blind (cf. *Isaiah* 35:5). In contrast to the crowd, this blind man sees with the eyes of faith. Thanks to it, his supplication has a powerful efficacy. In fact, on hearing him, "Jesus stopped, and commanded that he be brought to Him" (v. 40). By doing so, Jesus "*takes the blind man away from the roadside* and puts him at the center of the attention of His disciples and of the crowd. We also think <of the times> when we have been in awful situations, including situations of sin, how it was in fact Jesus who took us by the hand away from the roadside and gave us salvation. Realized thus is a twofold passage. First: the people had proclaimed good news to the blind man, but they didn't want to have anything to do with him; now Jesus obliges them all to be aware that the good news implies putting at the center of one's path the one who was excluded from it. Second: in his turn, the blind man could not see, but his faith opened the way of salvation, and he finds himself amidst all those who had stopped on the road to see Jesus.

Brothers and sisters, *the Lord's passing is an encounter of mercy that unites everything around Him to enable us to recognize one who is in need of help and of consolation.* Jesus also passes by in your Life; and when Jesus passes, and I realize it, it is an invitation to draw near to Him, to be better, to be a better Christian, to follow Jesus.

Jesus turns to the blind man and asks him: "*What do you want me to do for you?*" (v. 41). These words of Jesus are striking: the Son of God is now before the blind man as a humble servant. He, Jesus, God, says: "But what do you want me to do for you? How do you want me to serve you?" God makes Himself a servant of the sinful man. And the blind man answers Jesus, no longer calling him "Son of David," but "*Lord,*" the title that since the beginning the Church has applied to the Risen Jesus. The blind man asks that he might see again, and his desire is heard: "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well" (v. 42). He showed his faith invoking Jesus and wanting absolutely to meet Him, and this brought him the gift of salvation. Thanks to his faith, he can now see and, above all, *he feels that he is loved by Jesus.*

Therefore, the account ends by stating that the blind man "followed Him, glorifying God" (v. 43): *he becomes a disciple.* From a beggar to a disciple: this is also our path. We are all beggars, all of us. We are always in need of salvation. And all of us, should take this step every day: from beggars to disciples. And so, the blind man sets out behind the Lord and begins to be part of His community. He whom they wanted to silence, now witnesses in a loud voice his encounter with Jesus of Nazareth, and "all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God" (v. 43). A second miracle happens: what happened to the blind man *makes it so that the people also finally see.* The same light illumines them all, uniting them in a prayer of praise. So Jesus pours out His mercy upon all those He meets: He calls them, brings them to come to Him, gathers them, heals and enlightens them, creating a new people that celebrates the wonders of His merciful love. Let us also allow ourselves to be called by Jesus, and let us be healed by Jesus, forgiven by Jesus, and let us go behind Jesus praising God. So be it!

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Zechariah 12:10-11

Responsorial:

Psalms 62:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

Second Reading:

Galatians 3:26-29

Gospel:

Luke 9:18-24

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of June 19, 2016

Monday: *Second Kings 17:5-8, 13-15, 18;*

Matthew 7:1-5;

Tuesday: *Second Kings 19:9-11, 14-21, 31-35, 36; Matthew 7:6, 12-14*

Wednesday: *Second Kings 22:8-13; 23:1-3;*
Matthew 7:15-20

Thursday: *Second Kings 24:8-17;*

Matthew 7:21-29

Friday: *Isaiah 49:1-6; Acts 13:22-26;*

Luke 1:57-66, 80

Saturday: *Lamentations 2:2, 10-14, 18-19;*

Matthew 8:5-17

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 resuming in the fall, **CCD:** Sundays 10:30 AM during school year,

RCIA: Tuesdays 10:00 AM restarting in the fall

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**

The Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time June 19th, 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
embracing the enriching diversity of our community of faith.*

Father Emmanuel Andinam: Administrator

*Now it happened that he was
praying alone, and his
disciples came to him and he
put this question to them, 'Who
do the crowds say I am?' And
they answered, 'Some say John
the Baptist; others Elijah;
others again one of the ancient
prophets come back to life.'
'But you,' he said to them, 'who
do you say I am?' It was Peter
who spoke up. 'The Christ of
God,' he said. But he gave them
strict orders and charged them
not to say this to anyone.*

Luke 9:18-21



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

The rewards of stewardship are plentiful. Stewards happily accept the call to give of themselves in response to the gracious gifts given to them. By helping others, stewards show their gratitude to God through their loving care for others.



Pastoral Council:
 Wayman Johnson,
 Chairman
 Payson Borst
 Jacqueline Brown
 Fredrick Cadek
 Nancy Durden
 Marge Glauser
 Joan Hesik
 Janet Menefee
 Gregory Wright
Finance Council:
 Robert Erikson,
 Chairman
 Leon Gagnon and
 Anna Marie Key,
 Auditors
 Lisa Solenberger,
 Secretary
 Art Wagner

Mass Intentions
 4:00 PM Mass, 7:00 AM Mass & 9:00 AM Mass
 are all said for your own personal intentions,

Weekend Offering
 June 12, 2016
 Collection \$2,884.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
 Over \$272.00
 Attendance 123
Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 337 H
O God, Almighty Father
The Offertory Hymn is 33 M
Humbly, Lord, We Worship You
The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 376 BB
Servant Song
Our Song of Praise is 552 H
Faith of Our Fathers (A Living Faith)



