



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 First Sunday of Lent *February 18, 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

Gn 9:8-15; Ps 25:4-5,6-7,8-9; 1 Pt 3:18-22; Mk 1:12-15

Monday

Lv 19:1-2,11-18; Ps 19:8,9,10,15; Mt 25:31-46

Tuesday

Is 55:10-11; Ps 34:4-5,6-7,16-17,18-19; Mt 6:7-15

Wednesday

Jon 3:1-10; Ps 51:3-4,12-13,18-19; Lk 11:29-32

Thursday St. Peter The Apostle

1 Pt 5:1-4; Ps 23:1-3a,4,5,6; Mt 16:13-19

Friday

Ez 18:21-28; Ps 130:1-2,3-4,5-7a,7bc-8; Mt 5:20-26

Saturday

Dt 26:16-19; Ps 119:1-2,4-5,7-8; Mt 5:43-48

Mass Intentions

Saturday, February 17

4:00 PM - For our Parish

Sunday, February 18

8:00 AM -For our Parish

10:00 AM - For our Parish

Tuesday, February 20 - 8:15 AM -For our Parish

Thursday, February 22- 8:15 AM -Tony & Betty
DiStefano

Friday, February 23- 8:15 AM -For our Parish

Ministers

<u>February 24</u>	<u>February 25</u>	<u>February 25</u>
4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Tony DaVino	MK L'Esperance	Janet Menefee
Mary Rose	Betsy Kenney	Wayman Johnson
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 this weekend. 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 10-11

Budget	\$2,894.00
Collected	\$4,339.35
Short/Over	+\$1,445.35
YTD +/-	+\$2,802.35

Second Collection

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.

Questions?

Fig Sunday. Spv Wednesday. Maundy Thursday

Many of us will read these titles and wonder what they mean. If this is the case, then come join us as Carole King takes us deep into the mysterious drama of the Triduum, the three-day long Liturgy that is "the summit of the Liturgical Year" (USCCB.org).

The talk will be on **Friday, March 8 at 6:30 PM** in the church hall, following a Pot Luck dinner at 5:00 PM. A sign-up sheet for the Pot Luck dinner is on the stand at the back of the church.

Finance Council Meeting, Wednesday, February 28, at 10:30 am, Conference Room.

February 18, 2024
Deacon Chuck's Corner



A Reflection on Wilderness Times –
Mark 1:12-15

In today's gospel, we see how Jesus is tempted in the wilderness before he can begin his preaching ministry. Jesus' wilderness is the place of danger, one of being tempted off one's path, but also finding the strength of God. After being 'tempted by Satan' coming through his testing totally unscathed, Jesus finds God's path for him in the wilderness. Jesus demonstrated his great power through victory over Satan and his temptations. This should encourage us as we face our own temptations. With his help, we can stand up to anything.

Now Jesus is ready to go into battle with the forces of darkness by urging people to repent and to turn aside from all the darkness of the Evil One – manifested in sin, in sickness, and in demonic possession.

As Lent begins might we all promise God to be more faithful to our quiet space and time which invites us to come closer to God and entrusting our life to God's care. Prayer can be a wilderness time. With practice, it introduces us to the peace of God in Christ - the harmony of the desert of Jesus - and the place of purification and rededication to God.

Prayer: Lord, come with me into my wilderness. Reveal to me where addiction to power, possession and self-gratification choke my path. Only when I am free from these can I be good news to others. Help me rededicate my life to God and to the Holy Spirit's prompting. 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.

The Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle February 22

The feast of the Chair of St. Peter has nothing to do with a piece of furniture. The "chair" symbolizes the authority of St Peter and his successors who have served the Church of Jesus Christ as the Bishop of Rome (the Pope). In Rome's St. Peter's Basilica, there is a chair enshrined in the Altar of the Chair of St. Peter, a symbol representing the 2,000-year-old papacy and unity the Pope continues to bring to Catholics around the world.

The use of the term chair in the feast day comes from the Latin term cathedra, meaning the seat of government. But how did such a feast day ever get started? We need to go back to the time of Jesus for the answer.

According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus asks the Apostles, "Who do you say that I am?". The only response Jesus acknowledged was that of Peter, who said that Jesus was the son of the living God. Jesus said to Peter, "Blessed art you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father". Peter's answer is heavenly inspired, and Peter is singled out among the apostles to be the rock of Christ's Church on earth. According to Jesus, the Church will be so rock solid that "the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it".

Following the Resurrection, Jesus confirms Peter's primacy over the other apostles as well as authority over His Church. He gives Peter the keys to the kingdom, telling him: to "Feed my lambs.... Feed my sheep". This authority given to Peter is meant to be passed on to each of his successors. Jesus did not intend for the Church to end with Peter.

