

## *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 Fifth Sunday of Lent*

## *March 22, 2026*

### **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

**OCIA:** Contact office 803-649-3203

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

**Website:** [www.stgerardinaiken.org](http://www.stgerardinaiken.org)

### ***Readings for The Week***

#### **Sunday:**

Ezk 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-2,3-4,5-6,7-8; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45

#### **Monday:**

Dan 13:1-9,15-17,19-30,33-62; Ps 23:1-3a,3b-4,5,6; Jn 8:1-11

#### **Tuesday:**

Num 21:4-9; Ps 102:2-3,16-18,19-21; Jn 8:21-30

#### **Wednesday: The Annunciation of The Lord**

Isa 7:10-14:8:10; Ps 40:7-8a,8b=9,10,11; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38

#### **Thursday:**

Gen 17:3-9; Ps 105:4-5,6-7,8-9; Jn 8:51-59

#### **Friday:**

Jer 20:1-13; Ps 18:2-3a,3bc-4,5-6,7; Jn 10:31-42

#### **Saturday:**

Exe 37:21-28; Jer 31:10,11-12abcd,13; Jn 11:45-56

### Mass Intentions

#### Saturday, March 21

4:00 PM - For our Parish

#### Sunday, March 22

8:00 AM - For our Parish

10:00 AM - For our Parish

#### Tuesday, March 24

8:15 AM - For our Parish

#### Thursday, March 26

8:15 AM - For our Parish

#### Friday, March 27

8:15 AM - For our Parish

### Ministers

March 28	March 29	March 29
4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Diane Begic	Peter Srednicki	Cathey Ciani
Joel Southwick	Betsy Kenney	Gregg Wright
Joan Hesik	Betsy Kenney	Gregg Wright

### Pray for our Sick

Rosa Johnson, Paula Thurston, Ellen Heim, Rich Borst, Betty Hyslop, Jeffrey Hesik, Angelo Perrino, John Burke, Krystal Ortiz, Michell Novotny, Casey Bay, Dennis HooChung, Joe Monahon

### 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. 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 church 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

The Legion of Mary Aiken Curia cordially invites all Active and Auxiliary members of the Legion of Mary to join in the annual Acies Mass at St. Mary Help of Christians Church, 203 Park Avenue, Aiken, SC on Saturday, March 28, 2026 at 10 a.m.

### Sunday After Mass Social

The Sunday After Mass social is April 19, after the 10 AM Mass. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the back entrance to the social hall.

### Weekly Collection 3/14-3/15/26

Budget	\$3,799.00
Collected	\$2,214.00
Short/Over	-\$1,585.00
YTD+-	+\$11,760.16

### Second Collection

April 3<sup>rd</sup> Good Friday  
The Holy Land

### Bible Study

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

### Tabernacle Candle

A special candle should burn continuously near the tabernacle to indicate the presence of Christ. If you would like to donate in honor or memory of a loved one, call the church office. The candle for March: William E Beckert, birthday memorial.

### Our Lady of the Valley Food Pantry

Our collection for the OLV food pantry is the third weekend of the month. The focus food for the weekend of March 21-22 is Pancake Mix & Syrup.

### Annual Garden Cleanup



It's springtime and time for the garden cleanup. As in the past, we need your help. We are looking for those interested to be at the church from 8:30 am to noon on Saturday, March 28th. We will spread mulch and clean up afterward. We would also appreciate financial support to offset the cost of mulch. Should that be your choice, please put your donation in an envelope, note on the outside that it is for "Garden Cleanup," and place it in the offertory basket during collection. Last year, we had great participation and nearly covered the cost of supplies.

Thanks in advance for your help!

Jackie, Kari & Chuck  
(The Garden Committee)

### The Bishop is Coming!

Bishop Jacques Fabre-Jeune will celebrate Holy Mass on Palm Sunday, March 29, at 10 a.m. at St. Gerard Church. Weather permitting, the Mass will be held outdoors. A light lunch will be served in the Parish Social Hall immediately following Mass. All are invited!

## Deacon Chuck's Corner

### Reflection on Lazarus Rising – John 11:1-45

Jesus tells Martha to believe this even before He raises Lazarus. In saying this, Jesus is asking Martha to trust Him. His message to us is the same. We can trust in Jesus even when he seems to have been absent. We can trust in Jesus even in the face of death, believing that death is not the end because Jesus is “the resurrection and the life.”

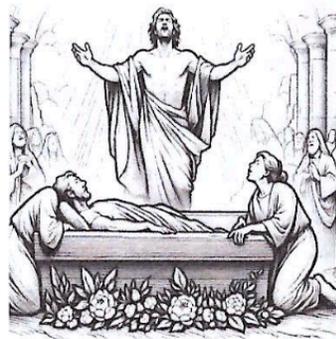
Now we come to Jesus' response to Mary. “Jesus wept.” He wept even though He knew He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead and that Lazarus would share in His resurrected life forever. He wept because He loved Lazarus and the death of His friend made Him sad. He wept because Mary was weeping. Jesus loved Mary, and in His love, He shared in her grief.

Jesus weeps with us too. He loves us as He loved Mary. Jesus is fully human. He loves us with a human love and shares in our human grief. Jesus sympathizes with us in every way. He is a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Another place in the gospels when Jesus shows this kind of emotional, spiritual disturbance that expresses itself in weeping is in Gethsemane; Jesus comes face to face with all that opposes him: sin, death, hatred. His response is lament and anguish, even unto drops of blood.

