

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?». And he was anxious to see him.

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Today, the Gospel tells us how Herod was anxious to see Jesus (cf. Lk 9:9). Such an urge to see Jesus was born out of curiosity. A lot was being said about Jesus because of the miracles which He was performing. Many spoke about Him. And Jesus' behavior was bringing to the minds of a lot of people the names of several prophets: Elijah, John the Baptist etc. But, being just a matter of curiosity, Herod's whims do not transcend. To the extent that when Herod meets Jesus he treats Him contemptuously and mocks Him (cf. Lk 23:8-11). Herod's caprice to meet Jesus vanishes when facing Him at last for Jesus refuses to answer his many questions. The Silence of Jesus denounces Herod as corrupt and depraved.

Sometimes, as in the case of Herod, we may have felt like “seeing” Jesus, too. But Jesus in flesh and bones, as in Herod's time, is no longer available to us; although there are other ways for us to meet Jesus. Let me draw your attention to just two of them.

In the first place, the Church's tradition has made Thursday an excellent day to “see” Jesus in the Eucharist. There are many places where, on a Thursday like today, Jesus-Eucharist is exposed. «Eucharistic adoration means entering the depths of our hearts in communion with the Lord, who makes himself bodily present in the Eucharist. In the Sacred Monstrance, he always entrusts himself to us and asks us to be united with his Presence, with his risen Body» (Benedict XVI). —Come over, so you may be bedazzled by His presence.

In the second place we may refer to a popular song that goes: «He is with us and we do not know him». For Jesus dwells in many of our brothers and sisters who are outcast of society, who suffer and have nobody “who wants to meet them”. In his Encyclical God is Love, Benedict XVI says: «Love of neighbor, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost a responsibility for each individual member of the faithful, but it is also a responsibility for the entire ecclesial community at every level». Hence, as Jesus is waiting for you, in both cases He will welcome you with open arms. So do come over!