

Pope Francis' General Audience: On the Two Thieves

"Jesus is truly the face of the Father's mercy. And the good thief called Him by name: 'Jesus.' It is a brief invocation, and we can all do it many times during the day: 'Jesus,' simply 'Jesus.'"

Rome, September 28, 2016. Zenit.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

The words that Jesus pronounces during His Passion find their culmination in forgiveness:

Jesus *forgives*: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). They are not just words, because they become a concrete act of forgiveness offered to the "good thief," who was beside Him. Saint Luke talks about *two evildoers* crucified with Jesus, who turn to Him with opposite attitudes.

The first insults Him, as all the people insulted Him, as the leaders of the people did, but this poor man, driven by despair, says: "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" (Luke 23:39). This cry testifies to the anguish of man in face of the mystery of death and the tragic awareness that only God can be the liberating answer: therefore, it is unthinkable that the Messiah, the one sent by God, can be on the cross without doing anything to save Himself. And they did not understand this. They did not understand the mystery of Jesus' *sacrifice*. And, instead, Jesus has saved us by *staying* on the cross. All of us know that it is not easy to "stay on the cross," on our small crosses of every day. He stayed on this great cross, in this great suffering, and He saved us there; He showed us His omnipotence there and He forgave us there. Fulfilled there was His self-giving of love; from it flows forever our salvation. By dying on the cross, innocent between two criminals, He attests that God's salvation can reach any man in any condition, even the most negative and painful. God's salvation is for all; no one is excluded. It is offered to all.

Hence, the Jubilee is a time of grace and mercy for all, good and evil, those who are healthy and those who suffer. Remember that parable that Jesus tells on the celebration of the marriage of the son of a powerful man of the earth: when those invited did not want to go, he said to his servants: "Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find" (Matthew 22:9). We are all called: the *good and the evil*. The Church is not just for the good and for those who seem to be good or believe they are good; the Church is for all, and even preferably for the evil, because the Church is mercy. And this time of grace and mercy reminds us that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ! (cf. Romans 8:39). To those who are nailed on a hospital bed, to those living closed in a prison, to those who are trapped by wars, I say: look at the Crucified One; God is with you, He stays with you on the cross and offers Himself to all of us as Savior. To you who suffer so much I say, Jesus is crucified for you, for us, for all. Allow the strength of the Gospel to penetrate your heart and to console you; may it give you hope and the profound certainty that *no one* is excluded from His forgiveness. But you can ask me: "But tell me, Father, does one who has done the worst things in life have the possibility of being forgiven?" Yes! Yes, no one is excluded from God's forgiveness. He must only approach Jesus repentant and with the desire to be embraced by Him.

This was the first evildoer. *The other is the so-called "good thief."* His words are a wonderful model of repentance, a concentrated catechesis to learn to ask Jesus for forgiveness. First, he turns to his companion: "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" (Luke 23:40). Thus he highlights the point of departure of repentance: *fear* of God, no: filial fear of God. It is not fear but that respect that is due to God because He is God. It is a filial respect because He is Father. The good thief recalls the fundamental attitude that opens to trust in God: the awareness of His omnipotence and His infinite goodness. It is this confident respect that helps to make room for God and to entrust oneself to His mercy.

Then, the good thief declares Jesus' innocence and confesses his guilt openly: "We indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:41). Therefore Jesus is there, on the cross, to be with the guilty: through this closeness He offers them salvation. What is a scandal for the leaders and for the first thief, for those who were there, who made a mockery of Jesus, this is, instead, the foundation of the latter's faith. And thus the good thief becomes a witness of Grace; the unthinkable has happened: God has loved me to such a point that He died on the cross for me. The faith itself of this man is the fruit of Christ's grace: his eyes contemplate in the Crucified One God's love for him, poor sinner. It is true, he was a thief, he was a robber, he robbed all his life. But at the end, repentant of what he had done, looking at Jesus so good and merciful, he succeeded in *stealing* Heaven for himself: this was <indeed> a good thief!

