October 24th: Memorial of Saint Anthony Mary Claret

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.” As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw.... James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

St. Anthony Mary Claret, bishop (1807-1870)

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Today 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. 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. 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.

—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."