Some people told Jesus 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.
Our Scripture Reflection

Many people in Jesus’ day thought that when a tragedy occurred, it was the result of punishment by God for one’s sins. Jesus put that misbelief to bed in John 9:1-3 with a story about a man blind from birth. He does the same in today’s Gospel text about men who had been murdered by Pilate and others who were crushed to death in an accident. None of those who died were more guilty of sin than any other person alive. Jesus’ message is very clear: Repent, that is, get right with God before a tragedy should occur. We know no when our time will come, therefore, be prepared.

Food for your Journey

"It's a jungle out there!" Just ask Jay Rathman. He was hiking in one of the wilderness areas near his northern California home. Passing along a rocky ledge, he sensed a movement beside his face. A timber rattlesnake struck, just missing his right ear. Its fangs got snagged in the wool of Rathman's turtleneck sweater, pulling the snake onto his shoulders. He grabbed it just behind the head with his left hand, as they both tumbled down the slope through the brush and rocks. In this eyeball-to-eyeball encounter, he discovered that snakes don't blink. In about 20 minutes, he was able to throttle the reptile. Later, passing through the checkout gate, Rathman said to Warden Smith, "I'd like to register a complaint about your wildlife here."

Reading that hair-raising account reminds us how closely it resembles life on a daily basis. At the most unsuspecting moment, something strikes at us. We are knocked off balance by the assault .... Who hasn't been tumbled head over heels by demands and deadlines? Who hasn't done battle with poisonous irritations on the slopes of overcommitment, underachievement and burnout? Who hasn't had to fend off surprise attacks from criticism that strike at us like hungry predators and rip into us like needle-sharp claws? They are frequent and varied: physical pain, emotional trauma, relational stress, spiritual doubts, marital conflicts, occupational disappointments, financial reversals ... demonic assaults.


A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, I rededicate my life to You this day. I ask Your forgiveness for what I have done wrong and what I have failed to do. Keep me humble and holy, Lord, because my hearts’ greatest desire is to spend eternity with You.