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"Herod kept trying to see Jesus" (Luke 9:9).

[Eccl 1:2-11](#); [Luke 9:7-9](#)

Today's gospel reading gives us a glimpse of one of the more malevolent actors in the drama of Jesus' life and ministry. Herod Antipas was son of Herod the Great, who ordered the deaths of children in Bethlehem around the time of Jesus' birth. As brutal as his father, Antipas had John the Baptist executed for criticizing his marriage. Deeply paranoid and superstitious, he wondered if Jesus was John risen from the dead.

Luke's phrase, "Herod kept trying to see Jesus," can have two meanings. Herod sought to meet Jesus, which happened when Pilate sent him to the Herodian court before crucifying him. Or it can mean that Herod wanted to understand Jesus in the same way he seemed intrigued by John, who was imprisoned before his execution. When he did finally meet Jesus, Herod only mocked him and used the occasion to curry favor with Pilate.

To really "see" Jesus is to believe in him. The distance between physical sight and spiritual insight is the journey to faith. If someone as evil as Herod could be haunted by Jesus, how much more might we be drawn to him as the mystery of God in history and as our personal invitation to surrender our lives to him?

Life without God can lead to unimaginable confusion, violence and evil -- Herod's witness in the Gospel story. Faith guides us in company with Jesus to find our way to God, no matter how much adversity we encounter in this world. We, too, are actors in the drama of the unfolding gospel story. May we always be filled with the desire to "see" Jesus in all things.

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