Conversion of the Heart

Daily Gospel / Liturgycal Cycle C

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Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 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.

Luke 9:7-9
Introductory Prayer:
As I enter your presence today, Lord, I know that I am not worthy to be with you. But you alone, Lord, have the words of eternal life and I believe; I have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. I kneel before you in contrition, adoration and hope in your mercy.

Petition:
Help me, Lord, to be converted to you more fully.

1. Our Daily Conversion to God:
Herod's desire to see Jesus is not precisely based on faith or on motives of conversion. During the entire time of his imprisonment, John the Baptist had constantly invited Herod to conversion. "Herod was in awe of John, knowing him to be a good and upright man, and gave him his protection. When he had heard him speak he was greatly perplexed, and yet he liked to listen to him" (Mark 6:20). Yet Herod continually postponed converting. We need to convert daily. It isnít enough just to say that we have accepted Jesus as our personal lord and savior and have been "born again," we have to start living that new life, renewing our option for Christ each day. Today I want to convert from my weaknesses and shortcomings. I want to draw closer to you, Lord.

2. What Is the Truth?
There comes a moment in life when we have to look in the mirror and see ourselves as we truly are. It takes courage to look directly and ask, "Who are you really? What are you making of yourself and the talents God has given you? What is the truth?" Now, not everything in Herodís life is relative; there is one truth he does accept: "John I beheaded." This could have been the point of departure for true conversion and acceptance of Godís mercy in his life. He at least recognized he had made one mistake. All that he was hearing about Jesus made his conscience uneasy. He was afraid that his sin was coming back to haunt him. Conversion always begins with the acceptance of our failures and inclination to evil. It is said that St. Philip Neri used to look at himself in the mirror in the morning and say: "Lord, watch out for Philip today lest again he betray you."

3. Blessed Are the Pure of Heart:
Jesus himself taught us in the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God." Explaining this beatitude a little more in detail St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "The man who sees God possesses in this act of seeing all there is of the things that are good. By this we understand life without end, eternal incorruption and undying beatitude. With these we shall enjoy the everlasting kingdom of unceasing happiness; we shall see the true light and hear the sweet voice of the Spirit; we shall exult perpetually in all that is good in the inaccessible glory." Seeing and possessing God is the result of our daily conversion. It is the promise of peace of heart, true happiness and everlasting life. It is the fullness of everything man can desire in this life and in the life to come. It is the very meaning of our existence. What more could we ask for?

Conversation with Christ:
Lord, I truly long to see your face. Do not hide your face from me. Help me to accept myself as I truly am and strive to overcome my weaknesses and my inclination to sin. Help me purify my heart so that I might see you in my everyday life and possess you forever in the life to come.

Resolution:
I will seek true conversion today by reciting a sincere Act of Contrition and trying to attend Mass or at least make a visit to Christ in the Eucharist.