

Pope Francis' General Audience: On the Invitations to Those Who Labor and Are Heavy Laden

"Sometimes our exhaustion is caused by having put our trust in things that are not essential, because we have distanced ourselves from what is really valuable in life"

Rome, Sept 14, 2016. Zenith.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

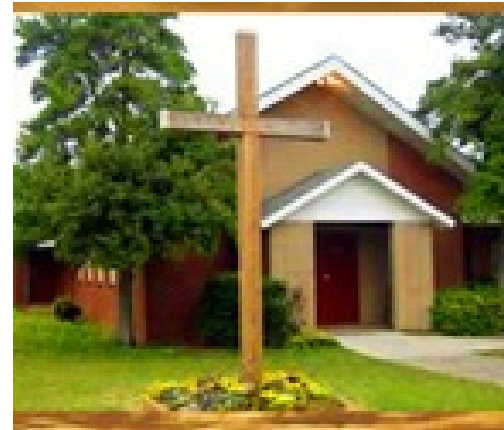
During this Jubilee, we have reflected many times on the fact that Jesus expresses Himself with unique tenderness, a sign of the presence and goodness of God. Today, we reflect on a moving passage of the Gospel (cf. *Matthew* 11:28-30), in which Jesus says: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [...] Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (vv. 28-29). The Lord's invitation is surprising: He calls to follow him simple people, who are burdened by a difficult life; He calls persons to follow him who have so many needs and He promises them that in Him they will find rest and relief. The invitation is addressed in an imperative way: "come to me," "take up my yoke" and learn from me." If only all leaders of the world could say this! Let us try to understand the meaning of these expressions.

The first imperative is "Come to me." Turning to those who are exhausted and oppressed, Jesus presents himself as the Servant of the Lord described in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. The passage of Isaiah states thus: "The Lord has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary" (50:4). To these wearied of life, the Gospel puts side by side the poor (cf. *Matthew* 11:5) and the little ones (cf. *Matthew* 18:6). They are those who cannot count on their own means, or on important friendships. They can only trust in God. Conscious of their humble and miserable condition, they know they depend on the Lord's mercy, expecting from Him the only help possible. In Jesus' invitation they finally find the answer to their waiting: by becoming His disciples they receive the promise of finding rest for their whole life. A promise that at the end of the Gospel is extended to all people: "Go therefore – Jesus says to the Apostles – and make disciples of all nations" (*Matthew* 28:19). By receiving the invitation to celebrate this Year of Grace of the Jubilee, pilgrims throughout the world cross the Door of Mercy open in Cathedrals, in Shrines, in so many churches of the world, in hospitals, in prisons. Why do they cross this Door of Mercy? To find Jesus; to find Jesus' friendship; to find the rest that only Jesus gives. This path expresses the conversion of every disciple who decides to follow Jesus. And conversion consists always in discovering the Lord's mercy. It is infinite and inexhaustible: great is the Lord's mercy! Therefore, by crossing the Holy Door we profess "that love is present in the world and that this love is more powerful than every sort of evil, in which man, humanity, the world are involved" (John Paul II, Encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, 7).

The second imperative says: "Take my yoke." In the context of the Covenant, the biblical tradition uses the image of the yoke to indicate the close bond that links the people to God and, consequently, submission to His will expressed in the Law. In controversy with the scribes and Doctors of the Law, Jesus puts *His* yoke on the disciples, in which the Law finds its fulfillment. He wishes to teach them that they will discover God's will through His person: through Jesus, not through laws and cold prescriptions which Jesus Himself condemns. Suffice it to read *Matthew's* chapter 23. He is at the center of their relation with God; He is in the heart of the relations between the disciples and places Himself as fulcrum of each one's life. Thus, by receiving "Jesus' yoke" every disciple enters into communion with Him and is rendered a participant in the mystery of His cross and of His destiny of salvation. Ensuing is the third imperative: "Learn from me." Jesus projects to His disciples a path of knowledge and of imitation. Jesus is not a teacher who imposes on others with severity burdens that He does not carry: this was the accusation He made to the Doctors of the Law. He addresses the humble and little ones, the poor and the needy because He Himself made Himself little and humble. He understands the poor and the suffering because He Himself is poor and tried by sorrows. Jesus did not follow an easy way to save humanity; on the contrary, his path was painful and difficult. As the Letter to the Philippines reminds: "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (2:8). The yoke that the poor and the oppressed bear is the same yoke that He bore before them: therefore, it is a light yoke. He bore on His back the pains and sins of the whole of humanity. Therefore, for the disciple to receive Jesus' yoke means to receive His revelation and to accept it: in Him God's mercy took on men's poverties, thus giving all the possibility of salvation. But why is Jesus capable of saying these things? Because He made Himself everything to all, close to all, to the poorest! He was a Pastor among the people, among the poor: He worked the whole day with them; Jesus was not a prince. It is bad for the Church when the Pastors become princes, far from the people, far from the poorest: this is not Jesus' spirit. Jesus reproaches these Pastors, and of them Jesus said to the people: "do what they say, but not what they do."

