

Thursday of the Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 13:31-35): Some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Go away, leave this area because Herod wants to kill you.” He replied, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and I perform healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I accomplish my purpose. Yet I must continue on my way today, tomorrow, and the following day, for it is impossible that a prophet should die outside of Jerusalem.’”

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how many times I yearned to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were unwilling! Behold, your house will be abandoned. But I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how many times I yearned to gather your children together, but you were unwilling!”

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 cast out demons and I perform healings today and tomorrow” (Lk 13:32). With this attitude, the Lord sets out the rules giving guidance on how the messengers of the Gospel would 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 after the survivors, later on.

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 out 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.

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how many times I yearned to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were unwilling! Behold, your house will be abandoned” (Lk 34:35). This lamentation of the Lord has very special 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.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“God desires not death, but faith. God thirsts not for blood, but for self-surrender. God is appeased not by slaughter, but by the offering of your free will.” (Saint Peter Chrysologus)

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“Jerusalem was the bride, the betrothed of the Lord: He really loved her!”. However, “she wasn’t aware of the Lord’s visitations” and she “made the Lord weep”... Jerusalem fell because of distraction, for not welcoming the Lord who came to save her”. (Francis)

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“On the threshold of his Passion Jesus announced the coming destruction of this splendid building, of which there would not remain "one stone upon another". By doing so, he announced a sign of the last days, which were to begin with his own Passover...” (Catechism of the Catholic

Church, n. 585)