

Church Unity Octave

“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of the Roman Pontiffs, Our predecessors, and likewise it concerns Us greatly, that Christians who have, unfortunately, withdrawn from the Catholic Religion should at length be recalled to us as a forsaken Mother.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 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. We mercifully grant and bestow in the Lord a Plenary Indulgence and remission of their sins to each and all the faithful of Christ who from the eighteenth day of the month of January, the Festival of the Chair of Blessed Peter of Rome, until the twenty-fifth day of the same month, on which the Conversion of St. Paul is commemorated, shall recite once a day the prayers appointed.” –Pope Benedict XV

The Chair of Unity Octave begins on January 18, the former Feast of St. Peter’s Chair in Rome and concludes on January 25, Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.

- January 18 The union of all Christians in the one true faith and in the Church
- January 19 The return of separated Eastern Christians to communion with the Holy See
- January 20 The reconciliation of Anglicans with the Holy See
- January 21 The reconciliation of European Protestants with the Holy See
- January 22 That American Christians become one in union with the Chair of Peter
- January 23 The restoration of lapsed Catholics to the sacramental life of the Church
- January 24 That the Jewish people come into their inheritance in Jesus Christ
- January 25 The missionary extension of Christ’s kingdom throughout the world

PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH UNITY OCTAVE

In the name of the Father, † and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Our Father.

Hail Mary.

V. O God, † make speed to save us.

R. O Lord, make haste to help us.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. (Alleluia.)

(After Septuagesima instead of Alleluia shall be said: All praise be unto thee, O Lord, King of glory everlasting.)

JANUARY 18

Prayer for the Reunion of Christendom

Let us Pray.

O God, in thy mercy thou dost set aright those who have gone astray and thou dost save those whom thou hast gathered together. We beseech thee to pour down upon all Christian people the grace of union with thee, so that putting aside disunion and attaching themselves to the true shepherd of thy Church, they may be able to serve thee humbly and lovingly. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

JANUARY 19

Prayer for the Reunion of the East and West

Let us Pray.

O Lord, who hast united all nations in the confession of Thy Name, we pray Thee for the dissident Christian peoples of the East. Mindful of the place they have held in Thy Church, we beg of Thee to inspire them to occupy it again, so as to form with us one single fold, under the guidance of one and the same Shepherd. Grant that they, together with ourselves, may be penetrated with the teaching of their holy doctors, who are also our Fathers in the Faith. Grant us that the spirit of peace and charity, the mark of Thy presence among the faithful, may hasten the day in which their prayers may be united with ours, so that every people and every tongue may acknowledge and glorify thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

Prayer to the Fathers of the Eastern Church

O ye glorious martyrs, St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Polycarp of Smyrna; O ye illustrious doctors of the Church, St. Athanasius, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Basil, who worked and suffered so much for the purity of faith and the salvation of the souls entrusted to your paternal care, look down from heaven upon your beloved Eastern lands, which forgetful of your teaching and example, live now separated from the body of the true Church. By your powerful intercession, O ye holy Eastern Fathers, obtain for all separated Oriental Christians the grace to

return to the centre of unity, and to form with us one and the same family, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

R. Amen.

V. Pray for us, O ye holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

R. That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.

JANUARY 20

Prayer for the Conversion of England

Let us Pray.

O Jesus, Good Shepherd, look down with favour upon the great and noble English nation. Converted to thee through the labours of St. Augustine and his companions, it was for many centuries rich in fruits of faith and sanctity. So devoted was this nation to thy holy and immaculate Mother that it was known throughout Christendom as the Dowry of Mary. When it was separated from thee in cruel fashion, many hundreds of its people willingly shed their blood in testimony of their loyalty to thee and thy Church. O loving Shepherd of souls, recall this great nation once more to the unity of thy Church, and grant peace of soul to all those now separated from thy flock.

R. Amen.

JANUARY 21

Prayer for the Conversion of European Protestants

Let us Pray.