Dear brothers and sisters, for us too there are moments of tiredness and disappointment. Then let us remember these words of the Lord, which give us so much consolation and make us understand if we are putting our strength at the service of the good. In fact, sometimes our exhaustion is caused by having put our trust in things that are not essential, because we have distanced ourselves from what is really valuable in life. The Lord teaches us not to be afraid to follow Him, because the hope we place in Him will not be disappointed. Therefore, we are called to learn from Him what it means to live of mercy, to be instruments of mercy. To live of mercy, to be instruments of mercy: to live of mercy and to feel oneself needy of Jesus' mercy, and when we feel ourselves in need of forgiveness, of consolation, let us learn to be merciful with others. By keeping our gaze fixed on the Son of God we understand what a long way we still have to go but, at the same time, He infuses in us the joy of knowing that we are walking with Him and we are never alone – courage, therefore, courage! Let us not have taken from us the joy of being disciples of the Lord. "But Father, I am a sinner, what can I do?" "Let the Lord look at you, open your heart, feel His look upon you, His mercy, and your heart will be filled with joy, with the joy of forgiveness, if you come close and ask for forgiveness." Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the hope of living this life together with Him and with the strength of His consolation. Thank you.

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

The Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time September 18, 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

*Anyone who is trustworthy in little
things is trustworthy in great;
anyone who is dishonest in little
things is dishonest in great. If then
you are not trustworthy with money,
that tainted thing, who will trust you
with genuine riches? And if you are
not trustworthy with what is not
yours, who will give you what is
your very own? 'No servant can be
the slave of two masters: he will
either hate the first and love the
second, or be attached to the first
and despise the second. You cannot
be the slave both of God and of
money.'*

Luke 16:10-13



SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Amos 8:4-7(135C)

Responsorial:

Psalm 113:1-2,4-6,7-8

Second Reading:

1 Timothy 2:1-8

Gospel:

Luke 16:1-13

Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of September 18, 2016

Monday: Proverbs 3:27-34;

Luke 8:16-18

Tuesday: Proverbs 21:1-6,10-13;

Luke 8:19-21

Wednesday: Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13;

Matthew 9:9-13

Thursday: Ecclesiastes 1:2-11;

Luke 9:7-9

Friday: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11;

Luke 9:18-22

Saturday: Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8;

Luke 9:43b-45

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: 9 AM Thursdays

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 and Ike
 Ligons
 Joe Fulmer
 Chuck Simkin
 Joe Begic

" May the Holy Spirit make you creative In charity, preserving in your commitments, and brave in your initiatives, so that you will be able to offer your contributions to the building up of the civilization of love."
 - Pope Benedict XVI .



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 is said for George and Ellen Heim's 43rd Anniversary
 7:00 AM Mass & 11:00 AM Mass are both said for your own personal intentions,

Weekend Offering
 September 10-11, 2016
 Collection \$2,928.00
 Needed \$2,612.00
 Over \$316.00
 Attendance 164
 Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn 40 M
 God, We Praise You
 The Offertory Hymn is 495 H
 Amazing Grace
 The Communion Hymn is CHOIR 308 BB
 In This Place
 Our Song of Praise is 405 H
 How Great Thou Art



Saturday September 24
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Lector: Diane Begic
 E E Ministers: Joe Dennis/Pam Ziomek

Sunday September 25
 7:00 AM Mass
 Denise Gelinis
 Roger Gelinis

Sunday September 25
 11:00 AM Mass
 Patricia Hayes
 Wayman Johnson

Saturday October 1
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
 Lector: Tami Schaeffer
 E E Ministers: Jerry Schaeffer

