

University of Notre Dame
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Tomorrow: The "Chair Of Unity" Octave

As a figure of speech the word chair is used to express the office, or position of authority. Thus we speak of the chair of history, or economics, here at the university; the person at the head of the department occupies the chair.

By an extension of meaning it is also used to signify the authority of the bishop who occupies the episcopal chair in the diocese. For every diocese has a church called the "cathedral"-- from cathedra meaning chair -- from which the bishop exercises his jurisdiction.

The name, "Chair of Unity" accentuates the doctrine that St. Peter's Chair at Rome is the source and center of that unity of belief, worship, and government which Christ gave to His Church founded upon St. Peter as its visible head. Today there is an actual chair venerated in the apse of the Vatican Basilica, and it is believed to have been used by the Prince of the Apostles. The Popes of the first 15 centuries were accustomed to use this chair, known as the Cathedra apostolica (the Chair of the Apostle) when they were solemnly enthroned in the papal office. This custom ceased in 1378 when the papacy was temporarily transferred to Avignon. But during the Middle Ages, it was customary to expose this precious relic each year on January 18, for the veneration of the faithful. In 1867, the 18th century of the martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul, the relic was again made available for the devotion of the people.

The Chair of St. Peter at Rome is the Chair of Unity because through it the visible unity of the Church is expressed and preserved. The Chair is the symbol of the infallible teaching office of the Pope and of his legislative authority. It is also the symbol of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. It is the symbol of that unity which Christ conferred upon His Church. Its oneness can never be lost; it is enduring and permanent, and will remain with His Mystical Body until the end of the world.

These are the eight days when we pray especially for the conversion of all outside the One Fold, that they may come to share in, and enjoy the unity of the one, visible, historical society founded by Christ upon Peter. We pray that men may hear the voice of Christ speaking through His Vicar and follow Christian teaching; that those separated from the Church may return to that unity from which they, or their ancestor departed; that the missionary work of the Church may flourish. Such are the purposes of the Chair of Unity Octave.

What Can I Do ?

This would be an excellent time for you to do a little apostolic work regarding a friend who is, you know, interested in the Church's teachings; and who might want to join a group of "Inquirers." These are also days to pray especially for the "Black Sheep" who have strayed from the Church. Maybe you have one -- or more--in your own family! We don't look down on anyone, mind you, because the same thing can happen to anyone of us. Pray for them; and pray for yourself, too.

Each day of the Octave, at 5:15 in Dillon Hall Chapel, there will be a brief service consisting of the Prayer For Union, and Benediction -- a matter of 10 minutes. Drop in on your way to the dining hall for the evening meal, and pray for the success of this universal cause, maybe even for one of your own family, or an acquaintance. This is the week when all of us should become apostles. The particular intention for the first day: The Return of All the "Other Sheep" to the One Fold of St. Peter.

PRAYERS -- Deceased: mother of Charles Shallcross; uncle of Jim Christ (Old College) grandmother of Rob't Drago (O-C); father of Anthony Black (Vetville); Rev. Daniel Lord, SJ. Ill: relative of John Hayes (O-C). 3 Special Intentions.