**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 22 – VII WEEK O.T.**

**CHAIR OF ST. PETER APOSTLE**

**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.**

**The Church of Christ Jesus is built up on Peter, but Peter, too, who is Church of Christ Jesus, must be built up in the Church. Peter supports the Church, the Church supports Peter. Christ Jesus supports Peter and the Church. Here is how the Church supports Peter through the work of the Apostle Paul: “And when Kephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he clearly was wrong. For, until some people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to draw back and separated himself, because he was afraid of the circumcised. And the rest of the Jews (also) acted hypocritically along with him, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not on the right road in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Kephas in front of all, "If you, though a Jew, are living like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (Gal 2, 11-14) Without the support of the Apostle Paul, Simon and Barnabas would have perseverated in their hypocrisy.**

**Here is now how Christ Jesus supports Simon Peter:** “**The next day, while they were on their way and nearing the city, Peter went up to the roof terrace to pray at about noontime. He was hungry and wished to eat, and while they were making preparations he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something resembling a large sheet coming down, lowered to the ground by its four corners. In it were all the earth's four-legged animals and reptiles and the birds of the sky. A voice said to him, "Get up, Peter. Slaughter and eat." But Peter said, "Certainly not, sir. For never have I eaten anything profane and unclean." The voice spoke to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you are not to call profane." This happened three times, and then the object was taken up into the sky.” (Act 10, 9-16) Without the support of Christ Jesus, the journey of salvation in history is stopped. Jesus and the Church must support Simon Peter together. Simon Peter must let himself be supported by Christ Jesus and by the Church. With great humbleness he must ask for help and support to Christ and the Church. With this double help He supports the Church.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 16,13-19**

**When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi 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 Messiah, 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."**

**Here is how the entire Church helps Simon Peter and Simon Peter helps the entire Church. Without Simon Peter there is no community that must consider itself reunited under the name of Christ the Lord:** “**When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, as well as by the apostles and the presbyters, and they reported what God had done with them. But some from the party of the Pharisees who had become believers stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and direct them to observe the Mosaic law." The apostles and the presbyters met together to see about this matter. After much debate had taken place, Peter got up and said to them, "My brothers, you are well aware that from early days God made his choice among you that through my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness by granting them the holy Spirit just as he did us. He made no distinction between us and them, for by faith he purified their hearts. Why, then, are you now putting God to the test by placing on the shoulders of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they."  After they had fallen silent, James responded, "My brothers, listen to me. Symeon has described how God first concerned himself with acquiring from among the Gentiles a people for his name. It is my judgment, therefore, that we ought to stop troubling the Gentiles who turn to God, but tell them by letter to avoid pollution from idols, unlawful marriage, the meat of strangled animals, and blood. For Moses, for generations now, has had those who proclaim him in every town, as he has been read in the synagogues every sabbath."(Act 15, 1-21)**

**In the exercise of his power of dissolving and of bonding, Simon Peter must always let himself be helped by Christ Jesus and by the entire Church. Where does temptation worm its way? Some children of the Church might even deceive him with their words of adulation, falsity, lie. He will have to be so intimately united to Christ in the Holy Spirit to feel the scent of falsity even before it comes to him with an appealing voice of hypocrisy and of lie. If he is not intimately united to Christ in the Holy Spirit, he will always be infallible in the dogma. In the daily decisions he might even act by the will of Satan and not by that of Christ Jesus. He must be united to Christ in the same way as Christ was united to the Father.**