

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 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 reminding many people of the names of several prophets: Elijah, John the Baptist etc. But these whims did not transcend mere curiosity. 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 finally facing Him because 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 feel 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 is an essential way of being with the Lord. The Lord is present in the tabernacle in His divinity and His humanity. He is not there for Himself, but for us” (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 outcasts 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!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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"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)

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"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)

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“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, N° 2257)