

Often our feasts connected to Rome and its structures, have to do with buildings. The Chair of St Peter, although seemingly a structure, is our connection with the Holy Father himself and our union through him, with all the other Catholics and peoples of the world.

I say, “And peoples,” because, as the voice of Jesus Christ was addressed to all people, so too is the voice of the Pope and the voice of every Catholic person of faith. As a Church, we do not exist simply for Catholics; we exist for everyone. It’s just that not everyone thinks they want what we have.

That Jesus questioned his disciples at Caesarea Philippi is significant because here, he was at the edge of Jewish religious influence. Far in the North Eastern regions, a place of Roman self-indulgence and even a place of worship to one of the gods of nature, Pan, Jesus asks his disciples to lift their voice to the truth of whom he is and what people were thinking about him.

It is in this context that Simon Peter voices the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. In the same way, the Holy Father is our voice in a world of many beliefs and ideals, bringing a peaceful voice to Christ’s reign. It is our Pope who speaks to the world about the realm of God’s Kingdom because he holds the keys.

However, as Peter reminds us in the first reading, he is simply a man. He has a place in the Church but, it is not for his purpose. This is why he is not a dictator. He does not draw attention to himself and his own wants. He draws attention to God who has the right to such honour.

The feast of the Chair of St Peter is a feast of the voice of God revealed in every Baptised Christian.