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."

And Jesus went with them, but when he was only a short distance from the house, the centurion sent friends to tell him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof. Therefore, I did not consider myself worthy to come to you; but say the word and let my servant be healed. For I too am a person 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 at him and, turning, said to the crowd following him, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." When the messengers returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

«I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith»

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Today, we are faced with an interesting question. Why did the captain in the Gospel not personally approach Jesus but rather, sent messengers ahead with the request to heal his servant? The captain answers this question for us in the Gospel passage. «You see I didn't approach you myself. Just give the order and my servant will be healed» (Lk 7:7).

The captain possessed the virtue of faith to believe that Jesus could work this miracle if it was in accord with His divine will. Faith allowed the captain to believe that no matter where Jesus was located He could heal the ill servant. The captain believed that no distance could prevent or stop the Christ from carrying out His work of salvation.

We are called to have that same faith in our own lives. There are times when we are tempted to think that Jesus is far away and not listening to our prayers. However, faith illumines our minds and hearts to believe that Jesus is always there to help us. In fact, the healing presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is a reminder that Jesus is always with us. St. Augustine, with eyes of faith, believed this reality: «What you see is the bread and the chalice; that is what your own eyes report to you. But what your faith obliges you to accept is that the bread is the Body of Christ and the chalice is the Blood of Christ».

Faith illumines our minds to see that it is the very presence of Jesus in our midst. We, like the captain say, «I am not worthy to welcome you under my roof» (Lk 7:6). Yet, we humble ourselves before our Lord and Savior and He still draws near to heal us. May we allow Jesus to enter our soul, under our roof, to heal and strengthen our faith so we may press on towards Eternal Life.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “By the works that charity does, it is known whether faith is alive or dead. Living faith is excellent because, being united to love and vivified by love, it is strong, firm and constant. She does many and good works, for which she deserves to be praised for them saying: Oh, what great faith!” (Saint Francis de Sales)

- “Our time needs Christians who grow in faith through their familiarity with Sacred Scripture and the sacraments. People who are, as it were, an open book that tells of the experience of new life in the Spirit” (Benedict XVI)

- “Faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed (...)” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 150)