

# Sunday 3rd (C) of Lent

**Gospel text (Lk 13,1-9): One day some persons told Jesus what had occurred in the Temple: Pilate had Galileans killed and their blood mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. Jesus replied, «Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this? I tell you: no. But unless you change your ways, you will all perish as they did. And those eighteen persons in Siloah who were crushed when the tower fell, do you think they were more guilty than all the others in Jeru-salem? I tell you: no. But unless you change your ways, you will all perish as they did».**

**And Jesus continued with this story, «A man had a fig tree growing in his vine-yard and he came looking for fruit on it, but found none. Then he said to the gar-de-n-er: ‘Look here, for three years now I have been looking for figs on this tree and I have found none. Cut it down, why should it use up the ground?’. The gardener replied: ‘Leave it one more year, so that I may dig around it and add some ferti-lizer; and perhaps it will bear fruit from now on. But if it doesn't, you can cut it down’».**

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***«Unless you change your ways, you will all perish as they did»***

+ Cardinal Jorge MEJÍA Archivist and Librarian of Holy Roman Church

*(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)*

Today, third Sunday of Lent, the evangelical reading contains Jesus' call to penance and conversion. Or, rather, a demand for a change in our lives.

In Evangelical language “To convert to” means to change not only our innermost attitude but our exterior style, too. It is one of the mostly employed parables in the

**Gospel. Remember that, before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, saint John the Baptist summarized his advocacy with the same saying: «Preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins» (Mk 1:4). And, immediately after, Jesus preaching can be summarized with these words: «Repent and believe the good news!» (Mk 1:15).**

**Yet, today's reading has some characteristics of its own that request faithful attention and an adequate answer. It can be said that the first part, with the two historic references (the Galileans' blood shed by Pilate and the crumbling of the Siloh tower), contains a threat. It is impossible to call it any other way!: we deplore the two misfortunes —regretted and moaned at the time— but Jesus Christ, most seriously, says to all of us: —«Unless you change your ways, you will all perish as they did» (Lk 13:5).**

**This shows us two basic things. In the first place, the total seriousness of the Christian commitment. And, secondly, if we do not respect it, as God commands, the possibility of our death, not in this world but, much worse, in the other one: the eternal doom. These two deaths in our text are nothing but examples of another death, that cannot be compared to the first one.**

**Each one of us will eventually find out how to face this demand of personal change. Nobody is excluded. But if this may worry us, the second part should comfort us, instead. The “gardener”, who is Jesus, begs the owner of the vineyard, his Father, to wait another year. And, in the meanwhile, He will do whatever possible (and the impossible, by dying for us) so that the vineyard may bear fruit. That is, we change our ways! This is the message of Lent. Let us, therefore, take it seriously. The saints —though late in his life saint Ignatious of Loyola is one instance— do change by God's grace while inciting us to change too.**