**SATURDAY JULY 31 – XVII WEEK O.T. [B]**

**Now Herod had arrested John, bound (him), and put him in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, for John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."**

**Jesus had begun his ministry in the Galilee. Everyone in this country spoke about Him. Herod, too, had the news of his fame. Fame should always precede a person. The fame of a person is his good work. The good works of Christ are the mighty deeds, his signs, but also the authority with which he proclaimed the reign of God, the compassion and the love with which he dealt with every man. On earth, before every man, the good work must precede us. Fame is the true way of evangelization and of attraction of the world to Christ the Lord. Jesus was always preceded by his fame. In Jesus fame is: speaking to authorities, the power of driving out demons, supernatural authority in carrying out signs and mighty deeds. But, first of all, his fame is the divine, supreme, eternal charity with which He loves every man. His compassion toward everyone makes him alike to God in everything, namely in the compassion with which God loves men. The fame of Jesus was what attracted the entire world to Him: compassion. Probably few people need miracles, signs, mighty deeds. Instead, everyone needs compassion. Everyone seeks compassion.**

**Herod is not a great one for the truth of faith. His faith is made of thousands of beliefs, with no relationship with the eternal life. It is a faith deprived of the content of the historical truth. John did not perform any miracle. He only preached the conversion. He baptised in the Jordan River. John is not powerful referring to miracles and signs. It is truth: whoever dies does not come back to life in another person. Everyone dies for himself and resurrects for himself in himself, never in other ones. Life is personal. It is of the individual person and only his. It is only his since the moment of conceiving to the entire eternity. One is not born again, one does not change form of life, one does not live in other people. Jesus is Jesus. John the Baptist is John the Baptist. About this truth, one demands the Christian the highest firmness, the holiest convincement, the strongest and firmest faith, especially in these times in which unrelated thoughts to the truth of Christ Jesus are conquering many hearts and leading many spirits to the spiritual adrift.**

**Herod has no holy life. He has Herodias with him, his brother Philip’s wife. They live in a flagrant adultery, being Philip still alive. Herodias is wicked, devilish. Her wickedness is so much to force Herod to imprison John the Baptist, who had openly denounced the adultery reigning at the court. His courage, this power of Holy Spirit, which makes him denounce the sin, unleashes all the wickedness of Herodias. Herod, who is basically a weak, is dominated by this woman. When one introduces sin in his house, it is bearer of all evil. Whoever lives together with sin will be victim of it, sooner or later. Sin is death and provokes endless troubles. Herod wanted John to die since he is daily prompted and tempted by Herodias. When a sinner lives a concord of sin with another sinner, the power of evil multiplies. The instigated and the instigator, however, are *rei in solidum* of the same fault. We know that Herodias was the one who wanted John to die. As well as she was the one who had him imprisoned, or better: she forced Herod to do it. It is because of this concord of sin that the text says: “Although he wanted to kill him, he feared the people, for they regarded him as a prophet.” Herodias daily instigated Herod to kill John. Herod did not do it because of the fear of people. If he had not feared the people, he would have done it on the first request of Herodias. No one even think about the mystery of sin today. It is an overwhelming force of death killing everyone who falls in it. The more the “concord” in the sin is great, and the greater is its force of death. The more one abandons himself to it and the more it becomes strong and overwhelming, until becoming unstoppable. The “concord” of sin that killed John the Baptist is called: fornication, adultery, lasciviousness, foolishness, imprudence, human respect, weakness, subjection. The “concord” of sin implies a “concord” of sinners. In the Book of Wisdom, this “concord” is called “Concord in wickedness.” In the killing of John the Baptist the “concord” of sinners is made up of: Herod, Herodias, Salome, the guests. *In solidum* they are all responsible of the death of John the Baptist. Each of them could have impeded it and they did not. They have rather collaborated for their own part. One wins the force of the sin in two ways: breaking and shattering the “concord” of sinners. Taking away, each of us, our “concord” to sin. Breaking the concord of sinners is an arduous, difficult, impossible thing. We do not have neither the means, nor the instruments, nor the actual possibility to do it. One thing can be done, though, it must be done: each of us can take away his “concord” to sin. This is the Christian testimony: always taking away even the smallest, meaningless “concord” to the sin. This is the Christian martyrdom: letting the other take away our life in a cruel way in order not to give our “concord” to the sin.**

**Prisoner of his foolishness, drowned in his sin, Herod is forced to kill John the Baptist. Sin always leads us to do things we would never want them to happen. Whoever wants things not to happen must take every care to avoid sin, even the smallest sin. The venial sin is always an open door toward the mortal sin. This truth, too, is totally ignored by man. The girl does not know what to do with the head of John the Baptist. She receives it and she gives it to her mother, whose wickedness is satisfied. John has died and can no longer cry out her sin. Just because the sin is no longer cried out, it does not stop being a sin. Our conscience will cry it out eternally when we are in the hell, salted with fire, as the Gospel according to Mark teaches us. The conscience does not find peace just because one takes away the one who manifests or cry out her sin. This illusion is great, too.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 14,1-12**

**At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the reputation of Jesus and said to his servants, "This man is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why mighty powers are at work in him." Now Herod had arrested John, bound (him), and put him in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, for John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." Although he wanted to kill him, he feared the people, for they regarded him as a prophet. But at a birthday celebration for Herod, the daughter of Herodias performed a dance before the guests and delighted Herod so much that he swore to give her whatever she might ask for. Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and the guests who were present, he ordered that it be given, and he had John beheaded in the prison. His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. His disciples came and took away the corpse and buried him; and they went and told Jesus.**

**The conscience, and the whole man with it, finds peace in one only way: taking away the sin from the body, from the heart, from the mind, from the thoughts, from the desires, from the will, from the eyes, from every other sense. The conscience finds peace when the whole man is pure. When is man pure? When he walks in the obedience to every Word that has come out of the mouth of God. When one separates himself from the obedience to the Law of the Lord – the adultery is true separation from the Law of the Lord – one becomes impure. There is no peace for our conscience. Herodias, cruel, wicked, merciless, does not stop even before the most heinous abominable practices. Evil can so much when it is left to smoulder in the heart. Not only. It makes an entire reign guilty of its heinous cruelty. Mother of God, help each of your son so that he never falls in the concord of sin. He becomes guilty of every sin he committed. The concord in the sin is the cause of endless evil today.**