



Missionary Prayer Intention - MISSIONARY INTENTION - "That Christians in Europe may rediscover their true identity and participate with greater enthusiasm in the proclamation of the and participate with more enthusiasm in Gospel" - Comment on the Missionary Intention for June 2012

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - In recent decades the countries of ancient Christian tradition in Europe are undergoing a severe crisis of identity. At a political level the demand was to eradicate Europe from its Christian roots. Apart from being a betrayal of the truth of history, this act constitutes an attempt to create a secularized Europe, without reference to God in the constitution and public life of citizens. It is undeniable, as John Paul II said that "Europe has been widely and profoundly permeated by Christianity" (Ecclesia in Europa, 24).

But even more than the external difficulties, we must worry about the difficulties experienced inside the Church itself. Unfortunately many of the baptized in Europe do not know or live their Catholic faith, which seems to have been suffocated by breathing this atmosphere of secularism. In the same document quoted, the Fathers note "the loss of Christian memory and heritage, accompanied by a kind of practical agnosticism and religious indifference whereby many Europeans give the impression of living without spiritual roots and somewhat like heirs who squandered a patrimony entrusted to them by history " (Ecclesia in Europa, 7).

Despite all the real difficulties that exist, Jesus Christ continues to be our hope. Living without God leads to hopelessness. For this reason the Church has the passionate conviction and the certainty of having to proclaim Jesus Christ to her contemporaries.

The difficulties encountered by the Church in a secular society, are also a call for consistency and authenticity. It is clear that the Gospel is convincing where it is really experienced and lived. We cannot be taken because of fear of attacks and questions that challenge faith. In the words of the Apostle Peter in his First Letter: "But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you! Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope"(1 Peter 3: 14-15). Jesus Christ is still the only source of hope for all men.

Pope Benedict XVI on his pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela (Spain), recalled how, especially in the nineteenth century, God was presented as a rival and enemy of human freedom, to obscure Biblical faith in the God who sent His Son around the world so that it would not perish. The Pope has asked: " How can it be that there is public silence with regard to the first and essential reality of human life? How can what is most decisive in life be confined to the purely private sphere or banished to the shadows? We cannot live in darkness, without seeing the light of the sun. How is it then that God, who is the light of every mind, the power of every will and the magnet of every heart, be denied the right to propose the light that dissipates all darkness? This is why we need to hear God once again under the skies of Europe; may this holy word not be spoken in vain, and may it not be put at the service of purposes other than its own. It needs to be spoken in a holy way. And we must hear it in this way in ordinary life, in the silence of work, in brotherly love and in the difficulties that years bring on." (Homily at the Mass, Santiago de Compostela, 06/11/2010)

We did not choose to be born in this moment in history. The Lord put us here and now to be witnesses of his love for men. We must not fall into the temptation of activism, but in imitation of Mary, we must cultivate the interior life and union with Christ. The branches cannot bear fruit if they are not attached to the vine. Paul VI said that modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if one listens to teachers it is because they are also witnesses. May the Holy Spirit make us credible and courageous witnesses of our faith in this Europe that has great need for proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the only one who has words of eternal life. (Agenzia Fides 31/5/2012)