

Reflection

Divine Secrets of the Gentile Centurion

What do you know a thing or two about? Are you an expert cook, teacher, salesperson, or plumber?

Today's Gospel tells us that our everyday experience can be a springboard to spiritual insight. The centurion draws on his military experience to nail an insight that had escaped Jesus' followers. Essentially, the centurion says: *As a commanding officer, I know a thing or two about authority, and I know where you are on the organizational chart. There's no need to give the order in person. Just say the word, and I will consider it done.*

The centurion's riff on authority prompts Jesus to do something he's never done before: heal a dying man *in absentia*. It's not that Jesus couldn't have done this before, it's just that the centurion is the first one to make the connection between natural and supernatural power and ask Jesus to exercise it. Significantly, the centurion is a Gentile, a religious outsider. He isn't making a retreat or partway through the RCIA program when he connects the dots between his own authority and divine authority. He's a regular guy with a secular job.

We sometimes forget that our daily lives are God's blackboard. Any good spiritual teacher will tell you that life's simple lessons are gold: things like how to defuse office drama, how to keep preschoolers engaged on a rainy day, or how to handle a high-maintenance customer. It's all good, and we are mistaken if we think we're supposed to bracket such things when we come before God.

What do you know a thing or two about? Draw a line between your own passion or principles and how you see God. It might be just the thing God can use to open your eyes to divine secrets.

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