August 29, 2019

Scripture

Mark 6: 17-29
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 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.

Our Scripture Reflection
If you take the time to read the lives of the martyrs you will likely be shocked by one important
fact: They NEVER went to their death kicking and screaming, begging and pleading. Why?
Because God chose them to give witness in this manner and they received special Grace to do
so. All of them, including John the Baptist, saw their death as the ultimate way to give glory to
God.

Food for your Journey
Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again and again, the gift which must
be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to
follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a
man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it
condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost
God the life of his Son: "Ye were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be
cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay
for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.

A Prayer from the Heart
Dear God, Although it is very unlikely that I will ever be called to be a martyr, I am called to be
Your witness every day. Help me, Lord, to live my faith to the fullest. In doing so may I give You
glory. Amen