O most beloved Lord Jesus Christ, who hast redeemed the world at the price of thy most Precious Blood, look down in thy mercy upon the Christian peoples of Europe, who are still outside thy fold, and let the full light of thy truth shine upon them. Multiply, O God, the true messengers of thy Gospel, inspire them with fervor, make them fruitful in good works, and bless with thy grace their zeal and their labours, so that the separated Christians of Europe may be fully converted unto thee, their Creator and Redeemer. Recall the strayed sheep to thy fold, and the wanderers to the bosom of thy one true Church. Hasten, O dearest Saviour, the happy advent of thy Kingdom on earth, draw all men to the treasures of thy Sacred Heart, so that all may share in the priceless benefits of thy Redemption and in the eternal happiness of Heaven.

R. Amen.

JANUARY 22

Prayer for the Conversion of America

Let us Pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, grant unto all thy servants, but especially to the people of our own nation, the grace of being fully united with thee in Thy Church. O divine Redeemer, of whom the prophet sang "all the kings of the earth shall adore Him, and all the nations shall serve Him," extend thy Kingdom over the entire human race, but especially over our own beloved country. Grant in thy Mercy that the people of our land may be converted unto thee, and humbly and

lovingly serve thee. This we ask, O Saviour, through the intercession of thine Immaculate Mother, the patroness and protector of our nation.

R. Amen.

JANUARY 23

Prayer for Lapsed Catholics

Let us Pray.

O Almighty Father, who desirest not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, pour out upon us thy mercy and hear the prayers of thy servants. Soften the hearts of thy children who have strayed from the true paths, which thou didst establish for their salvation. They are now forgetful of their duties as Catholics, and pursue only the transitory pleasures of the world. Grant that they may speedily return to the practice of every Christian virtue, so that their lives may shine with the integrity of faith, the fervour of piety and the ardour of charity. Restore all of them to thy sacraments and to the life of thy grace, through the merits of the Most Precious Blood of thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

JANUARY 24

Prayer for the Conversion of the Jews

Let us pray.

O God, who dost manifest thy mercy and compassion towards all peoples, have mercy upon the Jewish race, once thy chosen people. Thou didst select them alone out of all the nations of the world to be the custodians of thy sacred teachings. From them thou didst raise up prophets and patriarchs to announce the coming of the Redeemer. Thou didst will that thine only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour should be a Jew according to the flesh, born of a Jewish maiden in the Land of Promise. Hear the prayers we offer thee today for the conversion of the Jewish people. Grant that they may soon come to a knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah foretold by their prophets, and that they may walk with us in the way of salvation.

R. Amen.

Prayer of the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion

O God of all goodness, and Father of mercies, we beseech thee, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and by the intercession of the Patriarchs and holy Apostles, to cast a look of compassion upon the children of Israel, that they may be brought to the knowledge of our only Saviour, Jesus Christ, and may partake of the precious fruits of the Redemption.

R. Amen.

V. Our Lady of the Atonement, intercede for us.

R. That there may be fulfilled the prayer of thy Divine Son: "That all may be one."

Prayer to St. Paul

O holy Apostle, Paul of Tarsus, from thy glorious place in heaven look down upon the race that thou didst love so well. True it is that many of them remained deaf to thy words of truth, and that some of them even stirred up persecution against thee and thy fellow believers. But thou wast so devoted to thy people that thou didst will to become a castaway for the sake of their conversion. Now that thou art glorious in heaven, obtain for thy brethren the grace of repentance and conversion, so that they may finally take their rightful place in the great family of the Catholic Church.

R. Amen.

V. O ye Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, pray for us.

R. That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.

JANUARY 25

Prayer for the Conversion of our Brethren

Let us Pray.

Eternal God, Creator of all things, remember that the souls of unbelievers have been created by thee, and formed to thine own image and likeness. Behold, O Lord, how to thy dishonour hell is being filled with these same souls. Remember, O God, that for their salvation thy Son Jesus Christ underwent a most cruel death. Permit not, O Lord, that thy divine Son be any longer despised by unbelievers; but be appeased by the prayers of the Saints and of the Church, the Spouse of thy most holy Son, and forgetting their idolatry and unbelief, grant that they may at last come to acknowledge thy Son Jesus Christ, who is our Salvation, Life and Resurrection, through whom we have been saved and redeemed; to whom be glory forever and ever.

