March 18th: Memorial of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop and doctor of the Church

Gospel text (*Jn* 15:1-8): Jesus said to his disciples: "... You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit..."

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop and doctor of the Church (313-386)

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

Today our attention is focused on St Cyril of Jerusalem. His life is woven of two dimensions: on the one hand, pastoral care, and on the other, his involvement, in spite of himself, in the heated controversies that were then tormenting the Church of the East.

Cyril was exiled three times within the course of approximately 20 years: the first time was in 357, after being deposed by a Synod of Jerusalem; followed by a second exile in 360, instigated by Acacius; and finally, in 367, by a third exile —his longest, which lasted 11 years— by the philo-Arian Emperor Valens. It was only in 378, after the Emperor's death, that Cyril could definitively resume possession of his See and restore unity and peace to his faithful. Of Cyril's writings, 24 famous catecheses have been preserved, which he delivered as Bishop in about 350. Taken as a whole, Cyril's homilies form a systematic catechesis on the Christian's rebirth through Baptism.

—He tells the catechumen: «You have been caught in the nets of the Church (cf. Mt 13: 47). Be taken alive, therefore; do not escape for it is Jesus who is fishing for you, not in order to kill you but to resurrect you after death».