**MONDAY NOVEMBER 29 – I WEEK OF ADVENT [C]**

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

**A centurion approaches Jesus and he does not explicitly ask for the healing of his servant. He describes the condition of the servant, though. He asks by describing. He prays begging, pleading. He begs and pleads, showing in what condition his servant is: “He is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully." Every heart has its prayer. There is a prayer for every heart. The forms of prayer are many, as many as the men praying according to truth are. Our pastoral wisdom is that of ensuring that every prayer is true in substance. Let us leave the forms to man and his heart. We often fight the forms, while we leave the essence itself of prayer in falsity.**

**Jesus knows what the desire of this centurion is, as He knows what the great love of this man for his servant is. The centurion is not praying for himself. On the contrary, he is praying for his servant. He is not praying because he needs a healthy servant. This would be pure selfishness. He is praying because he sees his servant in the great sufferance. Prayer might never be said to be true, holy, righteous, when we seek something for the others, because we need the others. Prayer is holy and righteous if we seek for the others only for love for the others. The prayer for the others must be the greatest gesture of charity, of mercy, of compassion, of piety. We can even seek for the others when the good for the others comes back in our favour, but only because a greater glory can always go up to the Lord. In this case, it is not a good for our person, but it is for a greater love toward the brothers and God and this love must necessarily pass through us. The goal of prayer must always be charity, love; it may even be a greater love that must pass through us and that could not pass without the grace we ask the Lord for the others. Jesus listens to the heart of the centurion and replies: “I will come and cure him.” I will come with you, you will introduce him to me and I will cure him. This is the promise of Jesus to the centurion.**

**A greater humbleness and faith than these ones the centurion shows do not exist. The centurion sees the greatness of Christ. He sees Him similar in all to God. He calls Him: Lord. In the post-Easter context, we know what the true meaning of “Lord” is. He also sees his littleness, his nullity, his nothing. He does not consider himself worthy of having the Lord in his house. But, a more surprising thing, he knows that for Jesus it is sufficient to say one only word for his servant to gain the perfect health again. This man lives of perfect knowledge of himself and of Christ Jesus: nothing before Everything, man, before God, the servant before the Lord. Everything, God, the Lord can even act for command, for indirect way. This man is a soldier who can order. He is a soldier above the others. He does not always do things in person. It is sufficient that he gives an order so that things are made. Jesus has the entire world He can order to. The visible and the invisible are under his ruling. It is sufficient that Jesus says a word and everything obeys his will.**

**If one can do with a word, there is not even the need that Jesus moves to go to his house. The motivation is therefore double: for reasons of humbleness. Contemplating the divine height of Christ, he sees himself unworthy of having the Lord in his house. For reason of faith. Jesus just needs to order and everything that exists, nothing excluded, promptly obeys each of his desire, order, injunction. The divine height, the depth, the width, the length of Christ Jesus is great. Measuring the depths of God that cannot be measured in any case, it is right that we become conscious of the great love with which God has loved us: not only did He create us, He let himself be nailed on the wood of the cross. He died for us, in our place. We should reflect on this eternal truth. We have not understood the great mystery of incarnation, yet. May the Lord concede us this grace.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 8.5-13**

**When he 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,** **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 sees the centurion as the only one who has such a true, perfect, intact, holy faith. He is a pagan. Not even the children of Israel have such a pure faith. They do not have it because Jesus did not find it. If Jesus did not find it, it does not exist in their heart. Thus, a pagan becomes so teacher for the “owners” of the true faith in the unique God and Lord. A pagan teaches the faithful the true truth on Christ Jesus. The mystery of the grace of God always transcends the narrow borders set by religion. The grace of God has no borders. The border of grace is the heart of man. Whenever a heart is, there is space for all the grace of God. If we are capable of catching the depth of a heart, free from every prejudice, we will even know to see God where He really operates and acts. Everyone is personally called to investigate this mystery. No one must entrench himself in his small world, or in those fossilized truth in his mind that do not give salvation.**

**Jesus now opens the narrow borders, He enhances the horizons of the little faith of his people. He invite it to see far, very far. He asks it to see the people that from the east to the west, from every direction, would have come to the true faith, to the same faith professed by the centurion now. For this professed faith, large, spacious, free, open faith, faith opened to the fullness of truth, faith that is able to read inside the mystery of Christ Jesus, many pagans would have been eternally part of the kingdom of heaven. The way to belong to the kingdom is the true faith. Everyone can receive this true faith. It is for every man. One does not belong to the kingdom by birth, by offspring, by race, by tribe, by nation, or by whatever other reason coming from earth. One belongs to the kingdom by faith and this faith directly descends from God as his most pure grace. The people of God must know it. Knowing it, one can open himself to the great news that God is about to fulfil for the entire humanity. This truth is always valid, until the consummation of the centuries. This truth might always break the narrow borders of the heart ruled by a narrow, poor, little, sad truth. It is urgent to reflect and to meditate a lot.**

**Why will the children of the kingdom be driven out into the outer darkness, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth? Because their faith is founded on the flesh and not on the mystery of God. It is not a faith that saves the entire humanity, it is a faith that excludes humanity from salvation. It is a miserable faith to be able to open itself to the great mystery of Christ Jesus. It is like a mathematical calculation rather understanding always new, always current, of the mystery of God who is about to unveil to his children as always new. It is more made up of a tradition founded upon the desires of man rather than upon the will of the Lord. It is incapable of seeing the Lord who operates today through the Person of Christ Jesus. The vices of their faith are the greatest enemies of their religion. How can one remove every vice of faith? By leading it in the mystery of God and always anchoring it to the totality of his Word. By freeing it from all those prejudices of the flesh that are fruit of the sin in us dwelling our soul. Whoever wishes a pure faith must have a holy, sound, perfect morality. Mother of God, help us.**