

Thursday of the Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 9,7-9): King Herod heard of all that Jesus was doing and did not know what to think, for people said, «This is John, raised from the dead». Others believed that Elijah or one of the ancient prophets had come back to life. As for Herod, he said, «I had John beheaded; who is this man about whom I hear such wonders?» (...).

The authority of the State and its limits

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, in view of the unreasonable actions of the "Prince", we wonder: up to where we ought to obey the political powers? Christians are bound to the State juridical laws as a moral order. But if the State punishes "being a Christian" as such, it does not then exert its power as a guarantor, but as a destroyer of unalienable rights.

In this case, it is not a shame, but an honor, to be punished. Those who suffer for this reason are walking in the Footsteps of Christ. The crucifixion of Christ points to the limitations of the State power and shows just where its rights end and it becomes necessary to stand firm, no matter our suffering. The faith of the New Testament does not acknowledge revolutionaries, but martyrs: they recognize the authority of the State, but also its limits. Their resistance implies doing everything at the service of the law and of the community (even if it comes from authorities strange or hostile to the faith), but not obeying when they are told to do evil.

—O Lord – our King, we pray to You for our authorities and we worship You.