



St. Gerard Catholic Church

640 Edrie Street, NE
Aiken, SC 29801
803 649-3203

Rev. Emmanuel O. Andinam, Pastor
Deacon Dr. Charles Cooper, Retired

Mission 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.

The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time *February 11, 2024*

Mass Schedule

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday – 8:15 AM

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 PM

Sunday - 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM

First Friday: Benediction & Divine Mercy Chaplet following 8:15 AM Mass.

Confessions: Tuesday & Thursday after Mass and by appointment

Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals: By appointment

Religious Education: Contact office for information

RCIA: Contact office 803-649-3203

Bible Study: Fridays 10:00 AM in the church hall

Website: www.stgerardinaiken.org

Readings for The Week

Sunday

Lev 13:1-2,44-46; Ps 32:1-2,5,11; 1 Cor 10:11-11:1; Mk 1:40-45

Monday

Jms 1:1-11; Ps 119: 67,68,71,72,75,76; Mk 8:11-13

Tuesday

Jms 1:12-18; Ps 94: 12-13a,14-15,18-19; Mk 8:14-21

Ash Wednesday

Jol 2:12-18; , 12-13,14 & 17; 2 Cor 5:20-6:2, Mt6:1-6,16-18

Thursday

Due 30:15-20; Ps 1:1-2,3,4 & 6; Lk 9:22-25

Friday

Isa 58:1-9a; Ps 51:3-4,5-6ab,18-19; Mt 9:14-15

Saturday

Isa 58:9b-14; Ps 86:1-2,3-4,5-6; Lk 5:27-32

Mass Intentions

Saturday, February 10

4:00 PM - John Holder (D)

Sunday, February 11

8:00 AM -For our Parish

10:00 AM - For our Parish

Tuesday, February 13 - 8:15 AM -For our Parish

Thursday, February 15- 8:15 AM -For our Parish

Friday, February 16 - 8:15 AM -For our Parish

Ministers

February 14 Ash Wednesday

8:15 AM	4:00 PM
Peter Srednicki	Diane Begic
Betsy Kenney	Mary Rose

<u>February 17</u>	<u>February 18</u>	<u>February 18</u>
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4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Michele Bullington	Denise Gelinias	Pat Hayes
Ellen Heim	Betsy Kenney	Jackie Brown
Joan Hesik	Betsy Kenney	

Pray for our sick

Rosa Johnson, Paula Thurston, Ellen Heim, Rich Borst
Betty Hyslop, Angelo Perrino, John Burke, Chuck
Kenney,

Anointing of the Sick

The Rite of Anointing tells us there is no need to wait until a person is at the point of death to receive the Sacrament. A careful judgment about the serious nature of the illness is sufficient. In this Sacrament, the Holy Spirit gives us peace and courage to deal with the difficulties that accompany serious illness and our frailty. To receive the Sacrament of Anointing, contact the office:

Communion for Hospital/Homebound

If you would like Holy Communion brought to someone in the hospital or confined to home, please contact the church office: 803-649-3203

Legion of Mary

Legion of Mary meetings are on Tuesdays at 2:00 PM in the Conference Room. The Aiken Curia meetings are the 2nd Saturday of the month in the Parish Social Hall.

Our Lady of the Valley

St. Gerard food collection for OLV is the weekend of February 17-18. The focus food is hot cereal.

Bible Study

Classes are on Fridays at 10:00 AM in the church hall. If you are unable to attend the classes in person, you can participate by teleconference. The phone number is: 1-978-990-5273 and the Access Code is 236101#

Weekly Collection February 3-4

Budget	\$2,894.00
Collected	\$3,837.00
Short/Over	+\$943.00
YTD +/-	+\$1,489.00

Second Collections:

February 11 - Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe

February 18 - Black and Indian Missions

Tabernacle Candle

A special candle should be kept alight near the tabernacle to indicate and honor the presence of Christ. If you would like to make a donation in honor or in memory of a loved one, please call the church office. The donation is \$25. The candle for the month of February is offered for the intentions of the Bullington and Bittner families.

Bulletin Deadline

Information to be included in the bulletin must be submitted to the office no later than Tuesday prior to the Sunday bulletin.

Family Ministry and Faith Formation

February 16, 2024 - 5:30 PM
Food: PIZZA (no meat!)
Faith Formation: Lent & Burying Alleluias

Thanks from the Farm Workers

Sister Migdalia and the Farm Workers expressed much gratitude for the generosity shown by the people of St. Gerard for the many gifts of bedding supplies.

February 11, 2024
Deacon Chuck's Corner



A Reflection on Healing the Outcast-
Mark 1:40-45

Leprosy was a living death. The sufferer was isolated from family and community, and had to cry out 'Unclean, unclean!' when anyone approached. Leprosy was considered as making a person unclean. The law required that a leper stay away from others and be excluded both socially and religiously.

In today's gospel, the leper breaches this code by approaching Jesus, and Jesus breaches it by touching the leper. Jesus affirms the desire of the man with leprosy and heals him. Having affected a cure, Jesus also complies with the law in sending the man to the priest to formalize his re-instatement into the community.

Jesus reaches for the untouchable and reconciles the outcast. After the leper is healed, he becomes a disciple – he spreads the word – he becomes a powerful witness to Jesus' goodness. How can we be heralds of hope and healing to all those who may be grieving loss of loved one, and those who are suffering from illness and those who are marginalized or outcasts?

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me approach you with the confident trust of this leper in my daily prayer. I pray for the same attitude and ask you to touch me and make me clean. Help me to be aware of great things that have been done for me so I too can give gratitude for them in my prayer life and my witness to God's goodness. Amen.

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already come, and I unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.

Ash Wednesday's Significance

Among the beautiful, meaningful and solemn ceremonies of the Catholic Church is the gathering of the faithful on Ash Wednesday.

This special day begins our Lenten journey. It is the start of 40 days of prayer, penance and almsgiving as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. But what is the significance of ashes?

The Church has long used ashes as an outward sign of grief, a mark of humility, mourning, penance and morality. The Old Testament is filled with stories describing the use of ashes in such a manner. In the Book of Job, Job repented before God: "Therefore, I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes". Daniel "turned to the Lord God, to seek help, in prayer and petition, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes". Jonah preached conversion and repentance to the people of Nineveh: "When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in the ashes".

Ashes were imposed on the early catechumens when they began their preparation for baptism. Confessed sinners were marked with ashes as part of the public penitential process. Other baptized Christians began asking to receive ashes in a manner similar to catechumens and penitents. Christian men had ashes sprinkled on their heads while ashes were used to trace the cross on the forehead of women. Thus the use of ashes as the sign of penance, in readiness for Easter, was becoming a Churchwide practice. During the papacy of St. Gregory the Great, the practice was further expanded. This same rite of distributing ashes on the Wednesday that begins Lent was recommended for universal use by Pope Urban II at the Synod of Benevento in 1091.

So when we go to Mass on Ash Wednesday and receive the blessed ashes on our forehead, we are repeating a somber, pious act that Catholics have been undergoing for over 1,500 years. Like all those before us, we unhesitatingly embrace this invitation to sanctity, this time to turn away from sin. We are part of that great cloud of witnesses who through all the ages have donned the ashes, publicly acknowledging that we are Christians, Christians who have sinned and seek to repent. We acknowledge that "we are dust and to dust we shall return."



The Catholic Community of St Gerard



St. Gerard's Mercy Tree

On a hill called Calvary
Stands an endless mercy tree
Every broke and weary soul
Find your rest and be made whole.

During Lent, St Gerard's Mercy Tree will hold your personal petitions. During the Prayer of the Faithful, we will ask the Lord to hear those petitions.

Petition tags are available on the table at the front of the church under the hymn board. Please write your petition on the tag and place it in the basket provided. The tag will be placed on the tree for you during the week.

At the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, the petition tags will become one with the new fire from which the paschal candle is lit for the first time.



