



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mr. TRAJKO VELJANOSKI
PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY
OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
ON THE LITURGICAL MEMORIAL OF STS CYRIL AND METHODIUS**

Saturday, 22 May 2010

*Mr President of the Assembly,
Honourable Members of the Government and Distinguished Authorities,
Venerable Brothers of the Orthodox Church and of the Catholic Church,*

I am glad to welcome you and to express my joy and appreciation to the Lord, giver of every grace, for this occasion that sees us gathered together to invoke him through the intercession of Sts Cyril and Methodius heavenly patrons of your population and of all Europe in the annual pilgrimage that you make to Rome to venerate St Cyril's relics.

My beloved Predecessor, the Venerable [John Paul II](#), in the Encyclical [Slavorum Apostoli](#), reminded us all that, thanks to the teachings and the fruits of the Second Vatican Council, today we can look in a new way at the work of the Holy Brothers of Thessalonica, "now separated from us by 11 centuries. And we can read in their lives and apostolic activity the elements that the wisdom of divine Providence placed in them, so that they might be revealed with fresh fullness in our own age and might bear new fruits" ([n. 3](#)). The fruits of Cyril and Methodius' evangelization in their time were truly abundant. They knew suffering, deprivation and hostility, but they endured all of it with unwavering faith and invincible hope in God. With this strength, they gave their all for the peoples entrusted to them, preserving the Scriptural texts indispensable in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy that they had translated into a paleo-Slavic language, written in a new alphabet and for which they subsequently gained the authoritative approval of the Church. In difficulty and in happiness, they felt they were always accompanied by God, whose love they experienced daily, along with that of their brothers and sisters. We too understand ever more fully that when we feel loved by the Lord and we know how to respond to this love, we are enveloped in and guided by his

grace in all of our activities and our actions.

With the outpouring of the multiple gifts of the Holy Spirit, the more we learn how to love and to give ourselves to others, the more the same Spirit can come to aid us in our weakness, showing us new ways to act. According to tradition, Methodius remained faithful to the end to the words his brother Cyril had said to him on his deathbed: "Behold, my brother, we have shared the same destiny, ploughing the same furrow; I now fall in the field at the end of my day.... Do not... give up your work of teaching" (*ibid.*, [n. 6](#)). Dear brothers and sisters, together let us put our hands to the plough and continue to work the same furrow that God, in his providence, indicated to Sts Cyril and Methodius. May the Lord bless your work at the service of the common good and of your entire Nation, and shower it with the gifts of his Spirit of unity and peace.

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