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)

St. Lazarus, Greatmartyr-Vidovdan
John 15:17-16:2

These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. (KJV)

Believers gather in God's Holy Church each Sunday to seek and experience the Kingdom of God. Each person enters the church in personal uniqueness.

Each person shares the commonality of being created in God's image and likeness. The current Gospel from St. Matthew attests to the value of strong faith. Jesus recognized the strong faith of the centurion.

The Lord Jesus Christ chose to heal the centurion's servant. The Church values the lesson of strong faith. This Gospel lesson is proclaimed each year. Believers are expected to renew and strengthen their faith today.

The proclamation of the Gospel at each Divine Liturgy strengthens personal faith for the attentive believer. Jesus Christ is experienced in each proclamation of the Gospel.

Today St. Lazarus of Kosovo and the Kosovo Martyrs are celebrated in the Church. St. Lazarus and the Kosovo Martyrs demonstrated their strong faith in the way they lived and died. The Martyrs valued the Heavenly Kingdom.'

Each person entering the church determines the degree of personal faith that will characterize their personal lives. God is present to nourish, guide and strengthen believers each day of life.

Each Divine Liturgy offers believers the opportunity to partake of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. St. Lazarus and The Kosovo Martyrs partook of Christ's Body and Blood as they prepared for battle.

Believers battle earthly challenges each day. Evil is always present. The battle to remain faithful and focused exists for each believer. Maintaining love for persons in daily life is equally challenging.

God reassures believers in church and throughout life of being constantly present. Believers are never alone. Strength from God is always available. Guidance from God is ever-present.

Joy is equated with being in Christ and living in Christ. The centurion experienced joy when his servant was healed. The servant experienced joy in being healed by Jesus.

St. Lazarus and the Kosovo Martyrs bring joy to centuries of believers. St. Lazarus and the Martyrs demonstrated the value of choosing Christ and the Heavenly Kingdom. Each generation learns the wisdom of this choice.

St. John's Gospel for today describes Jesus' command to love one another even in the face of hate in the world. Jesus demonstrated how to love in the face of hate when He went to the Cross.

The centurion showed love for his servant in appealing to Jesus. The Kosovo Martyrs demonstrated convincing love for Jesus Christ with their unyielding faith in the face of overwhelming opposition.

The Lord God strengthens attentive believers in the Divine Liturgy today. Thank God for the example of the centurion. Thank God for the inspiring examples of St. Lazarus and the Kosovo Martyrs.

May God's strengthening of believers today be of benefit to each parish community. May the joy of Christ resound throughout each parish. Strong faith, love and joy in Christ make a difference in each home and community.

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Lazarus the Great Martyr and All Serbian Martyrs.-Vidovdan. June 15/28, 2026. Father Rodney Torbic.