Pope Francis' General Audience: Cycle of Catechesis. Vices and Virtues. 7. Sorrow

Rome: Wednesday, 7 February 2024

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

In our catechesis on vices and virtues, today we will look at a rather ugly vice, *sorrow*, understood as a despondency of the soul, a constant affliction that prevents man from feeling joy at his existence.

First and foremost, it must be noted that, concerning sorrow, the Fathers drew an important distinction: it is this. There is a sorrow that is appropriate to Christian life, and that with God's grace can be changed into joy: obviously, this must not be rejected and forms part of the path of conversion. But there is a second type of sorrow that *creeps into the soul and prostrates it in a state of despondency*: it is this second kind of sorrow that must be fought, resolutely and with every strength because it comes from the evil one. This distinction is found also in Saint Paul, who wrote to the Corinthians: "Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death" (2 Cor 7:10).

There is, therefore, a friendly sorrow, that leads us to salvation. Think of the prodigal son of the parable: when he reaches the depths of his degeneracy, he feels great bitterness, and this prompts him to come to his senses and to decide to return home to his father. It is a grace to lament over one's sins, to remember the state of grace from which we have fallen, to weep because we have lost the purity in which God dreamed of us.

But there is a second sorrow, which is instead an *ailment of the soul*. It arises in the human heart when a desire or hope vanishes. Here we can refer to the account of the disciples of Emmaus, in the Gospel of Luke. Those two disciples leave Jerusalem with a disappointed heart, and they confide to the stranger who at one point accompanies them: "We had hoped that he – Jesus – was the one to redeem Israel". The dynamic of sorrow is linked to the *experience of loss*, the experience of loss. In the heart of man, hopes arise that are sometimes dashed. It can be the desire to possess something that we are unable to obtain; but it can also be something important, such as an emotional loss. When this happens, it is as if man's heart falls from a precipice, and the sentiments he feels are discouragement, weakness of the spirit, depression, and anguish. We all go through ordeals that generate sorrow in us because life makes us conceive dreams that are then shattered. In this situation, some, after a time of turmoil, rely on hope; but others wallow in melancholy, allowing it to fester in their hearts. Does one take pleasure in this? Sorrow is like *the pleasure of non-pleasure*; it is like taking a bitter candy, without sugar, and sucking that candy. Sorrow is taking pleasure in non-pleasure.

The monk Evagrius recounts that all vices aim at a pleasure, however ephemeral it may be, while sadness enjoys the opposite: of *lulling oneself into endless sorrow*. Certain protracted griefs, where a person continues to expand the void of one who is no longer there, are not proper to life in the Spirit. Certain resentful bitterness, where a person always has a claim in mind that makes them take on the guise of the victim, does not produce a healthy life in us, let alone a Christian one. There is something in everyone's past that needs to be healed. Sorrow, from being a natural emotion, can turn into an evil state of mind.

It is a devious demon, that of sorrow. The fathers of the desert described it as a worm of the heart, which erodes and hollows out its host. This is a good image: it lets us understand. A worm in the heart that consumes and hollows out its host. We must beware of this sorrow, and think that Jesus brings us the joy of resurrection. But what must I do when I am sad? Stop and look: is this a good sorrow? Is it a sorrow that is not so good? And react according to the nature of the sorrow. Do not forget that sorrow can be a very bad thing that leads us to pessimism, that leads us to a selfishness that is difficult to cure.

We must beware of this sorrow and think that Jesus brings us the joy of resurrection. Life may be full of contradictions, of defeated desires, of unrealized dreams, of lost friendships, but thanks to Jesus' resurrection we can believe that *all will be saved*. Jesus rose again not only for Himself, but also for us, to *redeem all the happiness* that has remained unfulfilled in our lives. Faith casts out fear, and the resurrection of Christ removes sadness like the stone from the tomb. Every Christian's day is an exercise in resurrection. Georges Bernanos, in his novel *Diary of a Country Priest*, has the parish priest of Torcy say this: "The Church has joy, all that joy that is reserved for this sad world. What you have done against her, you have done against joy". And another French writer, León Bloy, left us this phrase: "There is only one sadness, [...] that of not being holy". May the Spirit of the risen Jesus help us to defeat sorrow with holiness.