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 Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and 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.

“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

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: “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (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: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” (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 Isabella 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.”