

## TRIVIAL PURSUITS

*Ecclesiastes 1: 2-11      Luke 8: 7-9*

*“Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!”* said the troubled old Jewish philosopher, and he then went on to coin a saying that has been used countless times since then: *“There is nothing new under the sun.”*

Jewish tradition attributes this Book of Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth) to King Solomon, the patron of wisdom. Even though he expresses such a dark summary of life, still he gives us food for thought. This wealthy king had so much and he lived a long life but now felt that all had passed as quickly as a puff of wind. Qoheleth seldom mentions God or faith or prayer but takes a long, hard look at life. Basically, he says that life is not worth living unless we seek for wisdom.

In the Gospel we see that Herod the Tetrarch was far from seeking wisdom. In fact, he displays to be the patron of trivial pursuit. He was curious about Jesus, but his curiosity was not the kind that would lead to faith. He wanted to see the famous prophet from Nazareth that everyone was talking about. He was curious to know if he was in any way related to John the Baptist, whom he had executed at the whim of his step-daughter. Herod did indeed get to see Jesus, during the Lord's Passion, when he had him mocked as a king (Lk 23:8). The Gospel writer saw Herod as a shallow, cynical ruler, who respected neither God nor man.

Herod's example is a wake-up call against cynicism. We come to Jesus to know him more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly.