

August 29, 2025

Daily Reflections



THE OATH OF A FRIGHTENED KING

By Sister Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

Herod was the one who had John the Baptist 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 (Herodias) 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' 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.

MARK 6:17-29

Reflection

The story of King Herod's birthday banquet and the violent death of John the Baptist tells how a weakened king gave in to his wife's demand for the death of a holy man who perplexed Herod because *"he liked to listen to him speak."* What was it that intrigued Herod when he listened to John's teaching, that made him ponder his personal life and the taking of his own brother's wife? Was it John's humble stance as he bravely stood up for his beliefs before a weakened king who was controlled by his wife's dangerous harboring grudge? What would it have been like if Herod had paid attention to his desire to listen to the holy man?



"John the Baptist" by LRD615 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/?ref=openverse>.

For Pondering and for Prayer

John the Baptist suffered imprisonment and chains as a witness to our Redeemer, whose forerunner he was, and gave his life for him. Lord, our God,

listen as we say: **Guide us into the way of peace.**

Through his birth, preaching, and baptizing John bore witness to the coming of the Messiah.

John called all people to repentance.

By his suffering John showed that Christ would also suffer.

John knew the sufferings of the present were nothing when compared with the glory to be revealed.

Responding to John's call to repentance, we close with the prayer Jesus taught us, Our Father...

FROM BENEDICTINE DAILY PRAYER: A SHORT BREVIARY

If you enjoy reading our reflections and would like to make a donation towards this ministry, click the button below!

[Support CSD](#)



[Visit Website](#)

[714-744-3172](tel:714-744-3172)

[Join Mailing List](#)



To “Unsubscribe” from the daily reflections while remaining on our general mailing list, please [email us](#). The unsubscribe function below will unsubscribe you from all emails from CSD. Please know we will never share your information.

Center for Spiritual Development | 434 A South Batavia Street | Orange, CA 92868 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)