



Ask, Father James:

Jesus' First Homily

Matthew 4:17 says: From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This was his first call to everyone, and it is still the call of Jesus Christ to all of us through the church. Every priest's sermon must re-echo this call. Often, we take the one meaning of the word Repent which means, repentance for one's misdeeds and atoning for those misdeeds. But there is a second meaning of that word. Re- (prefix) means return to and "pent" – (suffix) means thought. Therefore, Jesus calls us to return to God's original thought about "you." In Latin, Penta is the root for the English word, Pentecost – At the origins, God put/infuse his original plan into us – Holy Spirit. God breathed into Adam and Eve – He put his spirit in them, but they lost it at the fall (Genesis 3). Jesus comes to restore what we have lost – He calls us to re-pent – return to the original plan of God for you. Repent in this sense means to reclaim God's original plan. Jesus comes to bring the kingdom of God to earth and invites us to join him and he will lead us into this kingdom.

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