

Daily Reflection

March 18, 2020

Herod Antipas ordered the execution of John the Baptist to avoid embarrassment. The story comes to us in today's Daily Office Gospel reading (Mark 6:13-29). Don't stop here because you were looking for something more upbeat! The sordid stories of the Bible are all big "Caution Ahead" signs that remind us what pitfalls to avoid. We ignore them at our own peril.

Herod promised to do whatever Salome asked (first mistake). When she asked for the head of John the Baptist, Herod relented only because he did not want to be embarrassed by reversing himself in front of his guests (second mistake). The core mistake was looking for love in all the wrong places. Even seeming good deeds can produce strife if they flow more from similar neediness than true generosity of heart.

I've never really understood how living as a hermit serves the faith. Aren't we called to acts of compassion in the world? Now I see. Devout hermits separate themselves from all encouragement apart from the love of God. Our present hermitage life can strengthen our connection to the one source of sustenance that does not fail. It can nurture fruits that are not made bitter by neediness.

Find time today to visit and revisit this refrain from the opening hymn today at <https://www.missionstclare.com/english/March/whole/morning/18m.html>

Eye has not seen,
ear has not heard
what God has ready
for those who love him;
Spirit of love, come,
give us the mind of Jesus,
teach us the wisdom of God. (*Marty Haugen*)

Pastor Kathleen Kelly,

Interim Rector



*Salome with the Head of John the Baptist (London),
oil on canvas, by Caravaggio, c. 1607*