

# Saturday of the Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (Mt 14,1-12): On one occasion the news about Jesus reached King Herod. And he said to his servants, «This man is John the Baptist. John has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him».**

**Herod had, in fact, ordered that John be arrested, bound in chains and put in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For John had said to him, «It is not right for you to have her as wife». Herod wanted to kill him but he did not dare, because he feared the people who regarded John as a prophet.**

**On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst of the guests; she so delighted Herod that he promised under oath to give her anything she asked. The girl, following the advice of her mother, said, «Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a dish». The king was very displeased, but because he had made this promise under oath in the presence of the guests, he ordered it to be given her. So he had John beheaded in prison and his head brought on a dish and given to the girl. The girl then took it to her mother. Then John's disciples came to take his body and bury it. And they went to bring the news to Jesus.**

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***«The news about Jesus reached King Herod»***

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**Today, our liturgy proposes us to contemplate an injustice: the beheading of St. John the Baptist; and, at the same time, to discover in God's Word the need of a clear and concrete testimony of our faith to fill out the world with hope.**

**I invite you to center our consideration in the person of Herod, the tetrarch. In fact, it is a counter-testimony for us, but it will help us to emphasize some interesting aspects, important enough for our testimony of faith amid the world. «The news about Jesus reached King Herod» (Mt 14:1). This assertion underlines an apparently correct, but not too sincere, attitude. It is the same kind of reality we can today find in many persons and, perhaps, even in ourselves. There are many who have heard of Jesus, but, who is He actually?, what kind of personal implication can we find in him?**

**First of all, we must give the correct answer; Herod's reply is but vague information: «This man is John the Baptist. John has risen from the dead» (Mt 14:2). Most probably you will be missing here Peter's reply to Jesus' question: «He said to them, 'but who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'» (Mt 16:15-16). And this assertion does not leave any room for fear or indifference but it rather gives way to a testimony based in the Gospel of hope. This is how His Holiness Saint John Paul II defined it in his apostolic Exhortation The Church in Europe: «Therefore, in union with the whole Church, I invite my brothers and my sisters in faith constantly to be open in trust to Christ and to allow themselves to be renewed by him, proclaiming to all people of good will in the power of peace and love that whoever encounters the Lord comes to know the Truth, discovers the Life, and finds the Way leading to it».**

**Today, Saturday, let the Mother of God, the Mother of hope, help us to really discover Jesus and to bear witness of him to our brethren.**