

Pope Francis General Audience: Be Perfect (Merciful) as Your Heavenly Father Is Perfect (Merciful).

“St Luke specifies that perfection is merciful love: to be perfect means to be merciful”

Rome, Sept 21, 2016, Zenit,

Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

We heard the passage of Luke’s Gospel (6:36-38) from which the motto of this Extraordinary Holy Year is taken: Merciful as the Father. The complete expression is: “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (v. 36). It is not a slogan for effect, but a commitment of life. To understand this expression well, we can compare it with the parallel one in Matthew’s Gospel, where Jesus says: “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (5:48). In the so-called Sermon on the Mount, which opens with the Beatitudes, the Lord teaches that perfection consists in love, fulfillment of all the precepts of the Law. In this same perspective, Saint Luke specifies that perfection is merciful love: to be perfect means to be merciful. Is a person who is not merciful perfect? No! Goodness and perfection are rooted in mercy. God is certainly perfect. However, if we consider Him in that way, it becomes impossible for men to strive to that absolute perfection. Instead, having Him before our eyes as merciful enables us to understand better in what His perfection consists and it spurs us to be like Him, full of love, of understanding and of mercy.

But I wonder: are Jesus’ words realistic? Is it really possible to love as God loves and to be merciful as He is?

If we look at the history of salvation, we see that the whole of God’s revelation is an incessant and tireless love for men: God is like a father or a mother who loves with unfathomable love and pours it out abundantly on every creature. Jesus’ death on the cross is the summit of God’s history of love for man. A love that is so great that only God can realize it. It is evident that, compared to this love that has no measure, our love will always be defective. However, when Jesus asks us to be merciful as the Father, He does not think of the quantity! He asks His disciples to become sign, channels, and witnesses of His mercy.

And the Church cannot but be the sacrament of mercy of God in the world, at all times and towards the whole of humanity. Hence, every Christian is called to be a witness of mercy, and this happens on the path of holiness. We think of the many Saints that became merciful because they let their heart be filled by divine mercy. They gave flesh to the Lord’s love, pouring it out on the many needs of suffering humanity. In this flowering of so many forms of charity it is possible to perceive the reflections of the merciful face of Christ.

We ask ourselves: What does it mean for disciples to be merciful? Jesus explains it with two verbs: “forgive” (v. 37) and ‘give” (v. 38).

Mercy is expressed, first of all, in forgiveness: “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven” (v.37). Jesus does not intend to subvert the course of human justice, however, He reminds the disciples that to have fraternal relations it is necessary to suspend judgments and condemnations. Forgiveness, in fact, is the pillar that governs the life of the Christian community, because in it is shown the gratuitousness of the love with which God loved us first. A Christian must forgive! — but why? Because he has been forgiven. All of us who are here, today, in the Square, have been forgiven. No one, in his life, has not been in need of God’s forgiveness. And because we have been forgiven, we must forgive. We recite it every day in the Our Father: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,” that is, forgive the offenses, forgive many things, because we have been forgiven so many offenses, so many sins. And so it is easy to forgive: if God has forgiven me, why should I not forgive others? Am I greater than God? This pillar of forgiveness shows us the gratuitousness of the love of God, who loved us first. It is a mistake to judge and condemn a brother that sins, not because one does not want to recognize the sin, but because to condemn the sinner breaks the bond of fraternity with him and scorns God’s mercy, who, instead, does not want to give up on any of His children. We do not have the power to condemn our brother who errs; we are not above him: instead we have the duty to restore him to the dignity of a child of the Father and to accompany him on his journey of conversion.

To His Church, to us, Jesus indicates a second pillar: “give.” To forgive is the first pillar; to give is the second pillar. “Give, and it will be given to you [...] For the measure you give will be the measure you get back” (v. 38). God gives well beyond our merits, but He will be even more generous with all those who on earth were generous. Jesus does not say what will happen to those that do not give, but the image of the “measure” constitutes an admonition: with the measure of love we give, it is we ourselves who decide how we will be judged, how we will be loved. If we look well there is a coherent logic: in the measure that one receives from God, one gives to a brother, and in the measure in which one gives to a brother, one receives from God! Therefore, merciful love is the only way to go. How much need we all have of being more merciful, of not running down others, of not judging, of not “plucking” others with criticisms, envies and jealousies. We must forgive, be merciful, live our life in love. This love enables Jesus’ disciples to not lose the identity received from Him, and to recognize themselves as children of the same Father. Thus, in the love they practice in life, that Mercy is reverberated that will have no end (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1-12). But do not forget this: mercy and gift; forgiveness and gift, thus the heart widens, it widens in love. Instead, egoism and anger render the heart small, which hardens like a stone. What do you prefer, a heart of stone or a heart full of love? If you prefer a heart full of love, be merciful!

