

Monday After Epiphany

Gospel text (Mt 4,12-17.23-25): When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to settle down in Capernaum, a town by the lake of Galilee, at the border of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the word of the prophet Isaiah was fulfilled: «Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali crossed by the Road of the Sea, and you who live by the Jordan, Galilee, land of pagans, listen: The people who lived in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in the land of the shadow of death, a light has shone».

From that time on Jesus began to proclaim his message, «Change your ways: the kingdom of heaven is near». Jesus went around all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and curing all kinds of sickness and disease among the people. The news about him spread through the whole of Syria, and the people brought all their sick to him, and all those who suffered: the possessed, the deranged, the paralyzed, and he healed them all. Large crowds followed him from Galilee and the Ten Cities, from Jerusalem, Judea, and from across the Jordan.

«The kingdom of heaven is near»

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Today, we begin again, so to speak. «The people who lived in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in the land of the shadow of death, a light has shone» (Mt 4:16), Isaiah, quoted in the gospel —which takes us back to Christmas, tells us. We start again, we get another opportunity. Our time is new, the occasion asks for it, let's humbly let the Father work in our lives.

Today we start the time that God has given us yet again, for us to sanctify, so that we can get close to Him, so that we can turn our lives into service to others.

Christmas is coming to an end, next Sunday with the Baptism of the Lord, and with it the new year starts, ordinary time —as we say in Christian liturgy— to live in extenso the mystery of Christmas. The Incarnation of the Word has visited us in these days and has sown his Grace in our hearts in an infallible way, a grace which takes us back to the Kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of God that Christ has come to open up to us with His deeds and commitment from the Heart of our humanity.

Because of that, Saint Leo the Great said that «the providence and the mercy of God, who had already thought of helping a world which was collapsing at the time, determined the salvation of all peoples through Christ».

This is the right time. We cannot think that God worked more in the past than now, that it was easier to believe in Jesus —physically, I mean— than now that we do not see Him. The sacraments of the Church and the prayer of the community grant us pardon and peace and an opportunity to participate, once again, in the works of God in the world, through our work, study, friends, family, entertainment or the daily life with our brothers. May the Lord, source of every gift and every good, make it possible for us!