**MONDAY AUGUST 29 – XXII WEEK O.T. [C]**

**MARTYRDOM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST**

**She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the Baptist."**

**A huge river, an overwhelming river, a river that devastates and creates great disasters is made up of single drops of water flowing together. These drops become the strength of each other. Whoever wants the river to become weaker is obliged in every moment never to become part of it. If one has become it for any reason, one is called to dissociate without delaying. The first truth of moral order teaches that every drop is responsible of all the disaster the other drops cause. One is responsible since it cooperates effectively to give strength of devastation to the other drops. Some decades ago one would speak of evil that is organized and becomes structure of sin. When a structure of sin is raised in history, the damages are considerably huge.**

**It is right to reflect. Whoever does not want to precipitate in the abyss of sin, from where there is no return must be careful not to commit the first sin. A venial sin generates many other venial sins. Little by little the many venial sins lead to the mortal sin. If one does not immediately return into the forgiveness and in the truth of God, with obedience to his Law, one will fall in many other mortal sins. From sin to sin one achieves the non-government of our actions. Whoever wants to keep his hands pure and his conscience righteous must stay away from the transgression of the Law of the Lord. Instead, Herod is a grower of venomous vipers. He thinks he is able to rule them. Instead, he is dominated by them. The greatest sin always wins over the littlest sin. The hate of Herodias toward the prophet is greater than hell. Nothing must stop her desire of death. One is prisoner of vice. One is incarcerated by one’s own passions. Thinking of being free is foolishness. Sin always rules the one who commits it. One remains victims of sin, until one recognizes it, confesses it to the Lord, asks for forgiveness, enters the obedience to his Law. However, in an atheist society like ours, from where God is banned, recognizing the sin becomes impossible. We have no supernatural point of reference. The prophet, only the prophet, is a supernatural point of reference, but one wants the prophet dead. Thus the Word of God is silent and we can act as we please.**

**Let us read the text of Mk 6,17-29**

**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.**

**Who kills John the Baptist? The powerful body of sin ruling at the court of King Herod. Herod, Herodias, Salome, the guests and also the guards are part of this body of sin. Even if the will of killing John the Baptist is only of Herodias, this evil and cruel woman succeeded in her aim, at the reason of the body of sin triumphing in the palace of the king. Herod is lustful. This lust leads him to foolishness and ignorance. Salome is lustful and provocative as well. She prompts the king to swear an oath fruit of foolishness and ignorance, too. Foolish and ignorant is the king, foolish and ignorant are his words. Even the guests or nobles of his kingdom belong to the body of sin. They say nothing to the king. They let him to be overwhelmed by his sin. But Salome, as well, is responsible of the death of John the Baptist. She demands his head. Finally, the guard who has beheaded him is responsible, too. He should have disobeyed the command of the king as well. It is true: when one becomes part of a body of sin, everyone is personally responsible of all evil that the body does. Of course, the responsibility changes from person to person, but everyone is responsible of all evil that the body of sin does. But today who believes in sin since everything is declared a right of the person? We are beyond the time of Herod. That limit of evil has been abundantly overcome by us. Mother of God, obtain for us the grace of never becoming part of a structure of sin. Never. Let us always live in the fear of the Lord.**