

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

I. Jesus is Lord

The centurion in this morning's Gospel reading says two things.

First, he simply tells Jesus what his problem is—

“my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly” (8:6).

And second, he humbly expresses faith in who he knows Jesus to be—

“I'm not worthy for you come under my roof, but only say the word” (8:8).

But before either of these statements, the centurion calls Jesus “Lord” (8:6, 8).

Now, we don't think twice about this,
that title has become so attached to Christ,
so much a part of who He is and how we call upon Him.

But for the centurion to call Him Lord,
that's another story.

The centurion would have been called Lord himself!

In fact, he would have been 'lord' to the hundred men in his battalion.

Moreover, the emperor was called 'lord'—

it was a title of royalty, of authority;

it was to call someone 'Master.'

So, why would this centurion, presumably a Roman and not a Jew,
call Jesus 'Lord'?

Why would the centurion look to Jesus at all for the health and restoration of his servant?

Well it's because the centurion believed that Jesus actually was the Lord—
not the emperor, not the commander in chief, not the Lieutenant or Colonel or General—
but the Lord of heaven and earth, the Lord of Hosts, God Himself.

That's what it means to call Jesus 'Lord'—

it means that Jesus is God in the flesh, the creator of the world,
the one who has authority to heal and bless and make alive.

That's also why Margaret called this Jesus, 'Lord.'

She knew what it meant and confessed it freely and often.

Margaret wasn't much different than this centurion (except for the Roman military bit...).

She believed that Jesus is God in the flesh,
and more importantly, she believed Him to be God in the flesh *for her*.
For her health and life and blessing and healing and comfort and joy.

She believed that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18),
and therefore, like the centurion,
believed that whatever Jesus *said*,
would happen.

II. Jesus is the Word that does what He says

Jesus is a man under authority—
that means, whatever He says is backed and supported by His Father,
who gave Him this authority.

And the way authority works is by the mouth.

If you've got the authority to free someone from prison,
you don't need to storm the jail cell, or knock out the guard, or copy the key—
you simply say, "you're free."

That's the sort of Word Jesus has authority to say,
"You're free."

Or in the case of the centurion's servant,
"**Go; let it be done for you as you have believed**" (8:13).

And in the case of Margaret,
"**Today, you will be with me in paradise**" (Lk 23:43);
and,
"**Because I live, you also will live**" (Jn 14:19)
and again,
"**Take heart; your sins are forgiven**" (Mt 9:2).

Jesus does it all by His Word—
He speaks realities into existence.

If Jesus says,
"**Let there be light**" (Gen 1:3),
there's light!

That's what it means to have authority,
and the centurion knew Jesus had authority over heaven and earth and under the earth.

And so, the centurion said to Jesus,

"**Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed**" (8:8)

III. Jesus is the Feast of the Word under our roof

These words of the centurion have formed the Church's prayer since they were first spoken—
preparing the faithful to receive the Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar.

They're words of humility and great faith.

They're words that confess man as utterly sinful and unworthy and deserving of nothing but death;

and yet they're also words of complete trust, confessing God to truly be a merciful God.

The Church has taught these words to confirmation students since Matthew first recorded them in his Gospel—

they're words that prepare us well to receive Christ under *our* roof.

They're words that confess our sin and yet the goodness of our Lord as well.

They confess our unworthiness, but the Lord's healing presence.

Margaret rejoiced in these words.

And even more,

she rejoiced in the Lord coming to her—

as unworthy and utterly sinful as she confessed herself to be—

she rejoiced that the Lord came anyhow.

As she prepared to fall asleep in Jesus,

she trusted first and foremost in the promises of Christ to her.

She trusted the grace and new life promised to her in Holy Baptism.

She trusted the promise of forgiveness, life, and salvation

given to her by the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.

And in all of this,

she trusted that Jesus was Lord—

that whatever He says goes:

“Lord, only say the *Word* and I shall be healed.”

So when He says,

“Take; eat; this is My body, given for you for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:26)

Margaret delighted to take and eat—

for she knew that if Christ said it, He meant it.

And unworthy as she knew herself to be,

she delighted nonetheless for Him to come.

Margaret's trust in Christ,

like the centurion's,

was the sort that,

“when Jesus heard it, He'd marvel and say,

‘Truly, I tell you, I've not found such faith in all Israel’” (8:10).

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