Thursday of the Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 16:13-23): Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi and he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (...).

"Primate" of the Pope

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Today, Christ asks his disciples about who do people say He is. Among the Apostles, Simon Peter quickly answers, and inspired by God, affirms the divinity of Jesus. The Lord, by expressing himself in the first person, confers on him the "primacy" of the Church: He assigns to him, in a “precise” and “singular” way, the "power of the keys to the Kingdom”.

Jesus established a "community of faith". Its mission is to continue the Salvation through the Sacraments and the preaching of the Word of God. It stands to reason that Jesus Christ decided to bestow a figure to the Church —the Pope— who, with his mission, could steadily guarantee the purity of faith, shielding it from the fashions of times. If then there already were such a diversity of judgments about Jesus Christ, what would happen now, 21 centuries later, if there would not exist the figure of the Pope —Peter’s successor— infallibly assisted by God?

—O Lord, many thanks because You sustain us in the faith through your Vicar, the Pope. Assist him so that he never falters!