



6. January 2022

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord
Light up the fire of love

Eph 3:2-3a,5-6

You have surely heard the way in which God entrusted me with the grace he gave me for your sake; he made known to me by a revelation the mystery. This mystery, as it is now revealed in the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets, was unknown to humanity in previous generations: that the gentiles now have the same inheritance and form the same Body and enjoy the same promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

The proclamation of this new revelation - that all peoples of the world are called to follow Christ - is the ongoing mission of the Church. When this mystery was revealed to St Paul, he set out to bring the Gospel both to the Jews and also to the Gentile nations. Now, centuries later, we can see with wonder and gratitude the fruits of his work.

The Church's mission to evangelise the Gentile peoples is not yet complete, just as the promise that the People of Israel will recognise their Messiah has not yet been fulfilled.

If in recent decades the dynamism of the mission has become increasingly weakened, we must assume that this is because the fervour resulting from the knowledge of the Gospel has in turn diminished. The enormous grace of the Gospel and the responsibility that comes from having encountered it are often no longer recognised deeply enough to become an active bearer of the Lord's message.

If the fire of love that inflamed a St. Paul and so many other missionaries no longer burns with the same intensity, how can it be rekindled so that it can burn again with all its strength?

Perhaps we ourselves feel that we have become slumbering. Perhaps we have unconsciously and without realising it, we have adapted to a "politically correct" Catholicism, so to speak. Perhaps we think that the evangelisation of others is not so important and that we should let everyone go their own way. Perhaps we have also adopted the view that other religions and lifestyles are a kind of "parallel path" leading to the same goal; that Catholicism should grow only because of its power of attraction and that the proclamation of the Gospel no longer has the same salvific importance that was previously attributed to it. Or perhaps it is thought that if other people come into contact with the Gospel, it is enough that it helps them to live their own religion better. Instead of the concrete proclamation of the Gospel and the clear call to follow Christ, it is considered more important to deal with the current problems of the world and for the

Church to take its rightful place in the world. Our own conceptions and demands on the moral level should be brought into harmony with the feeling and thinking of the world, we are told....

One can easily get carried away by this trend and no longer notice that the fire of love is dying out more and more and that the evangelisation of the people is being lost sight of.

Is it possible and desirable to rekindle this fire?

It was the fire of love that moved Jesus to come into the world to save humanity. It never ceased to burn within Him. If we would let ourselves be inflamed more by this fire, we would understand from within what it means for the Lord to see that this fire of love does not really burn any more (cf. Lk 12:49). How will it be for Him that, having sent His disciples into the world, they find it no longer necessary to continue to proclaim His message? Will we perceive Jesus' sorrow that people are often deprived of the great gift that He wants to give them?

And what will it mean to our Heavenly Father if people ignore or reject Him, and He cannot give them all the treasures He has in store for them? Will this not be an offence to His love?

And the Holy Spirit, our divine Friend, who so lovingly and perseveringly reminds us of all that Jesus said and did (Jn 14:26), will we not grieve Him if we no longer pay attention to what He makes us see?

What about the Mother of the Lord, did she not say: "*Do whatever he tells you*" (Jn 2:5), and does she have any other desire than that all men should listen to her Son?

Let us renew our cold heart in the burning love, which is the Lord Himself. Let us offer this heart to Him again and again, so that it may be rekindled and the nations may receive the message of God's overwhelming love for us men. On this day when Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas Vigil and we Catholics celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord, let us do it again. Let us not waste any more time! The Lord will reward us.

NOTE: I recently published on my channel "Elijerusalem english" a short message for the beginning of the year 2022: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4u3ZBvZtVog>