February 14th: Memorial of Saints Cyril, Monk, and Methodius, Bishop, patron saints of Europe

Gospel text (*Lk* 10:1-9): The Lord Jesus appointed seventy-two disciples whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit...

Cyril, monk, and Methodius, bishop, patron saints of Europe (IXth century)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today we celebrate Saints Cyril and Methodius, brothers by blood and in the faith, the so-called "Apostles to the Slavs". Cyril, as a child, learned the Slavonic language. In about 861, the imperial government sent him on a mission to the Khazars on the Sea of Azov. Cyril, accompanied by his brother Methodius, stayed for a long time in Crimea and sought the body of Pope Clement I who had been exiled there. Cyril found Pope Clement's tomb and, when he made the return journey with his brother, he took Clement's precious relics with him.

Having arrived in Constantinople the two brothers were sent to Moravia by the Emperor Michael III. The mission was soon unusually successful. By translating the liturgy into the Slavonic language the two brothers earned immense popularity. However, this gave rise to hostility among the Frankish clergy who had arrived in Moravia before the Brothers… In 867 the two brothers travelled to Rome and were received by Pope Adrian II. The Pope perceived that the Slav peoples would be able to serve as a bridge and thereby help to preserve the union between the Christians of both parts of the Empire. Thus he did not hesitate to approve the mission of the two brothers in Great Moravia, accepting and approving the use of the Slavonic language in the liturgy.

—Cyril fell seriously ill in Rome. Feeling that his death was at hand, he wanted to consecrate himself totally to God as a monk and took the monastic name of Cyril. He then insistently begged his brother Methodius, who in the meantime had been ordained a Bishop, not to abandon their mission in Moravia and to return to the peoples there. He addressed this prayer to God: "Lord, my God, hear my prayers and keep the flock you have entrusted to me faithful".