

Sunday 21st (A) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 16,13-20): Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi. He asked his disciples, «(...) You, who do you say I am?». Peter answered, «You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God».

Jesus replied, «It is well for you, Simon Barjona, for it is not flesh or blood that has revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. And now I say to you: You are Peter (or Rock) and on this rock I will build my Church; and never will the powers of death overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what you unbind on earth shall be unbound in heaven» (...).

The Pope is not a "dictator"

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(*Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain*)

Today, we are thankful to God for the person of the Roman Pontiff, successor of St. Peter. The Pope —endorsing the words that Simon heard— is elected to confirm his brothers in the faith. And so, he receives a distinct assistance of the Holy Spirit. All this was evident in Caesarea Philippi: it was Simon Peter who, through a revelation from the Father, publicly and accurately confessed the Divinity of Christ.

He has "received" the primacy of the Church. We say "received" because it is an assignment. The Pope has supreme and full authority, but not to do what he may deem convenient: he is not a "dictator" but he must be the guarantor of obedience. He stands for Christ: he is His visible head. He stands for the Revelation: he is Its custodian. He stands for Truth: he is Its teacher. He advocates for his brothers: he is the Holy Father! He is the "servant of the servants of God".

—God, the Holy Spirit, please preserve, fortify and defend the Pope.