



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 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

Readings for The Week

Sunday:

Gen2:7-9;3:1-7;Ps 51:3-4,5-6,12-13,17; Rom 5:12-19; Mt 4:1-11

Monday:

Lev19:1-2, 11-18; Ps 19:8,9,10,15; Mt 25:31-46

Tuesday:

Isa 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:

Est C:12,14-16,23-25; Ps 138:1-2ab,2cde-3,7c-8; Mt 7:7-12

Friday:

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

Saturday:

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

Mass Intentions

Saturday, February 21

4:00 PM - For our Parish

Sunday, February 22

8:00 AM - For our Parish

10:00 AM - For our Parish

Tuesday, February 24

8:15 AM - For our Parish

Thursday, February 26

8:15 AM - For our Parish

Friday, February 27

8:15 AM - For our Parish

Ministers

<u>February 28</u>	<u>March 1</u>	<u>March 1</u>
4:00 PM Vigil	8:00 AM	10:00 AM
Linda Cooper	Perry Stanley	Erin Kramer
Joel Southwick	Kelly Stanley	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, Nancy Gardzina, 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

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

Sunday After Mass Social

The Sunday After Mass social is March 15, after the 10 a.m. Mass. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the back entrance to the social hall.

Weekly Collection 2/14-2/15/26

Budget	\$3,799.00
Collected	\$11,621.00
Short/Over	+\$7,822.00
YTD+-	+\$7,876.16

Second Collections

February 22 - Black and Indian Missions

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 donation is \$25. 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. 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 February 21-22 is hot cereal.

Monthly After Mass Social

The Monthly After Mass Social is the first Saturday of the month after the 4:00 p.m. Mass. If you would like to host a social, contact the office: 803-649-3203. The host for March 7 is the McHale family.

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.

Request for Volunteers

We are in need of volunteers to serve as Sacristans and Eucharistic Ministers for the Saturday 4 p.m. Mass and the Sunday 10 a.m. Mass. If you are interested in volunteering for one of these ministries, please contact the church office by phone (803-644-4059) or email (stgerard@gmail.com).

Deacon Chuck's Corner

Reflection on Temptation – Matthew 4:1-11

What is the Spirit trying to tell me in today's gospel story? At his baptism by John, Jesus had heard the voice of God the Father identifying him as his beloved Son.

In today's story, Jesus is reflecting on the challenges of his radical new mission and his own human temptations by Satan, which we all experience. Satan's message of being noticed, popular, and powerful continues to plague us in today's world. We are called to choose how we influence the world: do we dominate or serve; are we selfish or kind and generous? Am I even aware of the subtle temptations in my life, for bad or good? Can I find wisdom and guidance in Scripture and prayer to cope with life's difficulties and find peace, inspiration, and guidance from the Holy Spirit and Jesus' example?

Jesus gives us a pattern for walking by faith. We need to remember that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness precisely so that this temptation could occur, and that God is sovereign over it. Jesus spends 40 days and 40 nights in the desert and at the end, Jesus is hungry. The number 40 is a sacred number symbolizing a period of testing and transformation. We see Jesus working and responding to Satan with every turn of his temptations. Jesus is teaching us to persevere in faith and obedience in the face of Satan's fiercest temptations, perhaps even when we are hungry, tired, frustrated – at our worst. Because our enemy is a relentless liar, Jesus responds by citing Scripture and not engaging in a debate with Satan.

Likewise, we hear Jesus telling Peter: Don't fall for it, watch and pray that you might not be deceived, that you might not enter into temptation. He calls us to do the same – flatly refuse Satan and move on. We, like Jesus, may encounter many temptations in life and possibly every day – just think about all the cons, scams and fishing going on in our world that we must fight every moment.

Jesus comes as our liberator to free you and me from the captivity of sin and Satan's trappings. If you ever doubt whether God is leading you in paths of goodness, remember that same God did not spare his only Son, but gave him up for us all.



Sr Mary Thea Bowman

The Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi, officially concluded the diocesan phase of the canonization cause for Servant of God Sr. Mary Thea Bowman, a Catholic convert whose ministry profoundly shaped the Church's outreach to Black American Catholics. The documents and materials gathered since the cause was opened in 2018 will now be sent to the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints at the Vatican for further review. Born on December 29, 1937, in Yazoo City, Mississippi, Bowman converted from Methodism to Catholicism when she was 9 years old. She joined the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration at age 15 and later earned a doctorate in English from The Catholic University of America in 1972. A pioneer for Black Catholic ministry, Bowman helped found the National Black Sisters' Conference and contributed to the "Lead Me, Guide Me" Black Catholic hymnal, first published in 1987. In 1989, addressing the US Catholic bishops' conference, she reflected on the Black Catholic experience, singing lines from the spiritual "Motherless Child" and affirming, "Jesus told me that the Church is my home." Bowman passed away from breast cancer on March 30, 1990.

