Sunday 9th (C) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 7,1-10): When Jesus had finished teaching to the people, He went to Capernaum. There was a captain whose servant was very sick and near to death, a man very dear to him. So when he heard about Jesus, he sent some elders of the Jews to persuade him to come and save his servant's life. The elders came to Jesus and begged him earnestly, saying, «He deserves this of you, for he loves our people and even built a synagogue for us».

Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the captain sent friends to give this message, «Sir, do not trouble yourself for I am not worthy to welcome you under my roof. You see I didn't approach you myself. Just give the order and my servant will be healed. For I myself, a junior officer, give orders to my soldiers and I say to this one: 'Go', and he goes; and to the other: 'Come', and he comes; and to my servant: 'Do this', and he does it».

On hearing these words, Jesus was filled with admiration. He turned and said to the people with him, «I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith». The people sent by the captain went back to his house; there they found that the servant was well.

«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.