Monday of the Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 7:1-10): When Jesus had finished all his words to the people, he entered Capernaum. A centurion there had a slave who was ill and about to die, and he was valuable to him. When he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and save the life of his slave. They approached Jesus and strongly urged him to come, saying, "He deserves to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation and he built the synagogue for us."

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Religion, "laïcité positive" and "secularism"

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, this scene plunges us into a social atmosphere of "endearing humanity": a centurion —a foreigner— is concerned about one of his servants; he sends some elders of the Jews to plead with Jesus to heal his servant who is seriously ill… There is an element that brings them together: "he has built our synagogue". In their multifaceted diversity (origin, culture, social position… even religion), they are united by their respect to "religiosity".

"Laïcité positive" seeks a fair political autonomy: it avoids the "confessional" State, but assumes the deep human fact of the religiosity ("secularism" rejects it). It is essential to insist on the distinction between "politics" and "religion" to protect as much the religious freedom of all citizens as the State's responsibility for them. On the other hand, we should become more aware of the irreplaceable role of religion for the formation of consciences and the contribution which it can bring to —among other things— the creation of a basic ethical consensus within society.

—O Lord, we adore You and we pray to You for our authorities.