**Liturgy: “Lord, I am not worthy…”**

***“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”***

This prayer is not exactly something one would want to say to **God.** Yet, these words are prayed by Catholics every liturgy before receiving **Communion.**

The plea represents our **brokenness** due to **Original Sin,** which is the intrinsic brokenness everyone has inherited from Adam and Eve’s fall. As stated in Genesis, “By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, from which you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:19).

With the existence of sin, we are **imperfect.** We long for happiness, for something greater. As **St. Augustine** says, **“our hearts are restless until they rest in God.”**

**Evil** exists in the world, and we are all broken.

Recognizing our imperfection is important, and the Catholic liturgy reminds us of this. But don’t beat yourself up for being fallen because there is hope.

In the Gospel of **Matthew,** **Jesus** is approached by a **Centurion,** who pleads with **Him** to cure his servant.

Upon hearing that the **Lord** would come to help 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…’***

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…You may go; as you have believed, let it be done for you’”* (Matthew 8:8, 10, 13).

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**The Roman centurion**—a man of power and authority—subjects himself to **Christ** and has faith in **Him.** He recognizes his own brokenness, saying that he is not worthy of the **Lord.**

**How does Jesus respond?** He does not say that the **centurion** is *broken* or that he is *not worthy*; rather, **Jesus** commends him, even to the point of saying *“in no one in Israel have I found such faith.”*

**So why do Catholics recite this recognition of their inadequacy every week at Mass?**

One must look even further than this story of healing to find the answer. Look to the **Crucifixion.** Imagine **Jesus, the Lord,** dying on the cross, a **symbol of all the sins of humanity He** carried for us. **Jesus** redeems us on **Good Friday.**

Before we receive the **Body and Blood of Jesus,** we recognize that we are **not** the **Lord,** that we are broken. The **prayer** prepares us for an ***encounter with God and is a recognition that Jesus is Lord, and that His Body and Blood saves us.*** It is the ultimate expression of **faith and surrender to God.**

We should **not** equate ***unworthiness with being unloved in the eyes of God.*** **Unworthiness** is simply recognizing that we are not perfect, and that we sin.

**Jesus fulfills God’s promise that He would send a redeemer to save us.** Isn’t what we are preparing for during the **Advent Season?**

For **Jesus is the Redeemer** who makes us worthy and allows us to be saved and WHO came to save us from sin, satan, and death. The least we can do is **recognize God’s saving power**.

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**Jesus** is the one who delivers us from our sins, our unworthiness, and bestows grace upon us.

This prayer we recite reminds us that we are dealing with the **great mystery, God.** We receive, Jesus, the most incredible gift **God** could give us.

Therefore, we pray that we are unworthy of **Jesus’ mighty words and deeds** so that we may be saved from that **unworthiness.**

**St. Thomas Aquinas expresses a similar sentiment in his prayer before Communion:**

***“Almighty and ever-living God, I approach the sacrament of your Only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ* *I come sick to the doctor of life, unclean to the fountain of mercy, blind to the radiance of eternal light, and poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth.***

***Lord, in your great generosity, heal my sickness, wash away my defilement, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty, and clothe my nakedness.”***

**“Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof…my life—but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”**

**People repeat 3X:**

***“Lord, I am not worthy that you should come in my life but only say the word and my servant [Name] shall be healed!”***