Here, the restoration of physical life is a metaphor for breaking free from the bonds of spiritual death into the gift of eternal life that Jesus brings. Jesus is the resurrection and the life - "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."

When Jesus says, "Take away the stone," the reader can't help but be reminded of Jesus' coming resurrection. Then Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out! Lazarus is us, bound by death in our current lives, called to life by Jesus who is the Light and the Life of the world. Jesus stands at the edge of our tomb, shouting "Come out!"

**Prayer:** As children of God, help us persevere in faith by living in the spirit, knowing that this world will eventually pass for another, and put our trust in you Lord to raise us to true joy in it. Amen.



### A Prayer of Hope in Christ

Lord Jesus, You stood before the tomb of Lazarus and called him forth from death into life. You revealed that no darkness is stronger than Your power, no despair deeper than Your mercy. There are moments in my life that feel like sealed tombs. Situations that seem beyond repair. Prayers that appear unanswered. At times I struggle to believe that change is possible. Yet You declare, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Strengthen my faith in those words. Help me trust that You can bring life where I see only loss. Resurrect hope in my heart. Revive what has grown cold in my faith. Restore relationships that need healing. Renew dreams that have faded. As Lent draws me closer to Your Passion, prepare me also for the joy of Your victory. Let me never forget that suffering does not have the final word. You do. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### Summary of the Holy Father's words:\*

Dear brothers and sisters, in our continuing catechesis on the Second Vatican Council, today we consider the participation of the faithful in Jesus Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal offices, as presented by the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*. Through the sacrament of baptism, each of us is called to share in Christ's royal priesthood and to worship him in spirit and truth, especially through our participation in the Eucharist. We also partake in Jesus' prophetic mission, for we are called to bear witness to the truth of the faith. Indeed, the Council Fathers taught that “the whole body of the faithful ... cannot be mistaken in belief. It shows this characteristic through the entire people's supernatural sense of faith when, from the bishops to the last of the faithful, it manifests a universal consensus in matters of faith and morals”. Along with these gifts shared by all members of the Church, the Holy Spirit continues to grant special graces to the faithful to enrich and build up the body of Christ. It is important that we recognize these manifold gifts and express our gratitude to God for allowing us to be partakers in his work of salvation.

\*The full text of the Pope's Audience is on the last page of the bulletin.

**LEO XIV**  
**GENERAL AUDIENCE**  
*Wednesday, 18 March 2026*  
**Catechesis. The Documents of Vatican Council II.**  
**II. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium***  
**4. *The Church, a Priestly and Prophetic People***

*Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!*

Today, I would like to revisit the second chapter of the Conciliar Constitution *Lumen gentium*, devoted to the Church as the people of God.

The messianic people receive from Christ the participation in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly work office through which his salvific mission is carried out. The Council Fathers teach that the Lord Jesus, through the new and eternal Covenant, has established a kingdom of priests, constituting his disciples as a ‘royal priesthood’. This common priesthood of the faithful is given with Baptism, which enables us to worship God in spirit and truth, and to “confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church”. Furthermore, through the sacrament of Confirmation, all the baptized “are more perfectly bound to the Church and the Holy Spirit endows them with special strength so that they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ”. This consecration is at the root of the common mission that unites the ordained ministries and the lay faithful.

In this regard, Pope Francis observed that, “Looking at the People of God is remembering that we all enter the Church as lay people. The first sacrament, which seals our identity forever, and of which we should always be proud, is Baptism. Through Baptism and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the faithful are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, so that everyone forms the faithful Holy People of God.”

The exercise of the royal priesthood takes place in many ways, all aimed at our sanctification, first and foremost through participation in the Eucharistic offering. Through prayer, asceticism, and active charity, we bear witness to a life renewed by God’s grace. As the Council summarizes, “it is through the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues that the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation”.

The Council Fathers then teach that the holy People of God also participate in Christ’s prophetic mission. In this context, the important themes of the sense of faith and the consensus of the faithful are introduced. The Doctrinal Commission of the Council specified that this *sensus fidei* “is like a faculty of the whole Church, by which she, in her faith, recognizes the revelation handed down, distinguishing between true and false in matters of faith, and at the same time penetrates it more deeply and applies it more fully in life”. The sense of faith, therefore, belongs to individual believers not in their own right, but as members of the People of God as a whole.

*Lumen gentium* focuses on this latter aspect and places it in relation to the infallibility of the Church, to which that of the Roman Pontiff is inherent and by which it is served. “The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special property by means of the whole people’s supernatural discernment in matters of faith when, from the bishops down to the last of the lay faithful, they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals”. The Church, therefore, as the communion of the faithful – which naturally includes the pastors – cannot err in matters of faith: the organ through which this truth is preserved, founded on the anointing of the Holy Spirit, is the *supernatural sense of faith* of the entire People of God, which is manifested in the *consensus of the faithful*. From this unity, which the Magisterium of the Church safeguards, it follows that every baptized person is an active agent of evangelization, called to bear consistent witness to Christ in accordance with the prophetic gift which the Lord bestows upon His whole Church.

Indeed, the Holy Spirit, who comes to us from the Risen Christ, “distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts, He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church”. A particular demonstration of this charismatic vitality is offered by consecrated life, which continually germinates and flourishes through the work of grace. Ecclesial associations, too, are a shining example of the variety and fruitfulness of spiritual fruits for the edification of the People of God.