

Today we celebrate the memorial of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, two brothers who went from Greece to Rome to what we know as Eastern Europe.

They were sent to the Slavic people, who lived north of the Danube River, East of the Elbe River, and west of the Vistula River.

Interestingly, the word "Slavic" which we use to identify these people, comes from a word in their native language meaning "word." Considering that the word in their native language for foreigner means "mute," or "mumbling" - it is apparent why when the holy brothers were sent to the Slavic tribes, they made every effort not only to learn the native language but also to translate both Scripture and the liturgy into the Slavic tongue.

Today's Gospel, on the healing of the deaf and mute man by Jesus, is an appropriate connection to the mission of Cyril and Methodius. In order to bring the Gospel to the Slavic people, they needed to bring it to them in their own language - lest the message of the Gospel be lost in "mumbling" and fall on deaf ears.

And in the first reading, we hear of a prophetic action by the prophet Ahijah (the Shilonite) who demonstrates through the rending of his own cloak, how the infidelity of Solomon, and all of Israel, would result in the division of the once united kingdom into many parts.

Fifty years ago, if you went to any country on the planet, and attended Mass at a Catholic church - it would have been in Latin. In a sense, Catholics spoke a single language. Yet to those who did not know the Mass, it seemed like so much mumbling.

Now, with the liturgy in the vernacular, we no longer have a single external language for our worship. Yet what we do have is a common language of God's Love. In a sense this is a much more difficult call for all of us to image the love of God so that our relationship with Jesus Christ can be seen by those we encounter every day. Our unity must be internalized and actualized for it to be seen by the world. Yet through God's gracious gift, we are well-equipped for this by the power of His grace poured out on us through the Holy Spirit.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, may our lives show forth the Love of God in how we behave not only in this building, but out and about in the world. May our common language of God's love - as shown in Christ's saving sacrifice - unite us as Catholics and Christians.