Sunday October 2
 7:00 AM Mass
 Mary Kay L'Esperance
 Gerard L'Esperance

Sunday October 2
 11:00 AM Mass
 Richardean Paige
 Jacqueline Brown

Refreshments September 18
 Shirley Paige/Anna Marie Key

Refreshments September 25
 Richardean Paige/Marilu Alarcon

Refreshments October 2
 Patricia Hayes/Marge Glauser



The Legion of Mary schedule is flexible. If you want to know if they are meeting at 1:30 on any Friday call the office on Thursday and we can tell you. Please continue to pray the Rosary.
 Perpetual Novena in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Tuesdays at the 8:15 Mass



We need the support of all St Gerard parishioners to make this a successful event. VENDORS, volunteers, raffle items/baskets, books and items for a silent auction are still needed.
 Showcase and sell your creations. Clean out your house of items no longer wanted and sell them at the fall festival. Spread the word to family and friends. All spots are free to St Gerard parishioners. We ask for at least 10% donation from your sales. You may bring your own tent and set up at one of the outside spots; however, we have one shelter rented for this event with power, water, grill and eleven picnic tables. For business vendors the spots are \$50.00 for a 14 ft. X 14 ft. spot. Bake sale, book sales, raffles and silent auction will be held inside the Weeks Center in room #4.
 PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO HELP

Memorials for Gary Gilbault to St. Gerard building fund.
 Thank You

Volunteer Corner:
 We need volunteers to do some clean up of the inside of the church building. Contact the office so we know how many people we have so we can schedule a date and know how much we can get done in a days work.

St. Gerard will have a table for baked goods at the Fall Festival on October 8. Since all monies collected will be pure profit for the church, we are asking everyone to contribute a baked item or two. Goodies may be dropped off the day before the festival from 1:00 – 3:00 at the church or before 9:00 am the morning of the festival at Odell Weeks. Loaf cakes, breads and cookies were the big sellers last year. Bag cookies in groups of 3, 6 or 12. Bring all items wrapped and labeled. If you have any questions please contact Nancy Durden @ 215-8008.

The Knights of Columbus will be taking up a collection this weekend outside of church for the Columbus HOPE foundation. They will be handing out free Tootsie Rolls as a reminder of this most important program. All donations will go to help people in our community with intellectual disabilities and to support the Special Olympics of Aiken. Please be generous and show them that we care.
 Thank you.

From Joe Dennis:
Ministerial Retreat and Installation
 There will be a retreat for all parishioners who participate in the various ministries of Saint Gerard on Wednesday September 21 at 2 PM and on Friday September 23 at 6 PM. The same program will be provided each session and it is not necessary to attend both, but attendance at one is strongly encouraged. Expect the program to last approximately 90 minutes. The retreat is intended to prepare those of us who serve the parish, or who wish to serve for the upcoming year and will be followed by a prayer of installation at each of the Masses on the weekend of September 24 and 25. We encourage all with a heart to serve to attend.

Marian Eucharistic Conference
 The 4th Annual Marian Eucharistic Conference will be held in Greenville on November 4th and 5th. Please see the bulletin board or www.meconferencesc.net for more information.

Fall Festival Book Sale Donations
 If you have books that you would like to donate for the Fall Festival book sale, and just seem to keep forgetting to bring them to the church, contact Joe and Dottie Dennis at 843-743-8779 to make arrangements for pick up.

FR. Emmanuel will be on vacation after the Mass on October the 2nd. And will return for the mass on October 29. Fr. Ernie Hepner will be saying the weekend Masses during that time. We will have no weekday Masses during Father's absents. We will have a Holy Hour on Thursday 10/6 and 10/21 at 8:15 AM.

WE NEED YOU
 The Fall Festival Committee is working hard to make the second annual festival a big success and we need your help.
 Silent Auction – **NEW** items are needed for the auction, not used items! If you have any questions or would like suggestions of what to donate, contact Tami Schaeffer (642-0768) or Joan Hesik (644-4059). We are asking for volunteers the day of the festival – Saturday, October 8, at Odell Weeks – to help setup tables and display auction items starting at 8:00 a.m. Help is also needed during the auction from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 We need help on the day of event to put up the church tents, direct vendors to their spots, and help move some tables and chairs, if necessary.