Lay Ministers

Saturday June 25	Sunday June 26	Sunday June 26
4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	9:00 AM Mass
Lector: Joan Hesik	Mary Key L'Esperance	Patricia Hayes
E E Ministers: Pam Ziomek	Gerard L'Esperance	Wayman Johnson
Saturday July 2	Sunday July 3	Sunday July 3
4:00 PM Vigil Mass	7:00 AM Mass	9:00 AM Mass
Lector: Tami Schaeffer	Denise Gelinis	Sheila Wagner
E E Ministers Jerry Schaeffer	Roger Gelinis	Jacqueline Brown
Refreshments June 19	Refreshments June 26	Refreshments July 3
Sheila Wagner/Patricia Hayes	Shirley Paige/Anna Marie Key	Richardean Paige/Marilu Alarcon



New Lector and EO Eucharistic Minister schedules in process. Suggestions helpful!

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

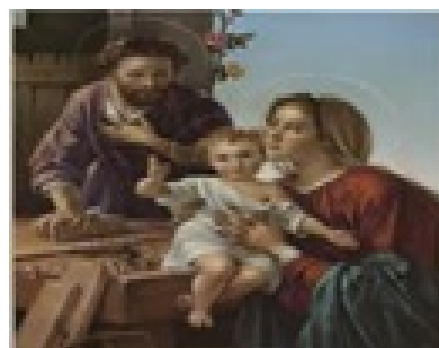
Pray for Fr. Emmanuel, Fr. Ernie and Fr. Don.

Joe Dennis, our Diaconate Candidate,

was raised in Bloomfield, New Jersey. He attended public grade school and high school, graduating in 1984. He served a 21 year career in the United States Coast Guard as a food service specialist, retiring in 2006 as a Senior Chief Petty Officer, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in Hospitality Management from American Military University. Joe married Dottie in 1986 and they have three grown children, Rebecca married to Brian, Kevin married to Erin, and Colin, as well as one grandson, Daniel, with another grandchild expected in October. Joe is a Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician and currently serves as an EMT with Orangeburg County Emergency Medical Services. He is currently a student of Saint Leo University, seeking a Master of Arts in Theology as part of the Diocese of Charleston Diaconate Formation program with ordination to the Permanent Diaconate anticipated in February of 2017. He is assigned to Saint Gerard's parish in Aiken, SC and resides in Johnston with his wife Dot and two stumpy hound dogs, Monty and Missy.

HAPPY FATHERS DAY

Joe Dennis will be contacting ushers, altar servers, lectors, EO Eucharistic Ministers and sacristans. This will be in an attempt for you and him to be familiar with each other and to assure that all those programs are operating according to policy.



Volunteer Corner Thanks

To Bob Erikson, Carroll Miller, Jackie Brown and Payson Borst for doing the landscaping last Saturday and Monday. Thanks to Veronica Barker and Wayman Johnson who are working on a date for the bazaar. Thanks to Marge Glauser for bazaar research and the outreach program.

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Tito Walter Guglielmono, Bishop Robert E. Guglielmono's older brother, who died on Saturday, June 11, in Callicoon, NY. A memorial Mass was held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, June 15, 2016, at Holy Cross Church, 9719 State Route 97, Callicoon. Bishop Guglielmono officiated. Please consider making a memorial contribution in Mr. Guglielmono's name to the Delaware Youth Center, 8 Creamery Rd, Callicoon, NY 12723 or to Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties, Inc., 800 Stony Brook Court, Newburgh, NY 12550. Notes of condolence may be sent to the Bishop at 901 Orange Grove Road, Charleston, SC, 29407.

Pray for the soul of Kenneth Ziomek who died this month.

For the soul of Shawn Riccio nephew of The Gagnons who died on 6/10/16 . He was 36 years old. He leaves a wife and three children.

ACTS has a position opening that supports our Women's Enrichment Program, 'Coffee with JoJo'. If you have questions or need more information, please call Carla at ACTS, 649-3800.

"A wedding is a day, a marriage is a lifetime!" Catholic Engaged Encounter invites you to attend an in-parish weekend, (Sat. all day and Sunday till about 3pm – no overnight accommodations provided) – which is a highly effective marriage prep program designed to meet the needs of today's engaged couples. This program will be held at St. Andrew Roman Catholic Church in Clemson, SC, Saturday, July 23 and Sunday, July 24. For more information or to register: www.cce-sc.org

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

The Tour of Mid-Life Transitions 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 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 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
themeracycenter@aol.com

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>

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.

Childcare Worker Position Opening

The individual selected will provide care and supervision for children in a daycare-type environment. Lead games and activities for multiple children, keeping them engaged. Change diapers and/or clean children up after activities. The opening is a part time position and is available immediately. It is the 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month (except Nov-Dec will be only the 2nd Thurs); 5:45 pm-8:15 pm (2.5 hrs per day). **Location is Hope Center in Graniteville SC.** Skills and abilities required: experience with children; a positive, friendly demeanor and ability to stand, kneel, bend, stoop and lift up to 30 lbs. This position supports a program that is an affiliation of ACTS, Christ Central, FamCo, and HUGS, LLC. Beginning pay \$8.00/hr. Submit resume to carla@actsofaiken.org. Additional application guidance will be provided.