

Monday of the First Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 1:14-20): After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” (...).

What does “Gospel” actually mean?

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

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Today, the Evangelist Mark describes the beginning of Jesus’ public activity, by specifying the essential contents of His preaching. Both Mark and Matthew define Jesus Christ’s preaching as “Gospel”. But what does Gospel actually mean? The term has recently been translated as “Good news”, but that falls far short of the order of magnitude of what is actually meant by the word “Gospel”.

In older days, the proclamations made by Roman emperors were called “Gospels”. What comes from the Emperor —that was the background idea— is a saving message that is not just a piece of news, but a change of the world for the better. When the Evangelists adopt this word what they mean to tell us is this. When the emperors, who pretend to be gods, illegitimately claim, really occurs here: a message endowed with primary authority, which is not just talk, but reality.

—Because You, O Jesus, are the Son of God who came into the world, your “Gospel” is not just informative speech, but performative speech: efficacious power that enters into the world to save and transform.