**4th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

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

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ we heard the Lord say “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

What is this faith that our Lord God is marveling at? Is it a belief or is it something more? In order to answer these questions we must examine the words belief and faith.

Belief is a word that expresses a concept of understanding. In a very real sense one could say that an unproven idea is a belief. A theory is a great example of a belief.

Faith on the other hand implies something that is known or proven. When I set the alarm clock at night I have faith that it will alarm in the morning at the time for which I set it. I have this faith because every time that I did this in the past it alarmed at the time for which it was set.

This is how are faith in God should be. We have faith in God because we have experienced Him; we have come to know Him through our relationship with Jesus. It is through this relationship that we obtain salvation. We confess our faith in this salvific relationship in the Creed or the Symbol of Faith.

It is interesting that the first words of the Creed have been translated into English as “I believe in…” The first words of the Creed could be translated as I have faith in…We have faith in the God revealed and experienced in the Holy Trinity as expressed in this Creed, in history and our living experience of Him.

One of the most concrete ways that we experience God is through prayer. Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ tells us “whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:13) Many of us question our faith because sometimes the things we ask for in prayer we do not receive. This is because God knows what we need. The answer to our prayers maybe “No, that is not good for you” or “not at this time, wait” or we may receive what we ask for in the manner we ask or in a different way. When we don’t get what we ask for our faith sometimes wavers because we forget what we say in the Lord’s Prayer “Your will be done.” (Matthew 6:10) Unwavering faith has nothing to do with our will. Unwavering faith has to do with seeking God’s will in all things.

When the centurion speaks about obedience of those that report to him he equates that obedience to the obedience of all of creation to Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. The centurion says that I not only believe that my servant will be healed but, I know from the experience of You that he will be healed. The Centurion has faith because he knows how faith and obedience are related by others fulfilling his will and by being obedient himself fulfilling the will of others, as “one under authority” as it says in the Gospel (Matthew 8:9).

Christ marvels at this because the centurion is able to understand the relationship between obedience and faith; that obedience is and faith are about fulfilling the command or will of another. That faith and obedience are about freedom. When we fulfill the will of God we come free. We become free from death and corruption. When we turn our will and our life over to God He gives it back to us transformed. It is transformed because we no longer need to make choices about what is the right thing to do in any situation; we are set free. This is what it means to have great faith.

The great faith of one man is to be marveled at. It is the greatest and most beautiful thing on earth, for by faith a slave becomes free, a hireling becomes a son of God and a mortal man becomes immortal.”

So, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ let us have great faith obtaining freedom and life everlasting by surrendering our self will to God’s will by being obedient to His commandments. Amen