Finally, the good thief turns directly to Jesus, invoking His help: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom" (Luke 23:42). He calls Him by His name, "Jesus," with confidence, and so he confesses what that name indicates: "the Lord saves": this is what the name "Jesus" means. That man asks Jesus to remember him. How much tenderness there is in this expression, how much humanity! It is the human being's need not to be abandoned, that God be always close to him. Thus, a man sentenced to death becomes a model of the Christian who entrusts himself to Jesus. A man sentenced to death is a model for us, a model for a man, for a Christian who entrusts himself to Jesus; and also a model of the Church that so often in the liturgy invokes the Lord saying: "Remember ... Remember your love ..."

While the good thief speaks of the future: "when you *enter* into your Kingdom," Jesus' answer is not long in coming; he speaks of the present: "*today* you will be with me in Paradise" (v. 43). In the hour of the cross, Jesus' salvation reaches its culmination, and His promise to the good thief reveals the fulfilment of His mission: that is to save sinners. At the beginning of His ministry, in the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus proclaimed "release to the captives" (Luke 4:18); at Jericho, in the house of the public sinner Zacchaeus, He declared that "the Son of man - namely He - came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:9). On the cross, His last act confirms the realization of this salvific plan. From the beginning to the end He revealed Himself Mercy, He revealed Himself the definitive and unrepeatable incarnation of the Father's love. Jesus is truly the face of the Father's mercy. And the good thief called Him by name: "Jesus." It is a brief invocation, and we can all do it many times during the day: "Jesus," simply "Jesus." And do so during the whole day

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:
Habakkuk 1:2-3;2:2-4(141C)

Responsorial:
Psalm 95:1-2,6-7,8-9

Second Reading:
2 Timothy 1:6-8,13-14

Gospel:
Luke 17:5-10
Today's Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of October 2, 2016

Monday: Galatians 1:6-12;
Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday: Galatians 1:13-24;
Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday: Galatians 2:1-2,7-14;
Luke 11:1-4

Thursday: Galatians 3:1-5;
Luke 11:5-13

Friday: Galatians 3:7-14;
Luke 11:15-26

Saturday: Galatians 3:22-29;
Luke 11:27-28

The Twenty Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time October 2, 2016

Mission Statement

Called to be a People for Others

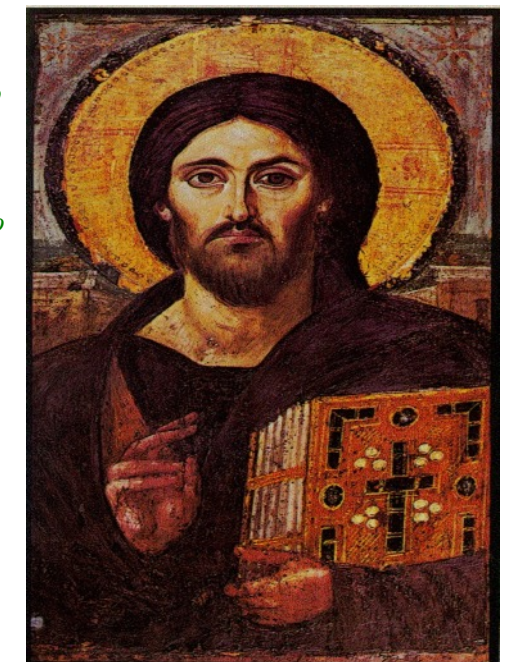
Vision Statement

*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

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith like a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it would obey you. 'Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal at once"? Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper ready; fasten your belt and wait on me while I eat and drink. You yourself can eat and drink afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are useless servants: we have done no more than our duty." '

Luke 17:5-10



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

Mary shows us the meaning of following the will of God. She gave her life completely to God with absolute trust and a faith-filled open heart. As stewards, we pray for her guidance as we strive to become faithful disciples of her son, Jesus.



