

REFLECTION

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While on February 14th many focus on Valentine's Day celebrations, in the general liturgical calendar of the Roman Catholic Church we celebrate the memorial of Saints Cyril and Methodius. The Seminary Chapel is dedicated to these two saints, and their relics are kept inside the altar.

These two holy men of Greek origin who lived in the 9th century are called "Apostles to the Slavs"

In the Words of

ST. JOHN PAUL II

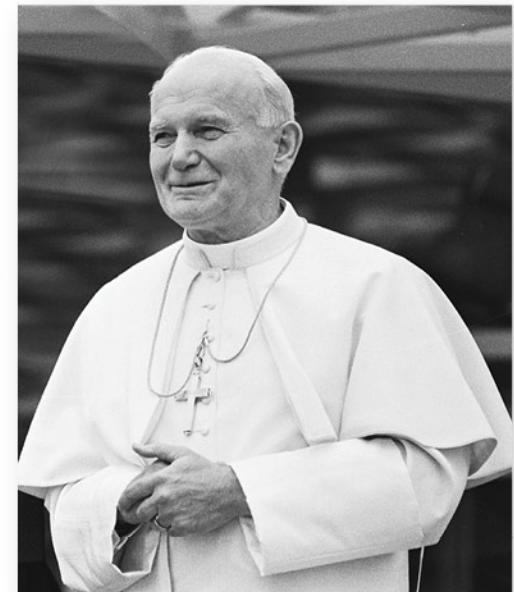
Byzantine in culture, the brothers Cyril and Methodius succeeded in becoming apostles of the Slavs in the full sense of the word. Separation from one's homeland, which God sometimes requires of those he has chosen, when accepted with faith in his promise is always a mysterious and fertile pre-condition for the development and growth of the People of God on earth. The Lord said to Abraham: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing . . ."

For the purposes of evangelization, the two holy Brothers—as their biographies indicate—undertook the difficult task of translating the texts of the Sacred Scriptures, which they knew in Greek, into the language of the Slav population which had settled along the borders of their own region and native city. Making use of their own Greek language and culture for this arduous and unusual enterprise, they set themselves to understanding and penetrating the language, customs and traditions of the Slav peoples, faithfully interpreting the aspirations and human values which were present and expressed therein . . .

Previously, Constantine and his fellow workers had been engaged in creating a new alphabet, so that the truths to be proclaimed and explained could be written in Old Slavonic and would thus be fully comprehended and grasped by their hearers. The effort to learn the language and to understand the mentality of the new peoples to

for their evangelizing work among the Slavs. To translate the Bible and liturgical books into the language of the people, they created the early Slavic alphabets, the Cyrillic and the Glagolitic.

St. John Paul II proclaimed them Co-Patrons of Europe, and in his Apostolic Letter "Slavorum Apostoli" of 1985 highlights their contribution to the Church:



whom they wished to bring the faith was truly worthy of the missionary spirit.

Exemplary too was their determination to assimilate and identify

themselves with all the needs and expectations of the Slav peoples. Their generous decision to identify themselves with those peoples' life and traditions, once having purified and enlightened them by Revelation, make Cyril and Methodius true models for all the missionaries who in every period have accepted Saint Paul's invitation to become all things to all people in order to redeem all. And in particular for the missionaries who, from ancient times until the present day, from Europe to Asia and today in every continent, have labored to translate the Bible and the texts of the liturgy into the living languages of the various peoples, so as to bring them the one word of God, thus made accessible in each civilization's own forms of expression.

Perfect communion in love preserves the Church from all forms of particularism, ethnic exclusivism or racial prejudice, and from any nationalistic arrogance. This communion must elevate and sublimate every purely natural legitimate sentiment of the human heart.