



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

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Angelus: Jesus began preaching in the periphery

In today's Angelus Pope Francis spoke about the beginning of Jesus' preaching in Galilee after he left Nazareth, a village in the mountains, and settled in Capernaum, an important centre on the shore of the lake, inhabited mostly by pagans, and a crossroads between the Mediterranean and the Mesopotamian hinterland. "This choice", said the Holy Father, "indicates that those to whom He preached were not only his fellow countrymen, but also those who dwelt in the cosmopolitan 'Galilee of the Gentiles', as it was known. Seen from the capital Jerusalem, that land is geographically peripheral and religiously impure, since it was full of pagans, from mingling with those who were not of Israel. Great things for the history of salvation were certainly not expected from Galilee. Nonetheless, it was from precisely there that there spread the light on which we have meditated over recent Sundays: the light of Christ. It spread, indeed, from the periphery".

"Jesus' message retraces that of the Baptist, announcing the 'kingdom of heaven'. This kingdom does not involve the establishment of a new political power, but rather the fulfilment of the covenant between God and His people, which will inaugurate a season of peace and justice. To seal this pact of alliance with God, each person is called to convert, transforming his or her way of thinking and living. This is important: converting is not only about changing the way we live, but also the way we think. It is a transformation of thought. ... What distinguishes Jesus from John the Baptist is the style and the method. Jesus chooses to be an itinerant prophet. He does not wait for the people, but instead moves towards them. ... His first missionary outings take place along the Lake of Galilee, in contact with the crowd, and especially with the fishermen. There, Jesus not only proclaims the coming of the kingdom of God, but also seeks out companions to associate with His mission of salvation. In this same place He meets two pairs of brothers – Simon and Andrew, James and John – and calls to them, saying, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men'. The call reaches them in the midst of their daily activity: the Lord reveals Himself to them not in an extraordinary or striking way, but in their everyday life. There we must find the Lord; and there He reveals Himself ... and with this dialogue with Him in our everyday life, our heart is changed. The response of the four fisherman is immediate and prompt: 'Immediately they left their nets and followed Him'. Indeed, we know that they were disciples of the Baptist and, thanks to his witness, had already begun to believe in Jesus as the Messiah".

"We, Christians of today, have the joy of proclaiming and bearing witness to our faith, because there was that first announcement, because there were those humble and courageous men who responded generously to Jesus' call. The awareness of these beginnings inspires in us the desire to take the word, love and tenderness of

Jesus to every context, even the most impervious and resistant. Take the word to every periphery! All the spaces of human life are the terrain on which the seed of the Gospel can be thrown, so that it may bear the fruits of salvation”.

“May the Virgin Mary help us with her maternal intercession, and respond with joy to the call of Jesus, to place us in the service of the kingdom of God”, the Holy Father concluded.