St. Gerard Catholic Church



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

The Twenty Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time September 25, 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

SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading:

Amos 6:1a,4-7(138C)

Responsorial:

Psalms 146:7,8-9,9-10

Second Reading:

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Gospel:

Luke 16:19-31

Today’s Missal

Lectionary Readings for the week of September 25, 2016

Monday: Job 1:6-22;

Luke 9:46-50

Tuesday: Job 3:1-3,11-17,20-23;

Luke 9:51-56

Wednesday: Job 9:1-12,14-16;

Luke 9:57-62

Thursday: Daniel 7:9-10,13-14;

John 1:47-51

Friday: Job 38:1,12-21;40:3-5;

Luke 10:13-16

Saturday: Job 42:1-3,5-6,12-17;

Luke 10:17-24

*There was a rich man who used to dress in
purple and fine linen and feast
magnificently every day. And at his gate
there used to lie a poor man called Lazarus,
covered with sores, who longed to fill
himself with what fell from the rich man's
table. Even dogs came and licked his sores.*

*Now it happened that the poor man died
and was carried away by the angels into
Abraham's embrace. The rich man also died
and was buried. In his torment in Hades he
looked up and saw Abraham a long way off
with Lazarus in his embrace. So he cried
out, "Father Abraham, pity me and send
Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water
and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in
these flames." Abraham said, "My son,
remember that during your life you had
your fill of good things, just as Lazarus his
fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here
while you are in agony. Luke 16:19-25*



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
 Lignons
 Joe Fulmer
 Chuck Simkin

" 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

Mass Intentions
 4:00 PM Mass is said for the soul of Carmine DeMeo from: the Pedleys, 7:00 AM Mass & 11:00 AM Mass are said for your own personal intentions,

Weekend Offering
 September 17-18, 2016

Collection	\$1,698.00
Needed	\$2,612.00
Short	\$914.00
Attendance	103

Stewardship a way of life

<i>The Gathering Hymn</i>	29 M
<i>Beautiful Savior</i>	
<i>The Offertory Hymn is</i>	757 H
<i>Gift of Finest Wheat</i>	
<i>The Communion Hymn is</i>	CHOIR 783 H
<i>Just A Closer Walk With Thee</i>	
<i>Our Song of Praise is</i>	637 H
<i>This Is The Day</i>	

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



Lector: Tami Schaeffer
E E Ministers: Jerry Schaeffer

Lay Ministers
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

Saturday October 8
 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
Lector: Joan Hesik
E E Ministers: Joe Dennis/ElLEN Heim

Sunday October 9
 7:00 AM Mass
 Denise Gelinis
 Joe Dennis/Roger Gelinis

Sunday October 9
 11:00 AM Mass
 Richardean Paige
 Jacqueline Brown

Refreshments September 25
 Richardean Paige/Marilu Alarcon

Refreshments October 2
 Patricia Hayes/Marge Glauser

Refreshments October 9
 Janet Menefee/Joan Lacombe



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: Thanks to Joan Hesik, Joan Lacombe, Nancy Durden, Cathie Ciani, Lisa Solenberger, Veronica Andreassen-Barker, Darla & Kamilia Alacron and all who contributed to Gary Gilbault's rosary, vigil and funeral.

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 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.

The Augusta area's only Catholic article and book store, Sainly Gifts, will have its special 25th anniversary grand re-opening celebration on Saturday, October 1st beginning at 10:00 a.m. Sainly Gifts is located in LaPetite Plaza at 3857 Rose Lane in Martinez, and is conveniently located off Bobby Jones Expressway. Catholic Book store that has served the CSRA for 25 years. For more information, call Sainly Gifts at 706-863-1235.

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

Fall Festival Committee meeting Tuesday September 27 at 5:00 PM
 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.

Bearing in mind our nation's challenges and the particularly urgent need for wise, moral, civic leadership in addressing them, the Call to Prayer Intentions will be adapted beginning Friday, September 23, 2016 - Friday, November 11, 2016 to highlight certain time-sensitive matters of national concern. This is being done in collaboration with Catholics from around the country. In addition to an invitation to fast on Fridays, participants will be encouraged to pray one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be for the week's intention and for our civic leaders and upcoming elections.