



THIS IS YOUR SPACE TO BELONG

7 FEBRUARY 2021

READING: LUKE 7:1-17

After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ²A centurion

“ there had a slave whom he valued highly, and who was ill and close to death. ³When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. ⁴When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, ‘He is worthy of having you do this for him, ⁵for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us.’ ⁶And Jesus went with them, but when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, ‘Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; ⁷therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, “Go”, and he goes, and to another, “Come”, and he comes, and to my slave, “Do this”, and the slave does it.’ ⁹When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, ‘I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.’ ¹⁰When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

¹¹ Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. ¹²As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother’s only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. ¹³When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ ¹⁴Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, ‘Young man, I say to you, rise!’ ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶Fear seized all of them; and they

glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has risen among us!’ and ‘God has looked favourably on his people!’ ¹⁷This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

These are words of faith

Thanks be to God

REFLECTION POINTS:

Today, we have 2 very different people coming from different backgrounds, expectations and positions of power. Luke deliberately places them together so he must do this for a reason.

The Roman centurion has wealth and power, a future. The widow has none of those with the loss of her son. And yet they are both desperate.

The centurion seeks out Jesus – whether he does so out of desperation or because of what he has heard, what he has been told, we don’t know. The widow is just doing what she has to do, putting one foot in front of the other and carrying out the rituals of her faith.

The centurion valued his slave, the widow weeps for her son. Is there a difference here? What can Jesus see here which perhaps we cannot? Perhaps our reading of the story through the lens of 2021 adds veils that are simply not there. Perhaps we miss the nuances which Luke’s audience would have picked up immediately.

What does ‘healing’ mean? It can be so problematic. We know after our 2020 experiences that not all illnesses can be cured, so what does that mean for us as people of faith?

In the new translation of the Roman Catholic mass, during the communion liturgy the people respond with the words: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.” Does this help us to unpack this dilemma?

How do these words of the centurion, together with the actions of Jesus towards the widow of Nain, help us to find a way to alleviate the suffering of another? How can we bring healing into the brokenness of the world?

And what does it mean to uphold the dignity of the human person? Why should we be concerned with this?

