



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.

Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time *August 24, 2025*

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

Readings for The Week

Sunday:

Isa 66:18-21; Ps 117:1,2; Heb 12: 5-7,11-13; Lk 13:22-30

Monday:

1 The 1:1-5,8b-10; Ps 149:1b-2,3-4,5-6a, &9b; Mt 23:13-22

Tuesday:

1 The 2:1-8; Ps 139:1-3,4-6; Mt 23:23-26

Wednesday: St Monica

1 The 2:9-13; Ps 139; 7-8,9-10,11-12ab; Mt 23:27-32

Thursday: St Augustine, Bishop & Doctor of the Church

1 The 3:7-13; Ps 90:3-5a,12-13,14 & 17; Mt 24:42-51

Friday: The Passion of St John the Baptist

1 The 4:1-8; Ps 97:1 & 2b,5-6,10,11-12; Mk 6:17-29

Saturday:

1 The 4:9-11; Ps 98:1,7-8,9; Mt 25:14-30

Mass Intentions

Saturday, August 23

4:00 PM - Nancy Santek

Sunday, August 24

8:00 AM - For our Parish

10:00 AM - For our parish

Tuesday, August 26 - For our Parish

Thursday, August 28 - For Our Parish

Friday, August 29 - For our Parish

Ministers		
August 30	August 31	August 31
4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Michele Bullington	Denise Gelinas	Rosa DiStefano
Joel Southwick	Kelly Stanley	Karen Uhle
Joan Hesik	Betsy Kenney	

Pray for our sick

Rosa Johnson, Paula Thurston, Ellen Heim, Rich Borst, Betty Hyslop, Jeffrey Hesik, Angelo Perrino, John Burke, Krystal Ortiz, Mary Rose, Michell Novotny, Nancy Gardzina, Jean Schodowski, Joan Lacombe, Casey Bay, Dennis HooChung

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

Active members meet Tuesdays at 2:00 PM in the church Conference Room. Auxiliary members can pray at home. If you are interested in becoming an active or auxiliary member of the Legion of Mary, contact the church office.

Bible Study

There are no Bible Study classes during the summer months. Classes will resume on September 5.

Weekly Collection 8/16-8/17/25

Budget	\$3,162.00
Collected	\$5,065.00
Short/Over	+\$1,903.00
YTD+-	+\$4,464.15

Second Collection September 14

The Catholic University of America

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 Parish Office. The donation is \$25. The candle offering is for one month. The August candle is for the birthdays of Connor James Brady (7 yrs.), George Heim, and Kristine Heath.

Monthly After Mass Social

The Monthly After Mass Social is the first Saturday of the month after the 4:00 p.m. Mass. The hosts for September 6 are the Beckert and Welsh families. If you would like to host a social, contact the office: 803-649-3203.

Men's Prayer Group

Meetings are on Tuesdays in the parish social hall at 7:30 a.m. for prayer and discussion. Following the meeting, the group will attend the 8:15 a.m. Mass. For more information contact Bill Collins at 803-998-7191. All men of the parish are welcome to the meetings.

Our Lady of the Valley Food Pantry

Our collection for the OLV food pantry is the third weekend of the month. Food donations are welcome at any time during the month; however, our focused collection is the third weekend of the month. The focus food for the weekend of September 20-21 is Fruit Cups or Canned Fruit.

Our Lady of Peace

Our Lady of Peace is hiring teachers for the following positions: Full-time 4th-grade teacher; Part-time teachers for Science and Math in Middle Grades. If interested, email: olpprincipal@olpschool.us or call 803-279-8396 ext. 100.

Deacon Chuck's Corner

Reflection on The Narrow Gate – Luke 13:22-30

Today's gospel reading is a warning to the Israelites who had heard of Yahweh and His teachings through the prophets. Many thought their place in the Kingdom was secured by the fact that they were children of Abraham. Not so, according to Jesus. Other nations may enter heaven first.

Jesus likens the Kingdom of God to a narrow door, emphasizing the challenging nature of the journey to eternal life. Entering the narrow gate means to undergo the painful process of change. It is not easy, but it leads to eternal life. Jesus asks us to concentrate on entering through the narrow door, symbolizing the path of righteousness and truth.

It is a timely warning for our generation, who are called Christians – it serves as a compelling call to action. We cannot assume our place in heaven is secure without personal effort, faith and commitment. Being baptized and active in church activities is not a guarantee of being admitted to paradise. The same is true with the length of time as a follower of Christ. We may have known Jesus for a long time. We may have been serving in the church since our youth. Still, we are not assured entrance into the Kingdom of God. This reading urges us to reflect on the choices we make in our daily lives.

What is important when it comes to acquiring eternal life is a change of heart. Jesus reminds us that living a life of integrity, humility, and compassion requires effort and dedication. That is why Jesus is telling us that the first may be the last and the last may be the first. This is because not all followers are willing to enter the narrow door. He foretells we may be surprised by those who enter and those who don't. However hard we try, we often find ourselves excluding persons or groups from salvation. Jesus invites us to be wary of judging others, and to believe that all can be open to God's loving offer of salvation.

Prayer: Let us heed the urgency of the gospel message by striving to enter through the narrow door of salvation with unwavering faith and dedication. May Luke's message prompt introspection in our spiritual journey and challenge us to prioritize seeking God with earnest effort and genuine commitment. Help us demonstrate our commitment to being chosen by you, God, by putting our trust in you, walking in your ways, and surrendering our lives to you daily. Amen.



