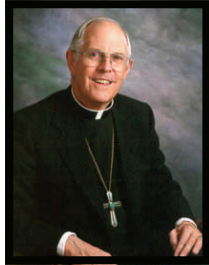


The Octave for Christian Unity

A Week of Prayer & Unity



From the Most Reverend
Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan, STL, JCD

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Vatican II's Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Decree on Ecumenism, called us to work for the restoration of unity among all Christians. It declared this unity to be "one of the chief concerns of the Second Sacred Ecumenical Synod of the Vatican."

Here in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe we have worked to foster the Ecumenical teachings of Vatican II, but this work belongs to all of us. The Decree tells us:

Concern for restoring unity pertains to the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone, according to the potential of each, whether it be exercised in daily Christian living or in theological and historical studies. This very concern already reveals to some extent the bond of brotherhood existing among all Christians, and it leads toward that full and perfect unity which God lovingly desires. (n. 5)

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Council's Decree on Ecumenism we know that such unity requires prayer and a mature Catholic Faith. This is why the Octave of Christian Unity is so important as we heed the call of Vatican II. I am pleased with the work of the Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission in providing us with helpful and practical ways to respond to the Holy Spirit.

Our Catholic Faith holds fast to the Eucharistic Mystery that constitutes us as the Mystical Body of Christ, as I said in my Pastoral Letter on the Eucharist "Our Lord gave the Church the great gift of the Holy Eucharist to feed us spiritually and give us the strength we need to follow Him faithfully." It is the gift of God's grace in our lives that guides our work for true unity.

While we cannot abandon what we know to be true we must strive in the light of that Truth for the "change of heart" which brings about true unity in Christ. This means growing in our charity. My hope for this Octave is found in the Decree on Ecumenism:

Let all Christ's faithful remember that the more purely they strive to live according to the gospel, the more they are fostering and even practicing Christian unity. For they can achieve depth and ease in strengthening mutual brotherhood to the degree that they enjoy profound communion with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. (n.7)

May these days of prayer bring us all closer to the unity of Christ.

Sincerely yours in the Risen Lord,

Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan
Archbishop of Santa Fe

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From Fr. Michael Demkovich, OP
Ecumenical Officer Archdiocese Santa Fe

Dear Friends,

The Ecumenical Commission has designated this Octave of Christian Unity as a time to foster a grass roots approach to ecumenism and encourage local parish and neighborhood activities that foster Christian unity. Many times we do not know our own tradition let alone that of our neighbor. This is why this week of Christian Unity invites Catholics to learn about their own tradition as well as grow in understanding the things we share in common with other Christians and those things that still keep us apart. It is not only a time of learning but it is also a time to pray together, to realize that our common Baptism unites us as brothers and sisters in Christ. It is also a time to realize that while we may not yet be in full communion, the Gospel of Christ nevertheless compels us to work together in building the City of God.

Both His Holiness Pope John Paul II and His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI have called us to work for unity and the healing of division as Christ call us to be one. It is a task that takes place in the theological circles of the Vatican but also in our circle of friends. Ecumenism is not only about a shared theological understanding but it is also about our living the Christian community. At a time when some elements want to silence the voice of religion we ought not to abandon are call to be one. The Octave leading up to St. Paul's conversion reminds us that people do change and by God's grace that change will call us back to Christ.

May these days of Christian Unity make us one in faith, steadfast in hope, and unwavering in love.

From Beth Lukes
Chair of the Ecumenical Commission Archdiocese Santa Fe



Dear Fellow Catholics,

To be or not to be ecumenical is a question that troubles many devout Catholics. Christ supplied his reassurance when he prayed, "... that they all may be one." At the Second Vatican Council, the Church responded to Christ's call by solemnly pledging to strive toward reconciliation with our Christian brothers and sisters. Since Vatican II, theologians from the various Christian denominations have made great progress toward unity. It is incumbent upon us as Catholic Christians to become aware of that progress by educating ourselves of the theological grounds for reconciliation and by engaging in meaningful dialogue with Protestant friends and neighbors to acknowledge the baptism and creed that unite us and to dispel the misconceptions and presumptions that divide us. It is my hope that the materials and activities provided in this web site will encourage your prayerful participation in ecumenism.

