Thursday of the Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 9:7-9): Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was greatly perplexed because some were saying, “John has been raised from the dead”; others were saying, “Elijah has appeared”; still others, “One of the ancient prophets has arisen.” But Herod said, “John I beheaded. Who then is this about whom I hear such things?” And he kept trying to see him.

“And he kept trying to see him”

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Today, the Gospel text tells us that Herod wanted to see Jesus (cf. Lk 9:9). That desire to see Jesus stemmed from curiosity. There was a lot of talk about Jesus because of the miracles he performed along his way. Many people spoke of Him. Jesus’s actions reminded the people of various prophets: Elijah, John the Baptist, etc. Yet, because it was mere curiosity, this desire did not go any deeper. Indeed, when Herod finally saw Him, Jesus made no great impression on him (cf. Lk 23:8-11). His desire vanished upon seeing Him face-to-face, because Jesus refused to answer his questions. This silence on Jesus’s part exposed Herod as corrupt and depraved.

Like Herod, we have surely felt, at some point, a desire to see Jesus. While we no longer have the Jesus of flesh and blood as in Herod’s time, we do have other ways in which Jesus is present. I would like to highlight two of them.

In the first place, Church tradition has made Thursdays a special day for seeing Jesus in the Eucharist. There are many places today where Jesus in the Eucharist is exposed for adoration. "Eucharistic adoration is an essential way of being with the Lord. In the sacred Host, he is present, the true treasure, always waiting for us. He is not there for himself, but for us" (Benedict XVI). —Draw near, so that you may be dazzled by His presence.

In the second place, we can refer to a popular song that says: "He is with us, yet we do not recognize Him." Jesus is present in so many of our brothers and sisters who have been marginalized, who suffer, and who have no one who "wants to see them." In his encyclical God Is Love, Pope Benedict XVI states: "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." Thus, Jesus is waiting for you; He welcomes you with open arms in both situations. Draw near!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "It is not a God who is far away that we are seeking, since we have Him present within us, if only we are pure of heart. He lives in us as the soul lives in the body, if only we are good servants of His; i.e., if we are dead to sin." (Saint Columban)

- "Herod was not able to overcome the layers that blocked his heart. The ambition for power, selfishness and weak convictions stifled that possibility of discovering a Jesus who suffered to save him." (Francis)

- “Every society's judgments and conduct reflect a vision of man and his destiny. Without the light the Gospel sheds on God and man, societies easily become totalitarian.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 2257)