

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 8:5-13

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. (KJV)

We gather in God's Holy Church today for the salvation of our souls. We seek peace and purity in our hearts, minds and souls. We desire for God's love to be manifested in our daily relationships.

The present Gospel is proclaimed every year in the Church. Jesus Christ recognized the strong faith in the centurion. The centurion showed compassion for his suffering servant. He desired Jesus to heal the servant.

The centurion was wise in turning to Jesus Christ to heal his servant. Believers suffering afflictions are wise to turn first to Jesus for healing. The centurion's decision to come to Jesus was beneficial. Jesus healed the servant.

Believers will have their faith tested from time to time. Events will occur in daily life that will require believers to proceed solely on faith in God. God does not disappoint believers coming to Him in faith.

Deep faith in the Lord God is fundamental for Christians. Deep faith needs to constantly be cultivated and nourished. The Holy Scriptures and lives of the saints offer lessons in faith.

Believers strengthen their personal faith by becoming familiar with the accounts of faith through the centuries. When Abraham took Isaac to the mountain to offer sacrifice, God responded to Abraham's faith. (Gen. 22:1-18)

The Lord God answered Elijah's deep faith when Elijah prayed to Lord in the contest with the 450 prophets of Baal, (1 Kings 18:22-39) Jesus healed the woman with the issue of blood for twelve year when she came to Jesus in faith, (Mark 5:25-34)

The Eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews yields lasting lessons of faith. Nourishing faith is a life-long process. Challenges to faith persist to the last moment of life.

Believers are required to cling to the Lord at every moment of life to address the challenges to faith. Evil temptations arise and attack the believer in moments of weakness and laxity.

God's Holy Church is where to nourish personal faith. Faithfully reading the Scriptures at home each day nourishes personal faith. Praying to the Lord often throughout the day keeps the believer connected with God.

When the connection with God is broken or severed, the soul is in peril. Danger to the soul increases when faith is weak. The soul is worth more than the whole world and merits constant care and protection. (Mt. 16:26)

The centurion in the current Gospel was a man of authority and power. He recognized that Jesus Christ was greater than himself. The centurion was humble before Jesus,

The centurion appreciated the power of Jesus' word. The centurion believed Jesus' word was sufficient to heal his servant. Faith in Jesus' words have power to heal the afflictions of believers' souls.

Faith in Jesus' words is sufficient for the cleansing of personal sins and beginning life anew in Christ. The Church proclaims Jesus' words at each Divine Liturgy. Attentive believers take Jesus' words to heart and put them into practice.

Each Divine Liturgy is intended to transform the believer. Believers are to increase their unity with and faithfulness with Christ at each Divine Liturgy. The Gospel entering the heart, mind and soul is intended to transform the believer.

Partaking of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ unites the believer with Christ completely. The more a believer partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ, the greater the unity with Christ.

Faithfulness to Jesus Christ maintains desired unity. The Gospel message is to be put into practice each day. The Church provides teachings each day from the Holy Scriptures.

Believers unite and remain united with the Church by considering the Scripture readings each day. Believers enrich their lives by being attentive to the saints and martyrs commemorated daily by the Church.

Viewing life and the world through the perspective of the Church keeps the believer on the narrow path to God's Kingdom and eternal life. The hunger in the soul is nourished in the Church.

The Church is a fortress against the perils of the world. The Church offers protection against the world's evils. Jesus Christ through the Church nourishes and fills the heart, mind and soul with peace, love and joy.

The centurion in the present Gospel experienced peace and joy when his servant was healed. The centurion benefitted from Christ's love. The healed servant was renewed in life by the healing of Jesus Christ.

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. Greatmartyr Procopius of Caesarea. July 8/21, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic