

25. April 2026
“The Church as teacher of the nations”

Liturgically speaking, this is still the time when the risen Lord Jesus is with His disciples to strengthen them in their faith in His resurrection and to prepare them for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We understand Pentecost as the founding day of the Church, which, according to our faith, is the Body of Christ and is built upon the foundation of the prophets and His apostles (cf. Eph 2:20). She is that Israel which recognized Him as the promised Messiah who came to redeem His people. All who recognized the hour of salvation and accepted God’s grace entered into the service of the Redeemer and thus became witnesses of Christ.

We still have thirty days remaining until the Feast of Pentecost, during which it is fitting to offer some reflections on the Church: the one, holy, Catholic Church, which emerged from Jews and Gentiles and has been called throughout the centuries, as the teacher of the nations, to communicate salvation in Christ.

God has set in motion a great work to lead people from all nations to the faith, to gather them in this way, and to call them home to His kingdom. It was His risen Son who gave His disciples in Galilee—as we hear in the Gospel—the following commission:

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.’” (Mt 28:18–20)

This is the enduring mission of the Church, to be carried out until the end of the world. One must listen very carefully to these words in order to recognize the deviations and relativizations of Jesus’ mission that have led, especially in recent times, to a darkening of the Church. We will speak about this, as well as about the painful schisms from the one Church of the Lord.

First, however, let us rejoice that the message of Christ—though often amid persecution—spread and led many people to salvation. Beyond the borders of Israel, to which Jesus had been sent, the message found its way into the pagan world. The

Church became the educator of humanity and brought the divine light everywhere, as St. Irenaeus describes in the 2nd century:

“The path of those who belong to the Church extends throughout the whole world; it is grounded in the firm, apostolic tradition and enables us to recognize that all faith is one and the same: All profess the one and same God the Father, all believe in the same order of the Incarnation of the Son of God, know of the same gift of the Spirit, observe the same commandments, and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution; they await the same coming of the Lord and hope for the same sanctification of the whole person, that is, of body and soul. The Church’s preaching is true and steadfast; the one and same path to salvation is shown throughout the world. The light of God is entrusted to her, and therefore the wisdom of God, which saves all people, ‘is sung at the gate, and in the streets she acts with confidence; on the walls she is praised, and at the city gates she speaks unceasingly.’ (Prov 1:20–21). For everywhere the Church preaches the truth; she is the seven-branched lampstand that bears the light of Christ.” (Against Heresies 5:20.1)

Let us hold fast to what is important for us. There was unity in doctrine and in practice. Everywhere this bore great fruit. Even though pernicious heresies arose early on, the tradition of the Apostles was upheld, so that the proclamation remained clear and without contradictions. It was that clear water flowing from the throne of the Lamb: *“Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” (Rev 22:1)*

From the message of the Gospel and from the Acts of the Apostles, we know that the hostility of the Jews toward the Gospel and toward the Jews who had come to faith continued. They persecuted the apostles and tried to prevent Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, from proclaiming the message of the Gospel. Unfortunately, this continued what had already happened to Jesus. Instead of the Jews of that time—and especially their religious leaders—becoming proclaimers of the message of salvation and rejoicing over the coming of the Messiah to them—the Messiah who came from their own people—they became, *“As regards the gospel,” “enemies of God”* (Rom 11:28), as St. Paul puts it. Thus, they were unable to fulfill their mission, and we wait and pray that it may still come to pass that many Jews will recognize Jesus as the Messiah. That would be a great blessing for everyone.

Reflection on the Gospel of the Day: <https://en.elijamission.net/preach-the-gospel-to-the-whole-creation/>