

## 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, the Feast of St. Peter's Chair

### I Pt. 5:1-4, Ps. 23, Mt. 16:13-19

Today's wonderful feast has been celebrated in Rome since the fourth century, and celebrates the unity of the Church founded on the Apostles. The readings at Mass today reflect leadership and ministry. We could think that they are addressed only to the clergy, as St. Peter is reminding his fellow bishops to watch over their flocks, not as a duty but out of love. However, this is addressed to all of us too. We all have, because of our Baptism, been given the duty of passing on the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ to other people. If we read this extract from the letter of St. Peter with that in mind, we can see that like the clergy who look after us, we too are charged with caring for other people. In Lent we are invited to do good, to serve our fellow human beings, and by gladly serving them, whether it is financially or physically (not so easy in lockdown) we know that we can do this by the grace of Christ.

The Psalm is probably one of the best known, even by those who are not regular members of the Christian community. When we read it we can do two things:

1. Hear it as a love-letter to us from Our Lord Jesus who is our shepherd, who leads us to the grace-filled fruitful waters of Baptism and the other sacraments, and who feeds us with the richness of Himself in the Eucharistic feast;
2. Consider how I lead other people to Christ – do I even talk about my faith to other people, do I mention that I go to Mass (or watch it live-streamed), do I offer to pray for others?

The Gospel is the wonderful exchange between Jesus and St. Peter, when He asks all the disciples who other people say that He is. Note that it's St. Peter who speaks up on behalf of the others. The Pope is not any better Bishop than anyone else – He is the head of the college of bishops and is the “spokesperson” for the Church. However, this question can also be directed at us – who do we say that Jesus is? As with the reflection on the Psalm above – do we ever speak about Jesus? If we do, do we just refer to Him as an historical figure, a good and holy man? Or do we reflect that He is true God and true Man, conceived to take away our sins and restore us to communion with His loving Father by the grace of the Holy Spirit?

Lord Jesus Christ, you came so that we might be restored to communion with your Father in heaven. We ask that you give us the grace, by your Holy Spirit, to be able express our faith in you, in our everyday life. Amen.