The Passion of Saint John the Baptist

Feast Day: August 29

The Memorial of the Passion of Saint John the Baptist is an important day in the Catholic Church. It is celebrated every year on August 29th. This day remem-

bers the death of John the Baptist, who was a key figure in preparing people for Jesus. He is known for his strong message and his call to repentance.

John the Baptist was a prophet who lived a simple life. He wore rough clothing and ate simple food. He preached about turning away from sin and getting ready for the coming of Jesus. He also baptized many people, including Jesus himself. John's courage in speaking the truth made him well-known, but it also led to his death.

The story of the Passion of Saint John the Baptist is tragic. He spoke out against King Herod's marriage, which was not allowed under Jewish law. This angered Herod's wife, Herodias. She plotted to have John killed. Through a series of events, Herodias' daughter, Salome, asked for John's head as a reward for dancing at Herod's party. Herod reluctantly agreed, and John was beheaded.

The Memorial of the Passion of Saint John the Baptist is a time to remember his courage and his faithfulness. He stood up for what was right, even when it cost him his life. His example teaches us the importance of standing up for the truth. On this day, we honor his memory and the role he played in the story of Jesus.

Prayer to St. John the Baptist

O God, You raised up St. John the Baptist to prepare a perfect people for Christ. Fill Your people with the joy of possessing His grace, and direct the minds of all the faithful in the way of peace and salvation. Grant that as St. John was martyred for truth and justice, so we may energetically profess our Faith in You, and lead others to the Way, the Truth, and Eternal Life.

LEO XIV
GENERAL AUDIENCE
Wednesday, 20 August 2025

Cycle of Catechesis – Jubilee 2025. Jesus Christ our Hope. III. The Passover of Jesus.

3. Forgiveness. He loved them to the end» (Jn 13:2)

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today, we will look at one of the most striking and luminous gestures in the Gospel: the moment when Jesus, during the last supper, offers a morsel to the one who is about to betray him. It is not only a gesture of sharing: it is much more; it is love's last attempt not to give up.

Saint John tells us about this moment as follows: [During supper, when] “the devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over... Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass ... he loved them to the end”. To love until the end is the key to understanding Christ's heart: A love that does not cease in the face of rejection, disappointment, or even ingratitude. Jesus knows the time, but he does not submit to it: he chooses it. It is he who recognizes the moment in which his love must pass through the most painful wound, that of betrayal. Instead of withdrawing, accusing, or defending himself, he continues to love: he washes the feet, dips the bread, and offers it.

“It is the one to whom I hand the morsel after I have dipped it”. With this simple and humble gesture, Jesus carries his love forward and to its depths, not because he is ignoring what is happening, but because he sees it. He has understood that the freedom of the other, even when it is lost in evil, can still be reached by the light of a meek gesture, because he knows that true forgiveness does not await repentance, but offers itself first, as a gift, even before it is accepted.

Judas does not understand. After the morsel – says the Gospel – “Satan entered him”. This passage strikes us as if evil, hidden until then, manifested itself after love showed its most defenseless face. For this reason, that morsel is our salvation, because it tells us that God does everything to reach us, even in the hour when we reject him. It is here that forgiveness reveals all its power and manifests the true face of hope. It is not forgetfulness nor weakness. It is the ability to set the other free, while loving him to the end. Jesus' love does not deny the truth of pain, but it does not allow evil to have the last word. This is the mystery Jesus accomplishes for us in which we are called to participate.

How many relationships are broken, how many stories become complicated, how many unspoken words remain suspended. And yet the Gospel shows us that there is always a way to continue to love, even when everything seems irredeemably compromised. To forgive does not mean to deny evil, but to prevent it from generating further evil. It is not to say that nothing has happened, but to do everything possible to ensure resentment does not determine the future.

When Judas leaves the room, “it was night”. But immediately afterwards, Jesus says, “Now is the Son of Man glorified”. The night is still there, but a light has already begun to shine because Christ remains faithful to the end, and so his love is stronger than hatred. We, too, experience painful and difficult nights. Nights of the soul, nights of disappointment, nights in which someone has hurt or betrayed us. In those moments, the temptation is to close ourselves up, to protect ourselves, to return the blow. But the Lord shows us the hope that another way exists. He teaches us that one can offer a morsel even to someone who turns their back on us. That one can respond with the silence of trust. And that we can move forward with dignity, without renouncing love.

Let us ask for the grace to be able to forgive, even when we do not feel understood, even when we feel abandoned. Because it is in those hours that love can reach its pinnacle. As Jesus teaches us, to love means to leave the other free — even to betray — without ever ceasing to believe that even that freedom, wounded and lost, can be snatched from the deception of darkness and returned to the light of goodness.

When the light of forgiveness succeeds in filtering through the deepest crevices of the heart, we understand that it is never futile. Even if the other does not accept it, even if it seems to be in vain, forgiveness frees those who give it: it dispels resentment, it restores peace, it returns us to ourselves. Jesus, with the simple gesture of offering bread, shows that every betrayal can become an opportunity for salvation if it is chosen as a space for a greater love. It does not give in to evil, but conquers it with good, preventing it from extinguishing what is truest in us: the capacity to love.