**I will grant you whatever you ask of me**

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 5 (Mk 6, 14-29)**

Herod is a foolish man.  When one falls into idolatry and immorality, always he leaves wisdom and intelligence, rationality and the ability to deduce and argue according to truth and rushes into foolishness and ignorance. When the Lord is abandoned, the mind becomes copper and the heart becomes bronze. The light of truth and justice is darkened, one rushes into the darkness of falsehood and all injustice. In addition, the strength to oppose evil is also lost. When we fall into sin and abandon the way of life, we are like dry leaves carried by the wind of Satan where he wants us to go. The story is this sad and terrible reality: from sin one sinks into sin and from sin only false oracles are pronounced: *“Sin directs the heart of the wicked man; his eyes are closed to the fear of God. For he lives with the delusion: his guilt will not be known and hated. Empty and false are the words of his mouth; he has ceased to be wise and do good. On his bed he hatches plots; he sets out on a wicked way; he does not reject evil.” (Ps 36 (35) 2-5).* If, besides one sin, other sins worse than the first are added, there is no longer any possibility of salvation. Evil strikes like a hurricane and destroys man even in that tiny light that still remains in his heart by the grace and mercy of God.

*King Herod heard about it, for his fame had become widespread, and people were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead; that is why mighty powers are at work in him." Others were saying, "He is Elijah"; still others, "He is a prophet like any of the prophets." But when Herod learned of it, he said, "It is John whom I beheaded. He has been raised up." Herod was the one who had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom he had married. John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Herodias harbored a grudge against him and wanted to kill him but was unable to do so. Herod feared John, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man, and kept him in custody. When he heard him speak he was very much perplexed, yet he liked to listen to him. She had an opportunity one day when Herod, on his birthday, gave a banquet for his courtiers, his military officers, and the leading men of Galilee. Herodias's own daughter came in and performed a dance that delighted Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask of me whatever you wish and I will grant it to you." He even swore (many things) to her, "I will grant you whatever you ask of me, even to half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the Baptist." The girl hurried back to the king's presence and made her request, "I want you to give me at once on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was deeply distressed, but because of his oaths and the guests he did not wish to break his word to her. So he promptly dispatched an executioner with orders to bring back his head. He went off and beheaded him in the prison. He brought in the head on a platter and gave it to the girl. The girl in turn gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.*

Today the disciple of Jesus is asked for great prudence, wisdom, far-sightedness, strength and intelligence in the Holy Spirit in order not to be overwhelmed by his fragility, weakness, lust, pride, foolishness, and the fruit of sin in him. He must be vigilant because before him there are many Herodias and very many Salome who dance dances of sin, immorality, idolatry, in order to win his heart. Today it is a very particular dance: that of salvation without Christ Jesus and without his one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church, without conversion to the Gospel and without any faith in the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit. This dance is conquering many hearts and is pushing them not to kill John the Baptist, but the Author of Salvation himself: Christ Jesus our Lord, Savior, Redeemer, God. Before this dance that the world of idolatry and immorality celebrates before our eyes, the Christian is as though he were electrocuted, more than Saul on the road to Damascus. However, this is a satanic and infernal shock and certainly not a shock of the Holy Spirit.

Mother of the Redemption, Angels, Saints make that we never let ourselves be electrocuted by evil.