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Overview

Each January Christians take time to pray for and promote true unity. It is called the week or octave of Christian Unity and always marks the feast of St. Paul's conversion. These eight days call all Christians to follow Christ more fully and to heal our divisions. This year the Ecumenical Commission of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe has a way for you to enter into this time of unity in your home, neighborhood and community. Each day you might try to do something with your fellow Christians that promotes unity and understanding within the Church. The box below gives some ideas of ways to foster ecumenism both in one's self and in the Church, among our friends and neighbors. They are only a help and you can mix them any way you see fit. You can do them at home or in a church. They involve study and prayer, feast and fast, faith and hope.

Why?

We celebrate an Octave to grow in our understanding of what it means to be the Church. To discover where Christ is calling us to be and how we might one day fulfill His prayer to be one.

Focus

The focus for this Octave is grass-root, home-based things you can do with friends and neighbors. We forget that our homes are the "Domestic Church" and what better place for us to foster ecumenism than with our neighbors and friends.

| Day | Theme |
|------|---|
| I | Study Day: What is the Catholic Church's Teaching on Ecumenism? |
| II | The Word of God Makes Us One |
| III | Day of Fast |
| IV | Sing a New Song to the Lord |
| V | Christ Be Our Light |
| VI | Day of Personal Prayer |
| VII | Ecumenical Prayer and Pot Luck |
| VIII | We Believe: Creed & Conversion |

The Octave for Christian Unity

A Week of Prayer & Unity

Day 1: Study Day-What is the Catholic Church's Teaching on Ecumenism?

Documents/Sources

Vatican II [*Unitatis Redintegratio*](#)

[Directory for Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism](#)

John Paul II [*Ut Unum Sunt*](#)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Activity:

Individual: After reading and reflecting on the above, write your own thoughts on what ecumenism means to you.

Group:

Share your reflection with friends and neighbors, Catholics and other Christians, who have done the same.

Prayer

Recite the [Creed](#) prayerfully and reflect on it in light of your study. (This can be done alone or in a group.)

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen

The Octave for Christian Unity

A Week of Prayer & Unity

Day 2: The Word of God Makes Us One

Document/Sources

Vatican II [*Dei Verbum*](#)

Activity

Individual

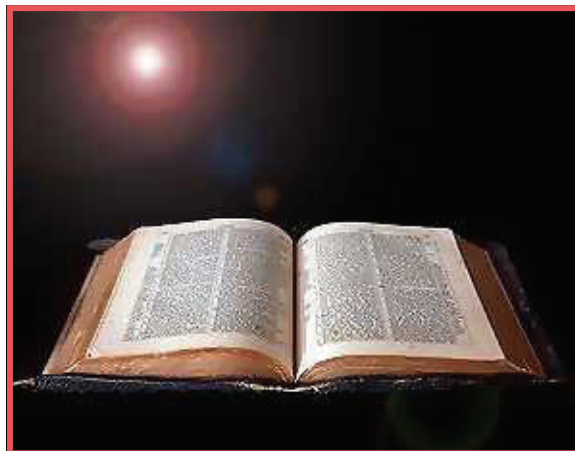
- 1) Find 2-3 different translations of the Bible (e.g. New American Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Jerusalem Bible, Good News for Modern Man, King James Version, etc)
- 2) Compare the following passages in each
 - A) Isaiah 7
 - B) Acts 9
 - C) Romans 8
 - D) John 20
- 3) How is the Bible the Word of God?

Group

Gather an ecumenical group together to discuss the Bible in your life.

Prayer

Take time for silent prayer together with the Bible placed in a central place and a candle burning by it.



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A Week of Prayer & Unity

Day 3: Day of Fast

Document/Sources

Dominus Iesus

Activity

Fast for Christian Unity, pray that as you fast the Church's hunger to be one with Christ will increase.

