

PACEM IN TERRIS - A PERMANENT COMMITMENT

newspaper post

rivista tal-Giżwiti Maltin



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## *The fresh start: a biblical stance*

*The Master said to Peter, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Peter was obliging and replied: 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.'* (Luke 5: 4-5)

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The die has now been just cast. The result of the recent general elections confirms that the Maltese people have opted to join the European Union. Whether one agrees with this or not, one has to admit that we are about to enter a new phase of history. It is of the utmost importance for the Christian believer to now try and understand what his Lord is calling him to, especially in view of the fact that one of the hallmarks of the Bible is that it reveals to us a God who is the Lord of history. Hence, by default, the Christian can only find his God in the midst of history: this is the only place where God reveals Himself.

Thus, for example, that is precisely where Peter the fisherman had found his God, namely when he encountered Him in the person of Jesus Christ on a boat in the Sea of Galilee. Although Peter was a professional fisherman, he had to make a fresh start in his own field when Jesus asked him to do so. Jesus' message was loud and clear when he told Peter: 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' (Luke 5: 4) Peter was obliging and replied: 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' (Luke 5: 5) The result was extremely fruitful, and it was simply beyond Peter's own wildest dreams and expectations (see Luke 5: 6-7).

We too are being called to make a fresh start, and like Peter we have to start afresh right in that area which we consider to be our own professional field. As far as the general elections go, this means that despite the unambiguous result, we still have to 'put out into the deep water' (Luke 5: 4). Although we have behaved consistently with the rules of democracy, we still need to delve deep into ourselves to ensure that we are motivated by the common good. Like Peter, we have to toil once again, casting our nets into the water for the second time in order to really get a big catch.

In this context, this means that Maltese Christians must now live the decision to join the European Union motivated only by the love of God and neighbour. They will never put self at the centre; on the contrary, following in the Master's footsteps they will never forget that self-fulfillment comes from being for others, that the poor and the downtrodden will have to be duly taken care of, and above all that Mammon will not be the beginning and the end of everything. Economic prosperity will be welcomed in the context of the Christian values of love, solidarity, and openness to the truth. We are called to do great things, which, however, cannot be attained without self-sacrifice. Only thus will the fresh start be really fruitful.