On this feast day, the universal Church acknowledges that St. Peter was the first pope and that his mission continues through the Holy Father today. Simply stated, that mission is to care for the people of God; to carry on the customs, rituals, teachings, and truths of Jesus; and to uphold the unity of His Church.

This day is not just about apostolic succession in respect to the pope and the bishops. Among the laity, it symbolizes an unspoken confidence that the Church of Jesus does not change from age to age; that the truths of the Gospel still form the basis of our faith; that these eternal truths are reflected in every Catholic parish and in every Mass. It is a confidence that the leader of our Church adheres to and will never deny the precepts and principles of the Church of Jesus. We firmly believe that we are part of the mystical body of Christ, a holy people, a holy priesthood.

Pope Francis' General Audience: Cycle of Catechesis. Vices and Virtues. 8. *Acedia*

Rome: Wednesday, 14 February 2024

Dear brothers and sisters,

Among all the capital sins there is one that is often overlooked, perhaps because of its name, which is often incomprehensible to many: I am talking about *acedia*. Therefore, in the list of vices, the term *acedia* is often substituted by another, much more commonly used: sloth, or laziness. In reality, laziness is an effect more than a cause. When a person is idle, indolent, apathetic, we say he is lazy. But as the wisdom of the ancient desert fathers teaches us, often the root of this laziness is *acedia*, which from its Greek origin literally means a “lack of care”.

It is a very dangerous temptation, which one must not joke about. It is as though those who fall victim to it are crushed by a desire for death: they feel disgust at everything; the relationship with God becomes boring to them; and even the holiest acts, those that in the past warmed their hearts, now appear entirely useless to them. A person begins to regret the passing of time, and the youth that is irretrievably behind them.

Acedia is defined as the “noonday demon”: it grips us in the middle of the day, when fatigue is at its peak and the hours ahead of us seem monotonous, impossible to live. In a famous description, the monk Evagrius represents this temptation thus: “The eye of the slothful person is continually fixed on the windows, and in his mind he fantasizes about visitors [...] When he reads, the slothful person often yawns and is easily overcome by sleep, wrinkles his eyes, rubs his hands and, withdrawing his eyes from the book, stares at the wall; then turning them back to the book, he reads a little more [...]; finally, bowing his head, he places the book underneath it, and falls into a light sleep, until hunger awakens him and urges him to attend to his needs”; in conclusion, “the slothful man does not do God's work with solicitude”.

Contemporary readers perceive in these descriptions something that closely recalls the evil of depression, both from a psychological and a philosophical point of view. Indeed, for those who are gripped by *acedia*, life loses its significance, prayer becomes boring, and every battle seems meaningless. If in youth we nurtured passions, now they seem illogical, dreams that did not make us happy. So, we let ourselves go, and distraction, thoughtlessness, seem to be the only ways out: one would like to be numb, to have a completely empty mind... It is a little like dying in advance, and it is ugly.

Faced with this vice, which we recognize to be very dangerous, the masters of spirituality envisage various remedies. I would like to note one that to me seems most important, and which I would call *the patience of faith*. Although in the clutches of *acedia*, man's desire is to be “elsewhere”, to escape from reality, one must instead have the courage to remain and to welcome God's presence in the “here and now”, in the situation as it is. The monks say that for them the cell is the best teacher of life, because it is the place that concretely and daily speaks to you of your love story with the Lord. The demon of *acedia* wants precisely to destroy this simple joy of the here and now, this grateful wonder of reality; it wants to make you believe that it is all in vain, that nothing has meaning, that it is not worth taking care of anything or anyone. In life we meet slothful people, people about whom we say, “He is boring!”, and we do not like to be with them; people who even have an attitude of boredom that is infectious. This is *acedia*.

How many people, in the grip of *acedia*, stirred by a faceless restlessness, have stupidly abandoned the good life they had embarked upon! The battle of *acedia* is a decisive one, that must be won at all costs. And it is a battle that did not spare even the saints, because in many of their diaries there are some pages that confide terrible moments, of genuine nights of the faith, when everything appears dark. These saints teach us to get through the night in patience, accepting *the poverty of faith*. They recommended, under the oppression of sloth, to maintain a smaller measure of commitment, to set goals more within reach, but at the same time to endure and persevere by leaning on Jesus, who never abandons us in temptation.

Faith, tormented by the test of *acedia*, does not lose its value. On the contrary, it is the true faith, the very human faith, which despite everything, despite the darkness that blinds it, still humbly believes. It is that faith that remains in the heart, like embers beneath the ashes. It always remains. And if one of us falls prey to this vice, or to the temptation of *acedia*, try to look within and fan the embers of faith; that is how we keep going.