

2. March 2026
LENTEN SPIRITUAL RETREAT
Day 13: “Causes of Misery on Earth”

Our Lenten itinerary today presents us with a supplicatory prayer from the prophet Daniel, who was very clear about the reason why Jerusalem had fallen into ruin.

"Lord our God (...), who didst bring thy people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast made thee a name, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy righteous acts, let thy anger and thy wrath turn away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy hill; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people have become a byword among all who are round about us. Now therefore, O our God, hearken to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplications, and for thy own sake, O Lord, cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline thy ear and hear; open thy eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name; for we do not present our supplications before thee on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of thy great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, give heed and act; delay not, for thy own sake, O my God, because thy city and thy people are called by thy name."
(Dan 9:15–19).

This prayer clearly expresses the sins committed and their consequences. This helps us to better understand the current situation. We know so much misery in this world that each of us could provide enough examples. However, we are becoming less and less willing to point out the real cause, which is precisely the transgression of God's commandments, accumulating crime upon crime. It suffices to mention the murder of innocent children in their mothers' wombs to see how dense and heavy the shadows looming over many nations are. How can there be true peace on earth as long as there is no radical conversion and the lives of the most innocent are not respected? Is it not an illusion to try to create a peaceful world as long as this injustice, which cries out to heaven for vengeance, continues?

It is not enough to list all the possible social or anthropological causes of misery in the world without making it clear that, ultimately, this is a consequence of sin. Therefore, the key to achieving the peace we implore is for people to convert to God and obey His commandments. This must be the perennial message of the Church. It was not in vain that God sent His prophets again and again to point out to His people the link between the transgression of God's law and the misfortunes that befell them, and to remind them that only by turning to the Lord could they obtain healing and restore true order. Are

things any different today?

What a wonderful message has been entrusted to us: to be able to offer, along with a clear mention of the causes of misery on earth, an outstretched hand for reconciliation with God through His Son, who took our sins upon Himself! The answer to Daniel's plea, imploring God's mercy, is the Redeemer, who came for all people and became the way to the Father.

In today's Gospel (Jn 8:21–29), Jesus warns the Jews that they will die in their sins because they did not believe in Him. They did not want to understand that He is the one sent by the Father and, therefore, they were also unable to accept the grace offered to humanity with His coming into the world. Jesus repeats to them: *“I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.”* (Jn 8:24). And further on: *“I have much to say about you and much to judge; but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.”* They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father.” (vv. 26–27)

In these words of Jesus, too, we find a clear mention of sin and its consequences. I believe that most of us are aware of this, although it is worth repeating again and again. The question that arises is what we can do when injustice continues to proliferate, when the call to conversion barely resonates enough to shake people up, when the light given to the Church is often eclipsed and the salt becomes bland (cf. Mt 5:13–14).

We must not give up or fall into an attitude of resignation! Our Father has not turned His back on humanity, even though it has offended Him so many times with a life of sin, and has even mistreated and crucified His own Son.

What we can do on our part is to intensify our following of Christ and offer it to Him as atonement. That would be a response of love and responsibility toward those who do not yet know the way of God. We have undeservedly received the Lord's grace. Now it is up to us to be His witnesses and to counteract the avalanche of darkness with the light of Christ. This is stronger, since only truth has authority in itself, while lies and errors have no foundation.

Therefore, I would like to invite you today to walk the path of holiness, especially as atonement for the countless sins and offenses against God, unbelief, and injustices committed against people.

Thus, the flower of today's meditation is an “expiatory flower.”

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2021/03/01/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2022/03/14/>