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. He said to them, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way.

Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household.’ If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, ‘The Kingdom of God is at hand for you.’”

“The Lord Jesus appointed seventy-two disciples whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit”

Fr. Josep Mª MASSANA i Mola OFM
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, is the feast of Saint Cyril and his brother Saint Methodius, patrons of Europe. They were missionaries who evangelized a great part of the European geography. They prepared liturgical texts in Slavonic language, written in an alphabet that, later on, would be called “Cyrillic”.

The Gospel connects with these two great missionaries, because Jesus —sent by the Father and the Holy Spirit— also formed missionary disciples around Him and sent them. He sent the twelve apostles and the seventy-two disciples. The former could represent the priests consecrated to God by their religious vows. But, who would other seventy-two disciples be? Just all of us, Christians. Jesus sends us all. Each one of us is an envoy, his missionary...

Maybe we should repeat to ourselves more often that Jesus is sending each one of us (whether belonging to the twelve or to the seventy-two), to the specific mission He has charged us with.

Which is our mission and the message we have to deliver on Jesus' behalf? We have to announce the Kingdom and proclaim the Peace: Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household'... and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand for you.'" (Lk 10:5-9). Saint Francis of Assisi condensed it in just two words: "'Pax et Bonum'; Peace and All Good!" But, when can we become missionaries? When our life at home, at work and everywhere else, reflects the peace and uprightness of a reconciled heart. It is a testimony we have to provide, at times with words, but always with our Christian example.

Saints Cyril and Methodius recognized that these vocations and missions are nothing but a gift from God. Cyril expressed it by praying: "Yours is the gift whereby you have sent us to preach the Gospel of Christ, and to promote those good deeds you take pleasure in."

If only through the mediation of the Patrons of Europe, we could be the faithful missionaries of Christ...!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "I now return to you, your people, your gift to me. Direct them with your powerful right hand, and protect them under the shadow of your wings. May all praise and glorify your name, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen." (Saint Cyril, monk)

- "Together with a great respect for persons and a disinterested concern for their true good, the two holy Brothers had the resources of energy, prudence, zeal and charity needed for bringing the light to the future believers" (Saint John Paul II)

- "(...) The gathering together of the Church is, as it were, God's reaction to the chaos provoked by sin. This reunification is achieved secretly in the heart of all peoples (...)" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 761)