

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (Mt 4:12-23): When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled: “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen.” From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him. He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.

“Jesus went around all of Galilee”

Fr. Josep RIBOT i Margarit
(Tarragona, Spain)

Today, Jesus teaches us a lesson of “holy prudence”, totally congenial with boldness and courage. Certainly, He—who is not afraid of promulgating the truth—decides to pull away when realizing that His enemies—as they had already done with John the Baptist—also want to kill Him: “Go away, leave this area because Herod wants to kill you.” (Lk 13:31). —If His slanderers, to whom He had spent His life doing good, were trying to kill Him, you should not be surprised if you, eventually, also suffer maltreatment, as the Lord already warned us.

“When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew to Galilee” (Mt 4:12). It would be foolish to challenge danger without a commensurate reason. Only through prayer can we make out whether silence or abeyance or letting time go by, are symptoms of wisdom or of cowardice and lack of fortitude. Forbearance, the science of peace, will serenely help make up our mind in the difficult moments, provided we do not lose the supernatural vision.

“He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people” (Mt 4:23). Neither threats nor fear of what others may say can force us to retreat from doing good. Those of us who are called to become salt and light, workers of goodness and truth, cannot yield before extortion and threats that, more often than not, will be nothing but hypothetical or merely oral dangers.

Unwavering, fearlessly, without looking for any excuses to postpone for “to-morrow” our apostolic action. They say, “‘to-morrow’ is the adverb of the defeated” This is why St. Josemaría recommended: “Here is a recipe to make your apostolic spirit effective: make definite plans, not for the whole week but for the day ahead, for this moment and the next.”

To enthusiastically carry out God's will; to be righteous in any environment and to follow the ruling of our well shaped conscience, calls for strength and might we have to request for all of us, because the danger of cravenness is great. —Let us beg our Holy Mother in Heaven to help us always, and in all instances, to abide by God's will, by imitating her heroic fortitude at the foot of the Cross.



Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“I am not devoid of merit as long as he is not of mercy. But what if I am aware of my many failings? Then, where failings abounded, grace abounded all the more. And if the mercies of the Lord are from eternity to eternity, I for my part will chant the mercies of the Lord forever.”
(Saint Bernard)

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“Put out into deep water and let down your nets for catch. You too are called to become ‘fishers of men’. Don’t hesitate to spend your life witnessing joyfully to the Gospel, especially among your peers.” (Francis)

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“Those who with God's help have welcomed Christ's call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world....” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 3)