

“Our Challenges”

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Matthew 4.12-23, Isaiah 9:1-14
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During the season after Epiphany, the Church rejoices preaching the manifestation of God to all peoples and nations through his Word, so real that it inspires us to respond by sharing the announcement of the kingdom of God.

Despite the passage of time, the words of the prophet Isaiah -for example- seem written for the present moment. A people facing darkness is a confused and endangered people, condemned to live in the shadows of death. But God's mercy is always present, it appears as a light in the midst of darkness; He turns sadness into joy and weakness into strength, showing all peoples and nations that following him is reaching the light of life. This is how Psalm 27 expresses it, "The Lord is light and salvation, He is the strength of our life"; with this he inspires us to understand that, even when difficult times come, trusting in God represents security and final victory.

The Church teaches that the death of Jesus has changed the rhythm of humanity and the behavior of the human being. The Apostle Paul confirms in his message that the death of Christ on the cross seems nonsense to those who go to perdition, this is so because sadly many choose the path of ruin and destruction.

We well know that everyone who turns away from God is stalked by a world of darkness and ignorance. On the contrary, the Apostle assures that the power of this message becomes the gift of salvation, because it offers wisdom and freedom to everyone who accepts this good news, since "The message of Christ's death on the cross seems like a foolishness to those who go to perdition; but this message is the power of God for those of us who are going to salvation". This is how the Gospel contains all the power of God to save us and walk in a consecrated life.

The portion of the Gospel of Matthew tells of when Jesus learned that John the Baptist was in prison. It was the signal to continue sharing the message that John had pronounced: "turn to God, for the kingdom of heaven is near." It is the news that many were waiting for and that the Church continues to promote; the desire to be with the Lord produces great joy.

The gospel we share is a light of hope that reaches people to transform us and live in the truth. Many of us are lucky to be able to enjoy the light of Jesus. The gospel is also an open invitation to all who can understand the meaning of this manifestation of God; this is how we can invite others to share what it means to follow the path of the kingdom of God.

We can see the effect produced by the message of the kingdom of God in those who listen carefully to this good news. Jesus meets two brothers, Simon and Andrew, who were fishermen. These become the first disciples who decide to leave their nets to follow him and begin to be fishers of men.

The message of turning to the Lord is to save lives, it is for people who want to go beyond the superficial and material by making a commitment to the kingdom of God. According to the evangelist Matthew, the message continues without stopping: further on, Jesus sees two other brothers, James and John, also fishing and accompanied by his father. Upon hearing Jesus' call, they leave everything, including his father, and join the delegation of disciples who continued to announce the good news of the kingdom of God.

This is the promise of Jesus to those who decided to leave everything and follow him: "I assure you that everyone who has left home, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or land, will receive a hundred times more, and also they will receive eternal life." There are many men and women, in different parts of the world, who are enjoying this promise; Although it is not easy, the big road is the reward. This is what the prophet Isaiah says to those who follow the light of God: "Everyone rejoices before you as at harvest time, as those who distribute great wealth rejoice."

Jesus chooses his friends, then teaches them, prepares them to send them on a mission. The Galilee region was full of fishermen, but not all of them were chosen. History records that these twelve men were called to be part of Jesus' mission, to accompany him in the conquest of many hearts in need of a new beginning. These first disciples, together with Jesus, have changed the course of humanity and continue to be examples of courage and commitment to the cause of salvation.

We must be sure that the call of Jesus can come at any time and place. Jesus is passing by and calling many of us to continue the mission, to share this life-changing message of salvation to those who hear it. When we hear the voice of God let us not be afraid. It is a wonderful invitation to the adventure that leads to eternity.

The first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthian church reveals that conversion produces a profound change in the life of the believer. This is the power that the Word of God has, it changes us so deeply that it allows us to improve our lives and those of others, with the same grace of God that has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The Christian life is full of actions that are demonstrated by behavior that reveals the love of God in a life of harmony.

This is the challenge for this time of Epiphany: Jesus is calling us to send us in search of others and thus form a network of saved men and women. Every day it is more evident that our people need this message. We cannot keep this good news, we must share it. The hour has come, and the kingdom of God is near. The mission is to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God so that together we can enjoy the wonderful works of God in the lives of believers.

The Epiphany comes true. God has manifested himself. It is the time to reap the harvest. This message contains all the power to save lives. The invitation is to follow the path of light that is Christ, to enjoy this journey of life because great is the joy that the path of salvation produces.