

October 24th: St. Anthony Mary Claret

Gospel text (Mk 1,14-20): After John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee and began preaching the Good News of God. He said, «The time has come; the kingdom of God is at hand. Change your ways and believe the Good News». As Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, «Follow me, and I will make you fish for people». At once, they abandoned their nets and followed him. Jesus went a little farther on and saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee; they were in their boat mending their nets. Immediately, Jesus called them and they followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men.

«Follow me, and I will make you fish for people»

Fr. Joaquim MESEGUER García
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Today, watching Jesus calling the first disciples to the mission, we think of a great missionary who lived in a very troubled time like the nineteenth century, while not preventing him from taking the Gospel message to Catalonia, the Canary Islands and Cuba: He is St. Anthony Mary Claret who heard Jesus' call in his youth as the first disciples did: «Follow me, and I will make you fish for people» (Mk 1:17). Like James and John, who left their father in the boat with the day laborers, Anthony Mary left the family textile workshop and his town Sallent to undertake the priesthood path, in which preaching and catechesis played a prominent role.

Jesus said: «The time has come; the kingdom of God is at hand. Change your ways and believe the Good News» (Mk 1:15), and Anthony Mary made this call from the Lord the plan of his life: as a catechist, as a presbyter, as a bishop and as confessor of Queen Elizabeth II of Spain, also when at this time he founded the Congregation of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and was the soul of the

foundation of great number of religious institutes dedicated to the education of children and youth and the care of the sick. With the creation of the religious printing press he worked for the dissemination of popular Christian culture with the publication of many books, exerting a beneficial influence.

Undoubtedly, Saint Anthony Mary Claret was a holy and wise fisher of men, zealous in the priestly ministry and in the work of evangelization. In his autobiography he gives us a brief and precise portrait of how the missionary must be: «Driven by the fire of the Holy Spirit... He thinks only of how he might follow Jesus Christ and imitate him by his prayers, his labors, his sufferings, and by caring always and only for the glory of God and the salvation of souls ».