



**14. February 2022**

**The light in the world**  
**St. Cyril and Methodius**

*Acts 13:46-49 (Reading from the Memorial)*

*Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out fearlessly. 'We had to proclaim the word of God to you first, but since you have rejected it, since you do not think yourselves worthy of eternal life, here and now we turn to the gentiles.*

*For this is what the Lord commanded us to do when he said: I have made you a light to the nations, so that my salvation may reach the remotest parts of the earth.' It made the gentiles very happy to hear this and they gave thanks to the Lord for his message; all who were destined for eternal life became believers. Thus the word of the Lord spread through the whole countryside.*

In the early Church, as well as in later times, there was still a firm conviction that the Gospel should be carried to the ends of the earth.

The holy brothers Cyril and Methodius were totally committed to this task and evangelized the Slavic world. In spite of some resistance, even a liturgy in the Slavic language came into being. By decision of the Pope at the time, the liturgy was allowed to be celebrated also in languages other than Latin, thus avoiding a certain narrowness that could occur in this regard. A balanced relationship between fidelity to Tradition and flexibility to listen to the guidance of the Spirit in every age... That should characterize the Church!

Today, it seems that the predominant direction taken by the Church is moving towards a rather modernist vision. But how will it be possible to renew the Church by adapting it to the spirit of the world? If the Church is no longer led by the Holy Spirit and does not hold firmly to the truth and the mission entrusted to her, then she becomes a plaything of the "spirit of the times"; a leaf blown by the wind... This "spirit of the times" (Zeitgeist) is by no means Christian; rather, in many respects, it is evidently anti-Christian.

Let us return to the words of Holy Scripture. As we understand them better and allow ourselves to be shaped by them, there is true renewal, for it is the Word of God, and not merely human reflections.

Today's reading tells us that, in terms of salvation history, it is a matter of bringing the "light of the nations" to the ends of the earth. But this requires the firm conviction

that for all people an encounter with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is indispensable for salvation. Certainly this includes the fact that God can grant the grace of Jesus in other ways, known only to him, to those who did not have the joy of truly meeting the Redeemer while still alive. But this must in no way be a hindrance to the mission! In this sense, every speculation or consideration that hinders or weakens the interior impulse of the mission must be rejected.

Neither in the Apostle Paul nor in Saints Cyril and Methodius, who proclaimed the Gospel in word and deed, can we identify a lessening of this missionary dynamism....

God has not changed the commission he entrusted to his Church (Mt 28:19-20)!

But if we are no longer convinced that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life for all people (Jn 14:6), it will hardly be the Spirit of God who guides us, since He is the one who reminds us of all that Jesus said and did (Jn 14:26), and would also bring to mind those words of St. Paul that we heard in today's reading.

Let us therefore take seriously once again the Lord's words and also the Church's previous statements on mission, which are still valid at this time. Let us not allow ourselves to be lulled to sleep and paralyzed in our efforts to bring the Gospel to the people, each according to the manner entrusted to him or her!

The Gospel is to be proclaimed in word and deed, opportunely or inopportunely (2 Tim 4:2). Just as the proclamation of the Gospel acquires credibility when it is accompanied by works that correspond to faith and love, so too works require the word of the Gospel, so that people may know who is the Author of every good deed, and God may be praised and glorified (cf. Mt 5:16). Let us not allow ourselves to be confused by the "spirit of the times", neither outside nor inside the Church!