

Octave of Church Unity

Feast of the Chair of St. Peter – Conversion of St. Paul

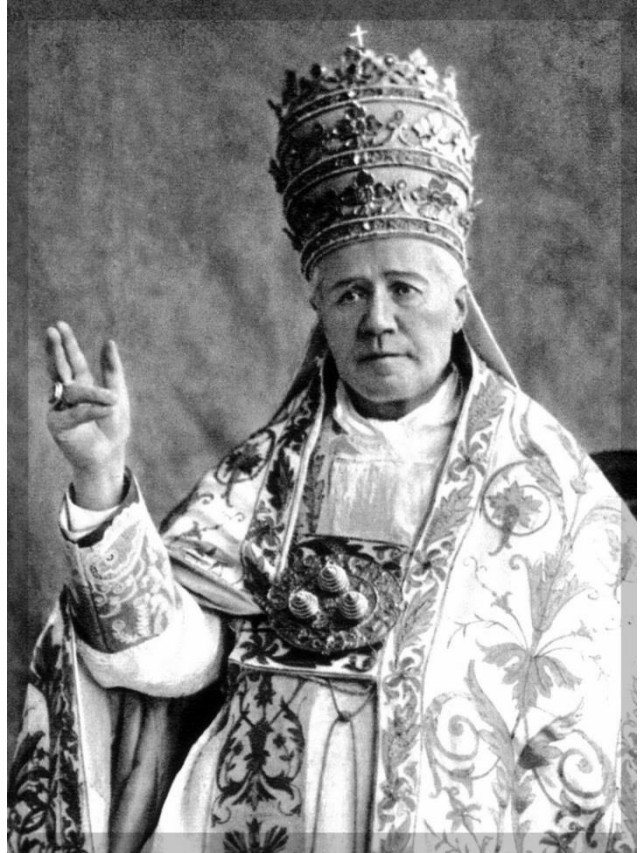
January 18th



UT OMNES UNUM SINT

"That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." -John 17:21

The Chair of Unity Octave begins on January 18, the Feast of St. Peter's Chair in Rome and concludes on January 25, Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. It originated by an Anglican priest, Father Paul of Graymoor, who later converted to the Catholic Church and founded the order of the Society of the Atonement. Subsequently, St. Pope Pius X gave his approval and blessing of this octave on December 27, 1909. It is a wonderful Octave, for eight days the entire Church prays for the conversion of those without the Fold, that all people will be united in the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church. It is also rich in indulgences, whereby in the *Raccolta* (1910) a Plenary Indulgence can be gained by receiving Holy Communion on either the First or Last day of the Octave under the usual conditions (also see apostolic brief below). However since the [Enchiridion Indulgentiarum \(1968\)](#) the Octave prayers Church Unity were replaced with a Prayer for Unity of the Church (Pro unitate Ecclesiae oratio) and furthermore was updated to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, in the [Enchiridion Indulgentiarum 4th edition \(1999\)](#):



“The Catholic Church of the Creator, to the Father, his prayer was uttered the day before he was to suffer "that they all may be one", that is very dear, and hence that of Christ's faithful are earnestly exhort to pray assiduously for the unity of Christians.”

Benedict XV extended the Octave for use in the universal Church in 1916. Here is a beautiful apostolic brief of Pope Benedict XV, relating to the Church Unity Octave that was given at St. Peter's in Rome, under the Seal of the Fisherman, February 25h, 1916.

“In every age it has been the concern of the Roman Pontiffs, Our predecessors, and likewise it concerns Us greatly, that Christians who have, unfortunately, withdrawn from the Catholic Religion should at length be recalled to us as a forsaken Mother. For in the



Unity of the Faith the foremost characteristic of the truth of the Church shines forth, and it is thus that the Apostle Paul exhorts the Ephesians to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, by proclaiming that there is One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism (Ephes. 4:5). With a glad mind, therefore, we have heard from the Society which is called "of the Atonement," established in New York, that that prayers have been proposed to be recited from the Feast of the Chair of the Blessed Peter at Rome to the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in order that this aim of Unity might be obtained from the Lord and at the same time we rejoiced that these prayers, blessed by Pope Pius the Tenth, of recent memory, and approved by the Bishops of America, have been

circulated far and wide through the United States. And so, in order that the prayers above mentioned may be offered to God everywhere and with abundant fruit of the souls thus the desired end may be more easily attained, we, having also consulted our Venerable Brethren the Cardinal Inquisitors

*General of the Holy Roman Church, mercifully grant and bestow in the Lord a Plenary Indulgence and remission of all their sins to each and all the Faithful of Christ of either sex in the whole world, who from the 18th day of the month of January, the Festival of the Chair of Blessed Peter at Rome, until the 25th day of the same month, on which the Conversion of St. Paul is commemorated, shall recite every year once a day the prayers which are subjoined and on the last day of this Octave, truly penitent and confessed and refreshed with Holy Communion, shall visit any Church or public Oratory and there say these prayers to God for the concord of Christian Rulers, **the extirpation of heresies, the conversion of sinners, and the exaltation of our Holy Mother the Church.** Moreover, we also grant permission in virtue of which confession may be made and Holy Communion received, and the visit be made in order to gain the aforesaid Plenary Indulgence, on the Feast of the Chair of Blessed Peter in Rome. Furthermore, to these same Faithful, who, with at least a contrite heart, say on any of the eight days named these same prayers, we grant an indulgence of two hundred days from the penances imposed upon them or owing by them in any other way, according to the usual form of the Church. We mercifully grant in the Lord that all these indulgences, remissions of sins, and relaxations of penances may be applied in behalf of the soul of the Faithful of Christ detained in Purgatory. **This present Letter will be in force forever, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.** The prayers, however, which are to be recited for the Unity of the Church during the Octave, we have ordained, as above, are to be as follows and **lest any changes might creep into them,** we have decreed that a copy of them is to be kept in the Archives of the Apostolic Briefs.” —Pope Benedict XV*



Octave Prayers

To Be Recited Daily During Octave

Antiphon. That they all may be One, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast Sent Me. St. John xvii:21

V. I say unto thee, that thou art Peter;

R. And upon this Rock I will build My Church

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, who saidst unto Thine Apostles; Peace I leave with, My Peace I give unto you; regard not our sins, but the faith of Thy Church, and grant unto her that peace and unity which are agreeable to Thy will, Who livest and reignest God forever and ever, Amen.

N.B. It is also recommended that one decade of the Rosary (at least) be said for the particular intention of each day; also that Holy Communion be received as often as possible during the Octave, *daily* if possible, *certainly on the Sunday within the Octave.*

The Daily Intentions

Jan. 18: *Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome.* The return of all the "other sheep" to the one fold of St. Peter, the One Shepherd.

Jan. 19: The return of all Oriental Separatists to Communion with the Apostolic See.

Jan 20: The submission of Anglicans to the Authority of the Vicar of Christ.

Jan 21: That the Lutherans and all other Protestants of Continental Europe may find their way "Back to the Holy Church."

Jan 22: That all Christians in America may become one in communion with the Chair of St. Peter.

Jan. 23: The return to the Sacraments of lapsed Catholics.

Jan. 24: The conversion of the Jews.

Jan. 25: *Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.* The Missionary conquest of the entire world for Christ.

If you wish to learn more about the Octave of Church Unity, below is a sermon entitled, *Chair of Saint Peter: Chair of True Unity* from the excellent website <http://www.reginaprophetarum.org/>

<http://reginaprophetarum.org/audio/20150118-Chair-of-Saint-Peter-Chair-of-True-Unity.mp3>