

## Homily on Matthew 4:12–23

In today's Gospel, Matthew presents the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. After John the Baptist is arrested, Jesus does not retreat in fear. Instead, He moves forward with clarity and purpose. What seems like a moment of darkness becomes the moment when the true Light shines.

Matthew tells us that Jesus goes to Galilee, a place looked down upon, a land mixed with peoples and cultures. It is here that the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled: "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." God's light does not first shine in the centers of power or prestige, but among ordinary people, in ordinary places, often in situations of confusion and struggle. This gives us hope: no place, no life, is too dark for God's light to enter.

Jesus' first message is simple yet demanding: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." Repentance is not just about feeling sorry for sin; it means a change of direction, a turning of the heart toward God. The Kingdom is not something far away or only in the future—it is already near, present wherever God's will is welcomed.

Then Jesus calls His first disciples. Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John are fishermen, busy with their daily work. Jesus does not call them in the synagogue or the Temple, but right in the middle of their ordinary lives. His invitation is powerful: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." They leave their nets immediately. The nets represent security, habits, and attachments. Following Jesus always requires trust and courage—to let go of what holds us back so that we may receive something greater.

Finally, Jesus goes throughout Galilee teaching, proclaiming the good news, and healing every disease. Word and action go together. The Kingdom of God is not only preached; it is made visible through compassion, healing, and care for the suffering.

Dear friends, this Gospel asks us three simple but profound questions:

Am I willing to let Christ's light enter my darkness? Am I ready to change direction where my life needs repentance? Am I prepared to leave my "nets" and follow Jesus more closely? May we, like the first disciples, respond generously, trusting that when we follow Him, He will transform our lives and make us instruments of His light for others. Amen.