# Monday of the First Week of Advent

**Gospel text (*Mt* 8:5-11):** 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 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 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.”

***“I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.”***

Fr. Joaquim MESEGUER García
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Today, Capernaum is our city and our village, where there are sick people, some we know, others anonymous, often forgotten because of the hectic rhythm of life that we lead. Loaded with work, we rush about non-stop without thinking of those who, due to their illness or for whatever other circumstance, remain marginalised from the frenetic activity of our world. However, Jesus told us: “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Mt 25:40). The great thinker Blaise Pascal follows this idea when he says that Jesus, suffering at Gethsemane, “will be in agony until the end of the world: we cannot sleep until that moment, for he seeks companionship and comfort."

The centurion of Capernaum does not forget about his servant who is ill in bed, because he loves him. In spite of being more powerful and having more authority than his servant, the centurion is grateful to him because of all his years of help and appreciates him very much. Because of that, he approaches Jesus, and in the Saviour's presence, manages to make an extraordinary confession of faith, seen in the liturgy of the Eucharist: “Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed” (Mt 8:8). This confession is based on hope; it comes from the centurion's faith in the Lord and, at the same time, from his feeling of lack of personal worthiness, which makes him aware of his own neediness.

We can only approach Jesus with a humble attitude, like that of the centurion. That way we can live the hope of Advent: the hope of salvation and life, of reconciliation and peace. Only he, who acknowledges his poverty and realizes that the meaning of life is not to be found in himself, but in God, in turning his life over to Him, can really have hope. Let's approach Christ confidently, and, at the same time, make the centurion's prayer our own.

## *Thoughts on Today's Gospel*

- “What do you suppose Jesus praised in this man's faith? Humility. The centurion's humility was the door for the Lord to enter by.” (Saint Augustine)

- “The Lord marvelled at the centurion. He marvelled at his faith. Therefore, he not only encountered the Lord, but he came to know the joy of being encountered by him. This is very important.” (Pope Francis)

- “Before so great a sacrament [Eucharist], the faithful can only echo humbly and with ardent faith the words of the Centurion: ‘Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul will be healed’.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church № 1386)