



1) Opening prayer

Father,
guide us, as you guide creation
according to your law of love.
May we love one another
and come to perfection
in the eternal life prepared for us.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2) Gospel Reading - Luke 9,7-9

Herod the tetrarch had heard about all that was going on; and he was puzzled, because some people were saying that John had risen from the dead, others that Elijah had reappeared, still others that one of the ancient prophets had come back to life. But Herod said, 'John? I beheaded him. So who is this I hear such reports about?' And he was anxious to see him.

3) Reflection

- Today's Gospel presents a reaction from Herod listening to the preaching of Jesus. Herod does not know how to place himself before Jesus. He had killed John the Baptist and now he wants to see Jesus close to him. It is always threatening.
- Luke 9, 7-8: Who is Jesus? The text begins with the exposition of the opinion of the people and of Herod on Jesus. Some associated Jesus to John the Baptist and to Elijah. Others identified him with a Prophet, that is, with a person who speaks in the name of God, who has the courage to denounce injustices of those in power and who knows how to give hope to the little ones. He is the Prophet announced in the Old Testament like a new Moses (Dt 18, 15). These are the same opinions that Jesus received from the disciples when he asked them: "Who do people say I am?" (Lk 9, 18). Persons tried to understand Jesus starting from things that they knew, thought and expected. They tried to set him against the background of the familiar criteria of the Old Testament with its prophecies and hopes, and of the Tradition of the Ancients with their laws. But these

were insufficient criteria; Jesus could not enter into them, he was much bigger!

- Luke 9, 9: Herod wants to see Jesus. But Herod said: "John, I beheaded him; so who is this of whom I hear such things?" "And he was anxious to see him". Herod, a superstitious man without scruples, recognizes that he was the murderer of John the Baptist. Now, he wants to see Jesus. Luke suggests thus that the threats begin to appear on the horizon of the preaching of Jesus. Herod had no fear to kill John. He will not be afraid to kill Jesus. On the other side, Jesus does not fear Herod. When they tell him that Herod wanted to take him to kill him, he sent someone to tell him: "You may go and give that fox this message: Look, today and tomorrow I drive out devils and heal, and on the third day I attain my end." (Lk 13, 32). Herod has no power over Jesus. When at the hour of the passion, Pilate sends Jesus to be judged by Herod, Jesus does not respond anything (Lk 23, 9). Herod does not deserve a response.

- From father to son. Some times the three Herods, who lived during that time are confused, then the three appear in the New Testament with the same name: a) Herod, called the Great, governed over the whole of Palestine from 37 before Christ. He appears at the birth of Jesus (Mt 2, 1). He kills the new-born babies of Bethlehem (Mt 2, 16). b) Herod, called Antipas, governed in Galilee from the year 4 to 39 after Christ. He appears at the death of Jesus (Lk 23, 7). He killed John the Baptist (Mk 6, 14-29). c) Herod, called Agrippa, governed all over Palestine from the year 41 to 44 after Christ. He appears in the Acts of the Apostles (Ac 12, 1.20). He killed the Apostle James (Ac 12, 2). When Jesus was about four years old, King Herod, the one who killed the new-born babies of Bethlehem died (Mt 2, 16). His territory was divided among his sons, Archelaus, would govern Judea. He was less intelligent than his father, but more violent. When he assumed the power, approximately 3000 persons were massacred on the square of the Temple! The Gospel of Matthew says that Mary and Joseph, when they learnt that Archelaus had taken over the government of Galilee, were afraid and returned on the road and went to Nazareth, in Galilee, which was governed by another son of Herod, called Herod Antipas (Lk 3, 1). This Antipas governed over 40 years. During the thirty-three years of Jesus there was no change of government in Galilee.

Herod, the Great, the father of Herod Antipas, had constructed the city of Caesarea Maritime, inaugurated in the year 15 before Christ. It was the new port to get out the products of the region. They had to compete with the large port of Tyron in the North and, thus, help to develop trade and business in Samaria and in Galilee. Because of this, from the time of Herod the Great, the agricultural production in Galilee began to orientate itself no longer according to the needs of the families, as before, but according to the demands of the market. This process of change in the economy continued during all the time of the government of Herod Antipas, another forty years, and found in him an efficient organizer. All these governors were 'servants of power'. In fact, the one who commanded in Palestine, from the year 63 before Christ, was Rome, the Empire.

4) Personal questions

- It is well always to ask ourselves: Who is Jesus for me?
- Herod wants to see Jesus. His was a superstitious and morbid curiosity. Others want to

see Jesus because they seek a sense for their life. And I, what motivation do I have which moves me to see and encounter Jesus?

5) Concluding Prayer

Each morning fill us with your faithful love,
we shall sing and be happy all our days;
let our joy be as long as the time that you afflicted us,
the years when we experienced disaster. (Ps 90,14-15)