Summary of the Holy Father's words*

Dear brothers and sisters, In our continuing catechesis on the Second Vatican Council, we have reflected upon various aspects of Divine Revelation. We have seen how God chose to reveal himself, making known the loving mystery of his divine plan to unite all people to him through his Son, Jesus Christ. Indeed, it is only within this mystery that we can understand both the origin and the mission of the Church. In this light, we turn today to consider *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, which presents the Church as both a sign and an instrument of this plan of salvation. A sign because the Church community makes the unity established by Christ through his Cross and Resurrection visible to the world today. An instrument, because it is through the Church that God achieves his goal of uniting people to himself and bringing them together. As we journey through a world still marked by division, let us ask the Lord to continue to guide His Church in the mission of sanctification and reconciliation.

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

LEO XIV

Wednesday, 18 February 2026

Catechesis. The Documents of Vatican Council II.

II. Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*.

1. *The mystery of the Church, sacrament of the union with God, and the unity of all humanity*

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

When the Second Vatican Council, to whose documents we are dedicating this catechesis, sought to describe the Church, it was concerned first and foremost with explaining its origins. To do so, the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, approved on 21 November 1964, drew the term “*mystery*” from the Letters of Saint Paul. By choosing this word, he did not mean to say that the Church is something obscure or incomprehensible, as is commonly thought when the word “*mystery*” is heard. It is exactly the opposite: indeed, when Saint Paul uses the word, especially in the Letter to the Ephesians, he wishes to indicate a reality that was previously hidden and is now revealed.

It refers to God’s plan, which has a purpose: to unify all creatures through the reconciliatory action of Jesus Christ, accomplished in his death on the cross. This is experienced first in the assembly gathered for the liturgical celebration: there, differences are relativized, and what counts is being together because we are drawn by the Love of Christ, who broke down the wall of separation between people and social groups. For Saint Paul, mystery is the manifestation of what God wanted to achieve for the whole of humanity, and is made known in local experiences, which gradually widen to include all human beings and even the cosmos.

The condition of humanity is one of fragmentation that human beings are unable to repair, even though the tendency towards unity dwells in their heart. The action of Jesus Christ enters this condition through the power of the Holy Spirit and overcomes the powers of division and the Divider himself. Gathering together to celebrate, having believed in the proclamation of the Gospel, is experienced as an attraction exerted by the cross of Christ, which is the supreme manifestation of God’s love. It is feeling called together by God: this is why the term *ekklesia* is used, that is, an assembly of people who recognize that they have been *summoned together*. So, there is a certain coincidence between this mystery and the Church: The Church is the mystery made perceptible.

This convocation, precisely because it is brought about by God, cannot, however, be limited to a group of people, but rather is destined to become the experience of all human beings. Therefore, the Second Vatican Council, at the beginning of the Constitution *Lumen gentium*, states that: “the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race”. With the use of the term “*sacrament*” and the consequent explanation, it is intended to indicate that the Church is an expression of what God wants to accomplish in the history of humanity; therefore, by looking at the Church, we can, to some extent, grasp God’s plan, the mystery. In this sense, the Church is a sign. In addition, the term “*instrument*” is added to the term “*sacrament*”, precisely to show that the Church is an active sign. Indeed, when God works in history, he involves the people who are the objects of his action in his activity. It is through the Church that God achieves the aim of bringing people to him and uniting them with one another.

Union with God is reflected in the union of human beings. This is the experience of salvation. It is not a coincidence that in the Constitution *Lumen gentium*, in Chapter 7, dedicated to the eschatological nature of the pilgrim Church, again uses the description of the Church as a sacrament, with the specification “of salvation”: “Christ, having been lifted up from the earth, has drawn all to Himself. Rising from the dead, He sent His life-giving Spirit upon His disciples and through Him has established His Body, which is the Church, as the universal sacrament of salvation. Sitting at the right hand of the Father, He is continually active in the world that He might lead men to the Church and through it join them to Himself and that He might make them partakers of His glorious life by nourishing them with His own Body and Blood”.

This text enables us to understand the relationship between the unifying action of the Pasch of Jesus, which is the mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection, and the identity of the Church. At the same time, it makes us grateful to belong to the Church, the body of the risen Christ and the one pilgrim people of God journeying through history, which lives as a sanctifying presence in the midst of a still fragmented humanity, as an effective sign of unity and reconciliation among peoples.