

Church of the Holy Comforter
Got to Have Faith”

Heavenly Father, through weak human words, give us grace to hear your true and living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Imagine you are driving down a dark winding road. You can only see where our headlights shine. You can only see ahead to the next turn or the crest of a hill. The shafts of light are swallowed up by the darkness. You cannot see the dangers or the obstacles that lie to our left or to our right. You cannot even see our destination.

No Worries, you got this covered, you are not afraid, you have been down roads just like this one before and everything was fine. If something, darts out in front of us our brakes will work, our reflexes will instantly kick in and you will be safe. Today some cars have automatic systems that will stop your car in an effort to avoid an accident.

My wife thinks I need a system that prevents me from drifting out of my lane when I drive, although I have no idea, why. We all drive at night, on curvy roads, maybe a little too fast but we know our reflexes and our breaks will keep us safe. We have faith in our cars and in ourselves. This type of faith is based upon our experiences. We know that we will be OK driving down that winding road because we have done it a hundred times before and have made it safely. Faith does not mean you know exactly where this road leads or how fast your brakes will work. We know that a deer might jump out or a tree limb might fall down and if that fear of the unknown begins to consume us, we would be paralyzed. We would not be able to move. Our analytical minds are aware of the dangers but based on previous experiences we continue down that road.

The faith I am talking about comes from our relationship with God. Because of our relationship, we trust God.

In today's Gospel Jesus is surprised by the faith of the Centurion. This leader of men is the ultimate power in the region and yet he was humble before Jesus. He did not feel worthy to have Jesus enter his home. He was most likely a Gentile and according to Jewish tradition, this would have made Jesus unclean.

The authority of the Centurion is without question. It is understood that when he says **come**; you come; when he says, **go**; you go.

Nevertheless, with all of his authority, he cannot save the life of his servant.

The Centurion understands far more than the Jewish elders do. He has heard of Jesus, and of his miracles; although he does not have a relationship with God, he realizes that as a Centurion he has authority over men, and that does not compare with the authority Jesus has over life and death.



Because of centuries of dogma and tradition, we have faith in God just as the Jews did. Sometime our faith like the Jews can be rigid and inflexible but not the centurion.

Oh No, his faith, his trust in God was open to the love and the care that God provides for all. Jews and Gentiles alike.

While doing my preparation for today's sermon, I was reminded that Luke does not just trace Jesus's lineage back only to Abraham.

He traces Jesus his lineage back to Adam meaning that Jesus is not only the savior and redeemer for the Jews, but for all humankind and all nations.

Our faith in God is based on the relationship that we have with God.

We are fully aware of the dangers that exist in the world, we know the same God that has shielded us from any of these trials, and tribulations before will shield us from them in the future.

The elders come to Jesus and tell him about the Centurion, they say he is a "good guy", he built our synagogue. They brought the message

"But only speak the words and let my servant be healed".

This is so powerful. Your power is limitless, you do not need the laying of hands, and you do not need to come here,

"JUST SAY THE WORD".

Growing up I heard similar words almost every week, "Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only said the word and my soul shall be healed". I took it for fact then and I take it for fact now.

Jesus says, "I tell you not even in Israel have I found such faith". Even his disciples, who have seen every act and heard every word, do not have the level of faith that this Centurion has, at least not at this point. The Centurion knows the power Jesus has to change lives and he asks that his servant be saved. Not even his disciples realize that he is the savior.

But do we have the same amount of faith in God as we do in our brakes?

I do not think all of us do, I know sometimes I do not.

When an accident happens, do we all yell and curse the car manufacture or God?

We say "**BUT WHY ME GOD?**" we do not say, "But why me GM?" Or "But why me Honda?"



If I can take my driving at night metaphor a little further. Are there people you know or meet parked on the side of the road of life?

Afraid to move forward or backward, just lost in the dark.

Than you, come down the road with your high beams on, confident that this road will take you to where you want to go.

You aluminate the darkness with your faith. You can be the guide for that person sitting on the side of the road.

With your headlights and theirs, together you both can see twice as far in the darkness.

Moreover, the more people that travel with you the brighter, the clearer the road becomes.

One of my favorite prayers about faith and the Holy Comforter is from St. Francis de LaSalle

Do not fear what might happen tomorrow. The same everlasting father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and every day. Either he will shield you from suffering, or he will give you unfailing strength to bear. Be at peace then, put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.

St. Francis is asking us to have faith because God has always cared for us.

- Become the light in the darkness,
- Lead others to their destination.

When you find that person stuck on the side of the road of life,
Stop and ask if they need help, tell them they are not alone.

If you are not sure of the way, ask your brother or sister if you can travel with them until morning.

Amen

