Saturday of the Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 8:5-17): When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion approached him and appealed to him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully." He said to him, "I will come and cure him." The centurion said in reply, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man subject to authority, with soldiers subject to me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come here,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I say to you, many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the Kingdom of heaven, but the children of the Kingdom will be driven out into the outer darkness, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth." And Jesus said to the centurion, "You may go; as you have believed, let it be done for you." And at that very hour his servant was healed.

Jesus entered the house of Peter, and saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, the fever left her, and she rose and waited on him. When it was evening, they brought him many who were possessed by demons, and he drove out the spirits by a word and cured all the sick, to fulfill what had been said by Isaiah the prophet: He took away our infirmities and bore our diseases.

"Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed"

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Today, in the Gospel, we see the love, faith, trust, and humility of a centurion who feels a deep esteem for his servant. He is so worried about him that he is able to humble himself before Jesus and ask his help: "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully" (Mt 8,6). This concern for others, especially a servant, elicits a prompt response from Jesus: "I will come and cure him" (Mt 8,7). And it all leads to a series of acts of faith and trust. The centurion does not consider himself worthy, and alongside this sentiment, he demonstrates his faith to Jesus and all who were present, so much so that Jesus says,

"Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith" (Mt 8,10).

We can ask ourselves what moves Jesus to perform the miracle. How many times do we ask, and it seems that God does not attend to us! Even though we know that God always listens to us. So, what is happening? We believe we are asking correctly, but are we doing it like the centurion? His prayer is not selfish, but it is full of love, humility, and trust. Saint Peter Chrysologus says: "The law of love is not concerned with what will be, what ought to be, what can be. Love does not reflect; it is unreasonable and knows no moderation. Love refuses to be consoled when its goal proves impossible, despises all hindrances to the attainment of its object." Is that how my prayer is?

"Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof..." (Mt 8,8). That is the centurion's response. Are those your feelings? Is your faith like this? In the words of Saint Maximus: "Only faith can explain this mystery. Faith is true knowledge, the principles of which are beyond rational demonstration; for faith makes real for us things beyond intellect and reason." If so, you will also hear, "'You may go; as you have believed, let it be done for you.' And at that very hour his servant was healed" (Mt 8,13).

Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Master of faith, hope, and loving care, teach us to pray as we should to obtain from the Lord all that we need.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "The faith of this centurion presages the faith of the nations, like a grain of mustard seed, a faith both humble and fervent." (Saint Augustine)

- "Jesus marveled at faith of the centurion. The centurion made a journey to meet the Lord, but he made it in faith. Therefore, he not only encountered the Lord, but he came to know the joy of being encountered by him." (Francis)

- "Everyone is called to enter the kingdom. First announced to the children of Israel, this messianic kingdom is intended to accept men of all nations (Cf. Mt 8:11). To enter it, one must first accept Jesus' word." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 543)