**SATURDAY OCTOBER 23 – XXIX WEEK O.T. [B]**

**"Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!”**

**At the time of Jesus, it was easy to assist to some riots against the occupying power of the Romans. There was always some exalted inducing to arms and to rebellion against them. These riots all ended in bloodshed. The soldiers of Rome tolerated no armed riots against the Empire. Their hand was very heavy. No tolerance. On celebrations, while one was offering the sacrifice to the temple, there was a rebellion, ended, as the other ones, in bloodshed. This riot has been masterminded by some of the Galilee. This episode is referred to Jesus. One expected a word of justification of the action of the Galileans from Him and another one of blame against “the Roman overbearingness and the arrogance.”**

**Jesus does not give a political answer. It is not up to Him to give these answers. Instead, He gives a moral, ethical, of truth according to God answer. Those Galileans killed by Pilates because of their foolishness and ignorance – evangelically speaking, every riot against the one exercising the power is an act of foolishness, ignorance, an act of non-truth and of non-faith – are not greater sinners than the other Galileans to have suffered this fate. One does not measure sin from the cruel outcome of the results of the gestures put into effect. Sin is the transgression of the Law of God and the Law may be transgressed in the secret, too, without no one seeing it. However, one is not less sinner because no one has seen and because consequences are not immediate.**

**The Ecclesiastes teaches that the judgement due to our sins is not always immediate. This is the truth we must constantly hold into heart: the visible fruits of others’ sins do not enable us to declare ourselves innocent, or the others greater sinner than us just because our sin is with no striking fruits at present. Sin always generates death: either physical or moral death, or physical and moral together. Sometimes death is immediate, other times it is very slow. However, the fruit always follows. Sin is sin, regardless of its evident fruits. Sin always produces a fruit of death. Death is the salary everyone must pay for his sin. There is one only remedy to sin: conversion, the return into the Law of the Lord. Life is in conversion. Conversion is to the Law of God. One must always live in the Law of God, if we want to avoid paying our salary to sin with our death or that of the others. It is universal and eternal truth.**

**There are also some cases indirectly provoked by man: by what he does, how he does it, why he does. Many catastrophes we say to be natural always have an indirect or often direct responsibility of man, because of his foolishness, or less wisdom with which he does things. Behind every natural catastrophe, there is almost always an act of ignorance, of less wisdom of man. This act can be personal or of others. In acting, everyone is always obliged to put the greatest wisdom. But wisdom, too, comes from the Lord, it comes from our prayer addressed to him so that He gives us the wisdom of ruling our life well. In Jerusalem, the tower of Siloam fell down and eighteen people die. What did the common mind-set of that time think? Since the tower fell on them, those people are guilty. They are in sin. They are in fault. That is why the tower fell on them, killing them.**

**The same prior truth is reaffirmed. Salvation is not in the hiddenness and not even in considering the others greater sinners than us. Whether one drinks a litre of cobra’s venom or just what one only bite contains, it is the same thing: death. How does one take himself away from death? With conversion. Conversion is in the Law of the Lord. Without conversion, we will perish in the same way. No one deludes himself. No one searches for alternative ways to this truth. There is none. No one thinks of being able to bypass the way of conversion. Whoever wants to live must convert himself. Where there is no conversion, there is only death: physical, spiritual, economic, political, financial, social, civil, religious.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 13,1-9**

**At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. He said to them in reply, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did! Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them  - do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!" And he told them this parable: "There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. (So) cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?' He said to him in reply, 'Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.'"**

**Now Jesus teaches us how we can take ourselves away from the salary of death and who can and must help us so that we can enjoy the fruits of life. God is the Creator, the Lord. The Lord and the Creator wants the fruits from his creatures. The fruits are according to the Spirit, not according to flesh. The fruits are those of the strictest observance of the Law of Covenant.**

**The master complains with the gardener. For three years now, he comes in search of fruit, but he finds none. His patience is over. After all, there is a justice to observe. Why must this fig tree exhaust the soil? If it is not good, one must cut it down and put another one in its place. That of the master is a wise, cleaver, logical reasoning. It is also a reasoning of economic justice. A soil is worth it if one exploits it well. Exploited badly, the work costs more than the earning and it is failing. All reasons of the master are for the fig tree to be cut. It would be irrational to allow it to exhaust the soil with no use. The mediation of the gardener comes in. This man knows that the fig tree does not produce. He knows that it is right to cut it. He knows that it is a right thing to plant another one. He knows all of this. But is all of this a good reason to cut the fig tree? No. All of this is not a good reason to cut it. Why? Because the gardener wants to do something in favour of the tree. What does he want to do? He wants to cure the fig tree with more intensity. He want to hoe around it. He wants to fertilize it. He wants to cure it with more attention than he has done until now.**

**The time the gardener takes is not eternal, very long, though. It is just one year. What is necessary to provide the right and dutiful cures. The Master must be exigent. He must be vigilant so that every justice is fulfilled. The mediator, instead, must be merciful, piteous, rich in charity, compassion. However, the mediator is piteous, compassionate by not letting the fig tree be as it is now. He is charitable toward the fig tree if he provides all the due cures and even more than those dues. If after having provided the due and necessary cures, the tree remains insensible, then it is a right thing to cut it.**

**As one can notice, here one comes in a pastoral rule demanding all our attention. One cannot speak of mercy toward the others in a sole passive way, by asking the Lord that He gives other time for their conversion or repentance, so that they come back to the right way, abandoning the works of evil, of sin, of vice. Mercy is not in the sole intercession. This is surely needed. But in order that there is true intercession it is necessary that it is accompanied by our commitment to do everything that must be done so that the other may produce fruits of true spiritual life. If our commitment, our work, our deed, our daily solicitude is missing, one might never speak of true mercy. May the Mother of God obtain for us the gift of the true mercy toward every man.**