**10 2 16*”THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK”***

***“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us.”***

St. Paul on this Second Sunday of Luke tells us with what attitude we must live our lives. He is telling us first to recognize who our God is; and then to know who we are in relation to Him. When Abraham first encountered the Lord, he said ***“I am but dust and ashes.”***  When Peter encountered Jesus in the boat and realized that He had commanded the fish of the sea, that He was in control of nature- his reaction was the same; ***“he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"***

The love that God has for us brings us a humility of heart, a sense of unworthiness, and a recognition of our own sinfulness.When we realize how much the transcendent and all-powerful God cares for and loves us our reactions, beloved, must be the same. We do not hold our heads high and proclaim to the world that “we are saved.” We do not judge or feel better than others. We must pray with the centurion: ***"Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.”***

You see beloved, the servant that will be healed is our soul. Even though we are unworthy of the love of our magnificent God, the fact is He does love us intensely and wishes to live inside of us in intimate communion. He desires to bring us peace and health of soul and body. The Word that heals us is our Lord Jesus, who gives us the Holy Spirit. This is the treasure that we contain in earthen vessels. The fact that God Himself dwells in us should change the entire way in which we view life. We recognize that we are weak and depend on God for everything- and we become thankful. When something good comes to us, we recognize that it is our Lord who gives us this gift- and we are thankful. When something bad comes to us, we recognize that our Lord allows it to strengthen our faith, to give us courage, and to allow us to share in His cross. It is by sharing His cross that we can overcome any obstacle. Evil itself is destroyed by the cross. We share in this victory- and we are even more thankful.

Finally, beloved, we must recognize that our weak earthen vessels can never have a complete or pure faith in our earthly lives. In this temporal world we will never have a perfect faith and we will continue to sin against God. We still have corruption and physical death inside of our earthen vessels. As we begin to recognize our own weaknesses and sinfulness, and begin the great struggle against them, it becomes impossible to judge anyone else. As we humble ourselves, the Holy Spirit, this great treasure inside of us, gives us power. We begin to love again, and without knowing it, we begin to live a life of virtue- and our faith increases. The life inside of us conquers the death inside of us. This, then, is the transcendent power of God. This is the treasure that our gracious Lord has given to us in the earthen vessels of our bodies. This is the treasure that He desires, above all else to share with each one of us. Amen.