November 30th: Feast of Saint Andrew, Apostle

Gospel text (*Mt* 4:18-22): As Jesus 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.

"I will make you fishers of men."

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Today, is St. Andrew's Day, apostle, a festivity celebrated in a solemn way amongst Eastern Orthodox Christians. He was one of the two young men that met Jesus by the river Jordan and had a long conversation with Him. He first found his own brother Simon, and told him “We have found the Messiah” and he brought him to Jesus (cf. Jn 1:41-42). Shortly afterwards, Jesus called these two fishermen brothers, as we read in today's Gospel: “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19). In the same village there were two other brothers, James and John, friends and chums of the first ones, and fishermen like them. And Jesus also invited them to follow Him. It is nice to see how they leave everything and follow Him “at once”, a word that is repeated in both cases. We cannot tell Jesus: “afterwards”, “later on”, “I'm busy now”...

To each one of us —to all Christians— Jesus is also asking every day to place at His service whatever we are and whatever we have —that means to leave everything, not to have anything of our own— so that, while Jesus is accompanying us in our professional and familial obligations, we may become “fishermen for people”. What does it mean to be “fishermen for people”? A nice answer might be a commentary by St. John Chrysostom. This Father and Doctor of the Church says that Andrew did not know how to explain to his brother Peter who Jesus was and, consequently, he “brought him to the very source of light”, that is, Jesus Christ. “To fish men” means to help all those around us, in our family and in our work, to find Christ who is the only light for our route.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Peter and Andrew had not seen Jesus Christ perform any miracle. They had heard nothing of the eternal prize, and yet, upon hearing the voice of the Savior, they forgot everything they believed they possessed" (Saint Gregory the Great)

- "May the Apostle Andrew teach us to follow Jesus promptly, to speak enthusiastically about Him, and above all to cultivate a relationship of authentic familiarity with Him, aware that only in Him can we find the ultimate meaning of our life and of our death." (Benedict XVI)

- "Christ the Lord (...) commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel, which had been promised beforehand by the prophets, and which he fulfilled in his own person and promulgated with his own lips. In preaching the Gospel, they were to communicate the gifts of God to all men. This Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 75)