

# Thursday of the Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (Lk 13,31-35):** Some Pharisees came to Jesus and gave him this warning, «Leave this place and go on your way, for Herod wants to kill you». Jesus said to them, «Go and give that fox my answer: ‘I drive out demons and heal today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my course!’. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and for a little longer, for it would not be fitting for a prophet to be killed outside Jerusalem.

»O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you slay the prophets and stone your apostles! How often have I tried to bring together your children, as a bird gathers her young under her wings, but you refused! From now on you will be left with your temple and you will no longer see me until the time when you will say: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord».

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*«Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How often have I tried to bring together your children, but you refused!»*

Fr. Àngel Eugeni PÉREZ i Sánchez  
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we can admire Jesus' resolve to accomplish the mission his Father in Heaven has entrusted him with. Nothing would stop him: «I drive out demons and heal today and tomorrow» (Lk 13:32). With this attitude, the Lord set out the rules giving guidance on how the messengers of the Gospel should have to behave in front of the persecutions they would be facing through the centuries to come: not to be afraid of any temporal power. St. Augustine says that, in troubled times, the shepherds are not to abandon their flock: neither those who will suffer martyrdom nor those who will survive. Just like the Good Shepherd who, when He sees the wolf coming, does not desert the flock, but risks and lays down his own life for the sheep. But, realizing the fervor with which all the pastors of the Church were willing to

shed their own blood, He points out that the best thing to do will be to draw lots to see who will have to suffer martyrdom and who will be spared to look, later on, after the survivors.

Unfortunately, in our time and with undue frequency, we hear the news of new religious persecutions, tribal violence or ethnic riots in the Third World. Western embassies advise their fellow citizens to move over from these areas and repatriate their personnel. The only ones who remain are the missionary and volunteer organizations, who feel they would betray “their own faithful” should they desert them in those moments of trouble.

«O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you slay the prophets and stone your apostles! How often have I tried to bring together your children, as a bird gathers her young under her wings, but you refused! Look, your house is left to you desolate» (Lk 34:35). This lamentation of the Lord has very especial and sad connotations for us Christians of the 21st century, due to the bloody conflict between Palestinians and Jews. This area of the Near East is for us, the Holy Land, the land of Jesus and Mary. And the clamor for the peace everywhere has to be more intense and sincere for the restoration of peace between Israel and Palestine.