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

Mass Intentions
 4:00 PM Mass for the soul of Spencer Harding Jr. From: P. Miles, 7:00 AM Mass Is said for your own personal intentions, 11:00 AM Mass is a Mass of thanksgiving for and by A. Lauer

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

Weekend Offering
 September 24-25, 2016

Collection	\$2,625.50
Needed	\$2,612.00
Over	\$13.50

Attendance 137
 Stewardship a way of life

The Gathering Hymn	606 H
The Church's One Foundation	
The Offertory Hymn is	760 H
One Bread, One Body	
The Communion Hymn is	CHOIR 591 BB
All Good Gifts	
Our Song of Praise is	556 H
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God	



Lay Ministers

Saturday October 8 4:00 PM Vigil Mass Lector: Joan Hesik E E Ministers: Joe Dennis/Elleen Heim	Sunday October 9 7:00 AM Mass Denise Gelinis Joe Dennis/Roger Gelinis	Sunday October 9 11:00 AM Mass Paula Thurston Joe Dennis/Mike Solenberger
Saturday October 15 4:00 PM Vigil Mass Lector: David Didimamoff E E Ministers: Joe Dennis/Barbara Dixon	Sunday October 16 7:00 AM Mass Mary Kay L'Esperance Gerard L'Esperance	Sunday October 16 11:00 AM Mass Janet Menefee Wayman Johnson

Refreshments October 2 Patricia Hayes/Marge Glauser	Refreshments October 9 Janet Menefee/Joan Lacombe	Refreshments October 16 Jackie Brown/Jeanette Coleman
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Perpetual Novena in honor of Our Lady of the



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

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 selter 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

Deacon Bob Waters will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of his ordination on October 6th at the 5:30 PM Mass at St. Mary's Help of Christians. Deacon Bob served part time here at St. Gerard under Fathers Ed and Charles. Please join him in person and in prayer.



Volunteer Corner: Thanks to Fred and Nancy Cadek for finding, purchasing and shipping Fr. Anthony's Chasuble. And to all that contributed to the cause.

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.

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 until Father's return. We will have a Holy Hour on Thursday 10/6 and Friday 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.

Life Chains will be held across South Carolina on Oct. 2. The peaceful and public witness takes place for 90 minutes and participants hold signs and pray for the nation to end abortion. Life Chains with alternate dates are noted.
 For more information about Life Chains in South Carolina, call Deb Marks, state director, at 803-920-4933 or visit www.lifechain.net.
 AIKEN-118 Bypass (Rudy Mason Highway) at 183 Old Wagner Road, 2:50-4 p.m.; Rhonda Terry, 803-643-1834

Aiken Mid-day Lions 9th annual Wine Tasting: Ticket Presale \$45 Each. Heavy Hors d'oeuvres and silent auction.
 Woodside Plantation CC, October 4th, 5:30–7:30 PM Contact: 803 226-1521 Lion Kim

America needs Fatima rosary rally is on 15 October this year. Please mark it in your calendar. We had a small group show up last year. The prior year we had a large group. Lets do that again. More info will be coming.

Columbus HOPE Foundation (Helping Other People Every Day) Sincere thanks to St. Mary's, St. Gerard's, Our Lady of the Valley and our parishioners for their generosity. The Columbus HOPE Foundation Tootsie Roll drive was very successful. \$2,315.27 was collected. This money along with the upcoming Tootsie Roll drive will help people in our community with Intellectual Disabilities, and also help support the Special Olympics of Aiken. Once Again, Thank you for your Generosity.

Feed the Valley Weekend, Thank you and bless your gifts of food.

The picture of the Chasuble for Fr. Anthony's 40th Anniversary is on the bulletin board in the hallway

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.

Final Fall Festival prep, bake goods collection and planning for set up is at 5:00 PM on Friday October 7th in the church hall we need help with sorting books etc. Come help. Please!! Thank You