

16 September 2024 -- Monday, 24th week of Ordinary Time, even-numbered year

[1 Cor 11, 17-26; Luke 7-1-10](#)

Homily

The first reading, from Paul's 1st letter to Timothy, contains one of Paul's most powerful theological statements -- a statement that must be taken into account if we are to understand many of Paul's other statements. He says: *'God, our Saviour, wants everyone to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth'...*

And the Gospel we have just heard is a good example of this. It gives us the example of someone who was not a Jew and who was not a disciple of Jesus, but who showed in his life a faith that Jesus considered greater than anything he found in Israel.

This centurion, an officer in the Roman army, was a very good man. He was respectful of the Jews, whose religion was different from his own. Respectful to the point of building them a synagogue. He had even established a friendly relationship with the elders of the Jewish people, to the point that they interceded for him with Jesus. He also had a servant whom he loved very much. It's remarkable that a man should have such a love for a servant, to the point of seeking every possible means to have him healed.

This man had heard about Jesus, and because he was a good man, it was obvious to him that Jesus was a true prophet, that he really did have the power to heal. He is an intelligent and well-organised man. First of all, he knows exactly who he is and what his position is. He has superiors above him and he has soldiers and servants under him. He obeys and is obeyed. So he believes that all Jesus has to do is give an order and his servant will be healed. What's more, he doesn't want to waste Jesus' time, especially as he himself is not one of his disciples and is therefore not worthy to receive him in his house. So he sent his people to tell Jesus: *'Don't bother coming, I'm not worthy; just say the word and my servant will be healed'*.

Jesus was astonished by such faith. In fact, not only did Jesus not go to the centurion's house and perform any signs, but he did not say any words of healing. He simply comments on the centurion's faith. And the servant is healed. In many other healings reported in the Gospel, Jesus says to the person who has been healed, *'Your faith has saved you.'* What healed the centurion's servant was the centurion's faith.

We all have enormous healing powers in our being - in our bodies as

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well as in our minds - which have been given to us by the creator and which can cure most of our illnesses. Most of these powers remain permanently untapped. Even at the physical level, many medicines used by medicine do not heal directly but simply release the healing powers present in our bodies. The same is true at a deeper level. As we see in many cases in the Gospel, faith in Jesus releases the healing power present in the person who asks Jesus for healing.

We all have many wounds and a great need for healing. But God has given us the healing powers to heal most of these wounds. This healing power, however, must be released through faith. And the wonderful thing is that it works not only for ourselves but also for others, as in the case of the Centurion whose faith obtained the healing of his beloved servant.

Let us ask the Lord to increase our faith so that we, and all those with whom we live, may be healed of anything that distances us from God or from each other.

Pope Cornelius, whom we celebrate today, died in exile because of his firm resolve to open the way to reconciliation for those who, through weakness, had apostasised during the persecutions. Cyprian knew how to walk a fine line between disagreeing in principle with Pope Stephen about the validity of baptism conferred by heretics and his full communion with the same pope, and he confirmed the solidity of his faith by dying a martyr's death.

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