

Tonight at 6:45 the
Sorrowful Mother Novena
in Sacred Heart Church.

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
January 18, 1957

Tonight at 8:00 the Slavonic-
Byzantine Mass. The fast for
Communion begins at 6:00.

The Unity Octave

In the subway stations of New York, these days, a striking religious poster depicts hands folded in prayer. New Yorkers gawk, just as do Hoosiers, at such things. And beneath the folded hands they read in large, bold, red letters the one word: PRAY. Beneath this work is the prayer of the Savior for unity, spoken at the Last Supper: "That they may be one!"

From January 18 (the Feast of St. Peter's Chair at Rome) until January 25 (the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul), we are especially reminded of the dissensions existing among Christians. We are also reminded that each of us is called to be an apostle in his own sphere of life -- laboring to realize the prayer of Our Lord that all men be gathered into the unity of one Fold under one Shepherd.

This span of eight days, called the Chair of Unity Octave, began in 1908 under the leadership of Father Paul James Francis, founder of the Society of the Atonement at Graymoor, Garrison, N.Y. It was approved and extended to the Universal Church by Pope Benedict XV in 1916, and has been ever more widely observed throughout the Catholic world each succeeding year. The word chair is used here as the See of St. Peter, and as the symbol of the primacy and supremacy of the saint and his successors on the papal throne. The chair is the symbol of authority. The chair also symbolizes the infallibility of the pope, and his right to rule and teach the whole Church and world as the Vicar of Christ upon earth. Our prayer, these days, is that all men will recognize the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome as the foundation of all Church unity. Our apostolate covers the entire world.

But What Can I Do ?

You can start with prayer. Bishop Francis X. Ford, the heroic Maryknoll missionary who suffered and died for the faith in China not many years ago, expressed the spirit of prayer for souls in these words: "If Catholics were to redouble their prayers for the conversion of those outside the fold, the united appeal storming heaven would without doubt mark the year as a Pentecostal renewal." Furthermore, while prayer does not change God, it does change man. And it changes those who pray, as well as those who are prayed for. Salvation is the purpose of the Church, but not in a vague, meaningless way. Each of us has to pray for, and work with, the individuals who come into contact with him. Nor is it enough to put information into the hands of a non-Catholic to bring him to unity with Rome -- there must also be prayer; for prayer is the power that brings down God's grace. Without grace no soul is saved. And without prayer there is no grace. In the scale of values nothing can substitute for prayer. Is it any wonder, then, that we use these eight days as a time of special prayer for unity!

We start the public prayers this evening at 5:15 in Dillon Hall chapel. They will be very brief. Drop in on your way to dinner. They will continue tomorrow, and Sunday, and every day until next Friday inclusive -- same time; same place.

These are special days to scan the pamphlet racks, gathering material for those who are interested in the Faith, and putting it into their hands, and encouraging them to inquire into the teachings of the Church. Pray for the apostolic itch. It will pay rich dividends.

PRAYERS - Deceased: Dr. Harvey Brown, '24; father of Bob Prindiville; grandfather of Xavier Aragona; father of Bob Crespy, '54; Joe Ridzon, ex-Freshman; father of Joseph F. O'Brien, Director of Personnel. Ill: mother of John Barnes of Sorin (very ill); father-in-law of Jim Smith; Louis Pollman; two uncles of Jim O'Day of Howard.