



VATICAN - The Pope's Message for World Mission Sunday 2009: "The nations will come to its light" (Rev 21, 24)

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – “The goal of the Church's mission is to illuminate with the light of the Gospel all peoples journeying through history towards God, so that in Him they may be fully realised and accomplished. We must live the longing and the passion to illuminate all peoples with the light of Christ, that shines on the face of the Church, so that all may be gathered into the one human family, under God's loving fatherhood”. In his Message for World Mission Sunday, to be celebrated this year on Sunday 18 October, the Holy Father, Benedict XVI says "I address first of all you, my brothers in the episcopal and the priestly ministry and then you my brothers and sisters, the whole people of God, to encourage in each one of you deeper awareness of Christ's missionary mandate to "make disciples of all peoples" (Mt 28,19), in the footsteps of Saint Paul, the Apostle of the nations”.

In the Message which bears the title "The nations will come to its light" (Rev 21, 24) the Holy Father underlines once again “ the Church works not to extend power or affirm dominion, but to carry, to all, Christ, the salvation of the world" since "the effort to proclaim the Gospel to the people of today... is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to the whole of humanity”. In fact the dispersion, multiplicity, conflict, enmity which afflict humanity “ will be calmed and reconciled through the blood of the Cross and led back to unity. This new beginning has already started with the Resurrection and the exaltation of Christ, who draws all things to himself, renewing them and enabling them to share in the eternal joy of God”. Already today, in the contradictions and sufferings of this world, there shines the light of hope for a new life, and the Pontiff underlines that “ The Church's mission is to "infect" all peoples with hope” and “Christ calls, sanctifies and sends his disciples to announce the Kingdom of God, so that all nations may become the people of God... The universal mission should become a fundamental constant in the life of the Church. To announce the Gospel must be for us, as it was for the Apostle Paul, a primary and impelling duty”.

The Holy Father recalls that the universal Church “ feels responsible for announcing the Gospel to whole peoples” and is aware of her duty to “continue Christ's service in the world ”, since “ the measure of her mission and her service is not material or even spiritual needs restricted to temporal existence, instead, it is transcendent salvation, fulfilled in the Kingdom of God” adding that “ The Church wishes to transform the world with the proclamation of the Gospel of love,” the Pope says, calling all the members and institutions of the Church to take part in this mission.

Dwelling on the subject of mission ad gentes, Benedict XVI underlines the necessity “ to renew our commitment to proclaiming the Gospel which is leaven of freedom and progress, brotherhood, unity and peace”, a particularly urgent task considering “ widespread and profound changes in present day society ”: “Animated and inspired by the Apostle of the nations, we must realise that God has a numerous people in all the cities visited by the apostles of today... The whole Church must be committed to missio ad gentes, until the salvific sovereignty of Christ is fully accomplished”. The day dedicated to the mission is also an opportunity to recall local Churches and missionaries “ who bear witness to and spread the Kingdom of God in situations of persecution, with various forms of oppression ranging from social discrimination to prison, torture and death. No small number of them are put to death for the sake of his "Name" ... Participation in the mission of Christ, in fact, affects also the lives of those who announce the Gospel, for whom is reserved the same destiny as their Master ”.

The Pontiff then recalls that the old Churches and those of recent foundation are “ called to spread Christ, the Light of the nations, to the far corners of the earth ”, therefore “ must be a priority in pastoral programmes”. Thanking and encouraging the Pontifical Mission Societies “ for their indispensable service of promoting missionary animation and formation and material help for young Churches”, the Pontiff recalls: “communion among the Churches is admirably achieved with exchange of gifts, reciprocal concern and common missionary

programming”.

In the conclusion the Pope reaffirms “evangelisation is the work of the Spirit” and therefore he calls on Catholics to “ to pray that the Holy Spirit will intensify the Church's passion for the mission to spread the Kingdom of God and to support missionaries and Christian communities involved in mission, in front line, often in situations of hostility and persecution. At the same time I ask everyone to offer as a credible sign of communion among the Churches, financial assistance, especially in these times of crisis affecting all humanity, to help the young Churches be in the condition to illuminate the nations with the Gospel of charity.”. (S.L.) (Agenzia Fides 6/7/2009; righe 58, parole 832)

Links: See the complete text of the Message in different languages

> *LINKS*

in Italian: http://www.fides.org/ita/documents/Messaggio_GMM_ita_2009.pdf:

in English (Fides translation): http://www.fides.org/eng/documents/Message_GMM_eng_2009.doc:

in Spanish (Fides translation) : http://www.fides.org/spa/documents/Mensaje_GMM_spa_2009.doc:

in French (Fides translation): http://www.fides.org/fra/documents/Message_GMM_fra_2009.doc:

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in Chinese (Fides translation): http://www.fides.org/chi/documents/Messaggio_GMM_cinese_2009.doc: