



Missionary Prayer Intention - "May Western Christians, compliant to the Holy Spirit, rediscover the freshness and enthusiasm of their faith" - Comment on the Missionary Intention for August 2011

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - In the primitive Church, due to persecution and the evangelical zeal of the first disciples, the apostles and their collaborators spread throughout the land known at the time. St. Paul evangelized Greece and reached Spain and Rome, where he was martyred. Even St. Peter gave his life for the Master near the Vatican Hill. From the capital of the Roman Empire, the faith of Christ spread throughout Europe, influencing the culture and permeating all aspects of the gospel in social life. Western civilization was built on Christian values, a vision of man marked by his being the son of God, by his eternal destiny in Christ.

The new evangelization of the continent spread around the world, a culture that is rooted in the Gospel and is inseparable from faith. Unfortunately, the eighteenth century begins with the Enlightenment in Europe, a wave of secularism, which has the pretext to get rid of its Christian identity throughout the West. This wave of secularism leads to Christianophobia, as stated by Pope Benedict XVI. Secularism has the effect of bringing man to live as if God did not exist. This has produced a great lack of hope, which manifests itself in a certain angst about the future, in the decline in birth rate, in the number of vocations, and an inability for the young to make definite decisions for their lives, including marriage.

During his visit to Santiago de Compostela, in November 2010, the Holy Father Benedict XVI said: "It is a tragedy that in Europe, especially in the nineteenth century, the conviction that God is the enemy of man and the enemy of his freedom was affirmed and spread. (...) God is the source of our being and the foundation and peak of our freedom, not its opponent. (...) How is it possible that the first public silence occurred regarding the first and essential reality of human life?" (Holy Mass on the occasion of the Holy Year in Compostela, Plaza del Congreso, on November 6, 2010).

The disciples of Christ in the West must actually recover the enthusiasm for the faith, overcoming consumerist materialism and open up to a transcendent dimension of life. It is necessary to rediscover the person of Christ as Someone who is alive, who is among us. It is necessary to find new space for silence and meditation on the Word of God, to enter in communion with the person of Jesus. So this is why the Pope has called Christians to "follow the example of the apostles, getting to know the Lord more each day and offering a clear and courageous testimony of his Gospel".

May Mary, Queen of the Apostles, obtain for us with her maternal intercession a new effusion of the Holy Spirit so that the Church in the West may be renewed. (Agenzia Fides 26/07/2011)