

GOSPEL

Mt 4:12–23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

He went to Capernaum, that the prophecy of Isaiah be fulfilled.

Hearing that John had been arrested Jesus went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled: Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali! / Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan, / Galilee of the nations! / The people that lived in darkness / has seen a great light; / on those who dwell in the land and shadow of death / a light has dawned. From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And they left their nets at once and followed him.

Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. At once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him.

He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Shorter form: 4: 12-17

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Reflections on the Gospel

THE COMING OF A GREAT LIGHT

In today's Gospel Jesus moves back to Galilee to begin his public mission. St Matthew describes his return as the coming of a 'great light' to people who 'sit in darkness and the shadow of death'. Taken from the prophet Isaiah, these words beautifully capture the hope that his appearance and his message have to bring to a darkened world—then and now.

Central to that message is the summons: 'Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'. For Jesus, 'repent' means more than sorrow for sin. The Greek word implies a 'change of mind'—not merely in an intellectual sense but in the sense of a wholesale transformation of attitude at a deeply personal level. It means being prepared to let the rule of God ('the kingdom of heaven') rearrange one's life.

In Jesus' day there was a widespread sense that Israel had somehow fallen out of God's hand and lay in helpless bondage to malign influences, chief among them being the oppressive occupation of the land by the Romans. People longed for the restoration of God's 'rule'. Jesus proclaimed the coming of that reign of God. But for him what was central and prior to any political or economic freedom was a transformed relationship with God, a divine reclaiming of the human heart.

And his first action is to call disciples, the nucleus of the later Church. From now on, these fishermen will 'fish for people', 'catching' them for the community of the Kingdom, to be hope and light for the world.

Brendan Byrne, SJ



THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

26 JANUARY 2020

FIRST READING

Isa 8:23–9:3

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

In the Galilean country, the people have seen a great light.

In days past the Lord humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in days to come he will confer glory on the Way of the Sea on the far side of Jordan, province of the nations.

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.

You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing
the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 26:1, 4,13–14. R.v.1

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

1. The Lord is my light and my salvation; /
whom shall I fear? / The Lord is the stronghold
of my life; / before whom shall I shrink? **R.**

2. There is one thing I ask of the Lord, /
for this I long, / to live in the house of the
Lord, / all the days of my life, / to savour
the sweetness of the Lord, / to behold his
temple. **R.**

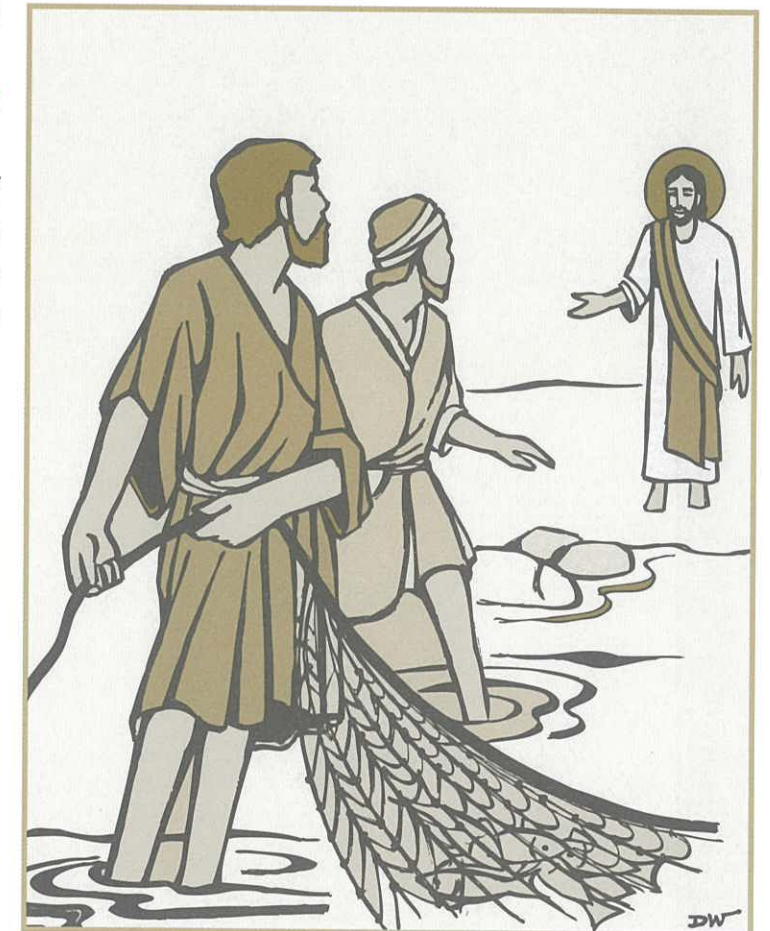
3. I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness /
in the land of the living. / Hope in him, hold
firm and take heart. / Hope in the Lord! **R.**

SECOND READING

1 Cor 1:10–13,17

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

I appeal to you, my brothers and sisters, make up the differences between you.



I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. From what Chloe's people have been telling me, my dear brothers, it is clear that there are serious differences among you. What I mean are all these slogans that you have, like: 'I am for Paul', 'I am for Apollos', 'I am for Cephas', 'I am for Christ'. Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul?

For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News, and not to preach that in the terms of philosophy in which the crucifixion of Christ cannot be expressed.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Mt 4:23

Alleluia, alleluia! / Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom, / and healed all who were sick. / Alleluia!