

FEBRUARY 6, 2026 FATHER MICHAEL COUTTS

here's a cliché that goes, “Do you want to hear the good news or the bad news?”

Do you want to hear about a good King David or a bad King Herod?

If you read, what Sirach has to say about King David, it reads like a eulogy that you'll hear at a funeral. So, what was the purpose?

If Sirach praises David and all his great works, but the real purpose is to show obliquely God's glory, God's praise, and chiefly, God's humour.

The story is told of, as soon as God created man, man said to God, “You've created this beautiful companion for me. Now, give me wisdom and understanding to understand woman.” And God said, “No problem. Go to the corners of the earth and you'll gather the wisdom to understand her.” And then, God proceeded to make the world round.

Now, we have here another sense of humour.

David's seven brothers were brought before Samuel, and they said he was the greatest king. And God says, “Uh-huh. I've got news for you. The lowly shepherd that you didn't even bother to look for, I have anointed him.”

And so, we hear the great stories that King David did.

King David fought against Goliath. King David actually fought with a lion barehanded and defeated him. King David won victories over the armies, and there were tens of thousands that came and praised—praised David.

And all through this, David gave glory to God. He said, “Yeah, God, you have given me all this victory and success, but it is all due to you.”

But during this last week, we've been also hearing about the failures of David, how he looked at Bathsheba and had a lust for her, committed adultery, then proceeded to murder her husband, Uriah the Hittite, way up in Syria.

Then, he began to be arrogant and condescending. He says, "I'm so great." He says, "I'm entitled to all this." He made a census of all his people.

This type of entitlement seems to be repeating itself in history even till today.

I can name six countries in the world where the leaders feel just like David "I'm entitled. I'm the greatest."

Like Muhammad Ali said, "I am the greatest," and the poor man now is buried.

But the beauty about King David was he was just the opposite to entitlement. He said to the Lord, "What is man that you should keep him, and mine mortal man that you should care for him? And I see the heavens, the work of your hands."

He gave glory to God all the time.

And when God said, "I'm going to punish you for your sins," David said, "Please don't punish my people, don't punish the kingdom; I'm responsible."

That humility brought out the greatness of David, a greatness that God gave to him, a greatness that God gives to each one of us.

Now, you and I don't relate to kings and prime ministers and presidents because we will never be them.

But we can take a page from David's book, namely, to realize that, whenever you do something great, the Lord is always there to say, "I have given you the talent, I have given you the skills."

Give glory to God where it deserves.

And when we fail like David, we can say, "You know, Lord, I'm human, I'm frail, I make mistakes, I've sinned. Have pardon on me."

From this great King David, we hear King Herod in the Gospel today, and he seems to be totally the opposite of King David.

He's got no class. He's got no courage. He's looking out to be favoured by people around him.

He's got yes-men around him, who will kiss him at any given time and bow down and may give him glory, even when he makes a fool of himself.

History seems to repeat itself even till today.

But in every terrible king or terrible ruler of any country, there's always a spark of goodness because we have been made in God's image and likeness.

And even in King Herod, we see that spark of goodness. He wanted to kill John because of Herodias, but he also knew that John was a man of integrity. John was a man of courage. John was a man of truth, and he wanted to listen to him.

But then, finally, his downfall was he was so concerned about what other people thought about him.

We, too, are like that.

I remember a wise lady telling me, when I said, “You know what? I like to do things, but I'm bothered about what people say to me,” and she said, “What people think about you is none of your business.”

God tells you what to do deep down within your heart.

Follow that instinct because God does not put that into your heart without giving you the courage, the support, and God's grace to fulfil all the good that God is calling you and calling me to.

King Herod was boasting all the time.

We find King David in silence, keeping that surrounding around him, looking out to see what God was telling him.

And when God gave him the inspiration, he fulfilled it to the end.

May we do the same. God bless you all.