

Daily Reflections

ADVENT

The Divine Intervention

November 28, 2016

Scripture

Matthew 8:5-11

When Jesus 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 man 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."

Our Scripture Reflection

Jesus is absolutely wowed by the faith and humility of the pagan Roman centurion. Who would have thought that such a person would acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus over him, especially a person with such power and authority? But he did! And, he received an incredible gift from Jesus that day. A good lesson for Advent: no matter who we are, no matter how much money, power or knowledge we possess, Jesus is Lord and King of all. May we learn to bend our knee before Him.

Food for your Journey

Sister Joan Chittister tells the story of a priest who once traveled to see a renowned spiritual teacher, to spend a time on retreat with him.

"Master," he said upon arriving, "I come to you seeking enlightenment."

"Well, then," the master said, "for the first exercise of your retreat, go into the courtyard, tilt back your head, stretch out your arms and wait until I come for you."

Just as the priest arranged himself in that position, the rains came. And it rained. It rained the rest of the afternoon. Finally, the old master came back. "Well, priest," he asked, "have you been enlightened today?"

"Are you serious?" the priest asked, in disgust. "I've been standing here with my head up in the rain for an hour. I'm soaking wet. I feel like a fool!"

The master said, "Well, priest, for the first day of a retreat that sounds like great enlightenment to me."

--Joan Chittister, *Songs of the Heart: Reflections on the Psalms* (Twenty-Third Publications, 2011), 23-24.

The centurion has all the power in his relationship with Jesus. Yet, unlike the priest in the story, he is no fool. He could have lorded it over Jesus, but instead he sets his personal authority aside and submits himself to the authority of Jesus, a Jew -- a subjugated member of a captive people. This wise officer understands that spiritual humility is the prerequisite to healing.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Help me to imitate the attitude of the Roman centurion who, while possessing tremendous power and authority, nonetheless acknowledged You as His Lord and Savior. Please give me the Grace to do the same. Amen.