R. Amen.

Prayer for Catholic Missions

Let us Pray.

O God, Who wouldest have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, we beseech thee, send forth laborers into thy harvest, and grant them with all boldness to preach the Word that thy Gospel may everywhere be heard and glorified, and that all nations may know thee, the One True God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord.

R. Amen.

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary

O Immaculate Virgin, who wast preserved by a singular privilege of grace from original sin, look down with pity upon our separated brethren, who are still thy children, and call them back to the centre of unity. Even from afar, many have preserved a most tender devotion towards thee, O Mother. Reward them for their devotion by obtaining for them the grace of conversion. Victorious over the powers of hell from the very first moment of thine existence, renew, now that the necessity is more urgent, thy triumphant progress, as in ages past. Glorify thy Son, O Mother, by bringing back to the one Fold his straying sheep. And may it be thy glory, O Virgin Mary, to banish error from the earth, to put an end to disunity and to restore peace to the world.

R. Amen.

V. Our Lady of the Atonement, intercede for us.

R. That there may be fulfilled the prayer of thy Divine Son: "That all may be one."

Prayer to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles

O glorious Saint Peter, as a reward for thy lively and generous faith, profound and sincere humility, and ardent love, thou wast singled out by our Lord and endowed with most special privileges. Thou wast also constituted Prince of the Apostles, with primacy over the whole Church, of which thou wast made the Rock and Foundation. Obtain for us, we pray, a lively faith and an ardent zeal so that all of us will labour for the return of our separated brethren. May the desire of our divine Redeemer, that there might be but "one Fold and one Shepherd," be for us, as it was for thee, the inspiration to work and pray for the return of all those who are still outside the Fold. Strengthened by divine Grace, may they be led back speedily to the bosom of our common Mother, the Catholic Church.

R. Amen.

V. O ye holy Apostles Peter and Paul, pray for us.

R. That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.

Chair of Unity Octave hymn

That all be one O dearest Lord, we pray,
That all be drawn within Thy one true Fold,
Back to Thy Church from which the wand'ers stray,
And Thy true Faith she keeps, like saints of old.
O bring them back Good Shepherd of the sheep;
And rouse the heathen nations from their sleep.

Then praise we God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Holy Spirit, Three in One,
That one in Him and one together we
In unity may praise the Trinity,
Till all the ransomed fall before His Throne
And give all glory to our God alone. Amen.

Chair of Unity Octave Prayer

Ant: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art 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)

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

R. And upon this Rock I will build My Church.

Let us Pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst say unto thine Apostles: Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you; look not upon our sins, but on the faith of thy Church, and vouchsafe to grant unto her that peace and unity which are agreeable to thy will. Who livest and reignest God for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Let us Pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, most gracious Saviour of the world, we humbly beg of thee by thy most Sacred Heart, that all the sheep now wandering astray may be converted unto thee, the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. Who livest and reignest from this time forth for evermore.

R. Amen.

Prayer to our Lady, Help of Christians

O Mary, Virgin Immaculate, our Mother and Mother of our God, thou seest how the Catholic Faith is assailed by the devil and the world, that Faith in which we purpose, by the help of God, to live and to die ; do thou, O Help of Christians, renew thy victories as of old, for the salvation of thy children. To thee do we entrust our firm purpose of never joining the assemblies of the heretics. Do thou, all Holy, offer unto thy Divine Son our resolutions, and obtain from him the graces necessary for us to keep them unto the end. Bring consolation to the Church, support and protect the Catholic clergy and people who proclaim thee Queen. Hasten, by the power of thy prayers, the day when all nations shall be gathered together in the one true Fold.

R. Amen.

V. O Mary, Help of Christians.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer for Unity

Let us Pray

O GOD the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred, prejudice, and error, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all; so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

V. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.