Individual

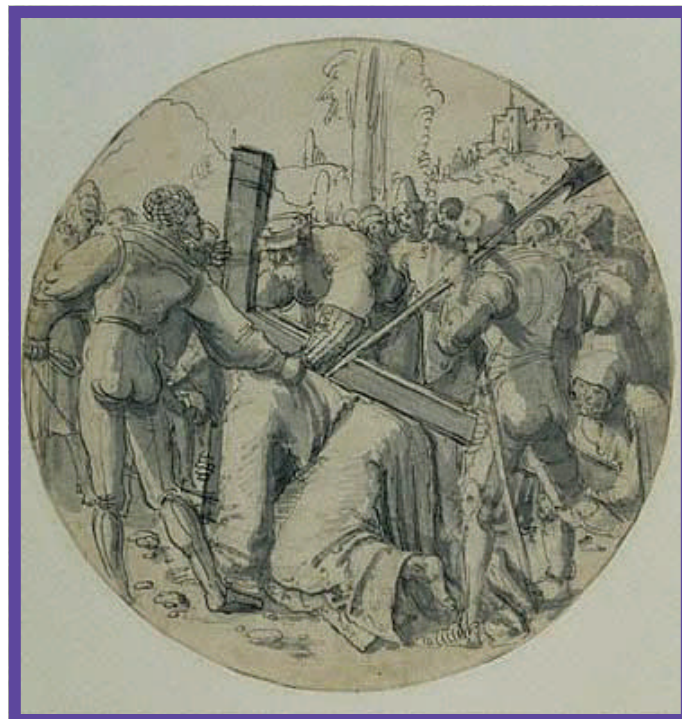
Write a journal entry on what this day of fasting has meant for you.

Group

Gather with others who have fasted for a simple soup supper.

Prayer

Set aside some time during the day for personal prayer.



The Octave for Christian Unity

A Week of Prayer & Unity

Day 4: Sing a New Song to the Lord

Document/Sources

Vatican II [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*](#)

Activity

Individual and Group

Organize a Christian sing-a-long in your home or get your parish/church/congregation to put on an Ecumenical Choral Concert

Music Websites

WWW.OCP.ORG

WWW.GIAMUSIC.COM

WWW.JSPALUCH.COM

Prayer

Conclude the Concert/Sing-a-long with the Our Father.



The Octave for Christian Unity

A Week of Prayer & Unity

Day 5: Christ Be Our Light

Document/Sources

[*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*](#)

Activity

Individual & Group

Organize an evening prayer service in your church/parish or a neighboring congregation.

Great resource for how to do a prayer service.

[Taize](#)

- Have people bring candles to the service
- At the end of the prayer service pass the flame from an altar candle to the candles brought by people. Slowly dim the church lights and chant Taize hymn [*Ubi Caritas*](#).
- Process the candles to the front of the church and place together as a sign of unity in the light of Christ.

Prayer

End with the Creed.

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glori-
fied,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen

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A Week of Prayer & Unity

Day 6: Day of Personal Prayer

Document/Sources

[Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)
[Part Four: The Revelation of Prayer](#)
[Article 2: In the Fullness of Time](#)

Activity

Set aside time in your day to pray in your church or in a neighboring church or congregation or a place of pilgrimage, the mountains, the Cathedral, the Santuario de Chimayo

Prayer

Sing [Psalm 27: I Believe I Will See](#) (John Foley, composer)

Silent Prayer

Our Father

Kiss of Peace



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A Week of Prayer & Unity

Day 7: Ecumenical Prayer and Pot Luck

Document/Sources

John 13

Activity & Prayer

3 course pot luck with prayer

| 1st course: | 2nd course | 3rd course |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Soup or Salad | Potluck main dish | Potluck dessert |
| Baptism | Christ Our Light | Mission & Ministry |
| Sing: One Bread on Body | Sing: Christ Be Our Light | Sing: City of God |
| Water sprinkling | Light table candles | Hold up Bible |
| Glory Be... | Our Father | Creed |

Pre-Arrange who will provide which course (if you do a progressive potluck determine where each course will take place, someone's home or a church).

Possible Discussion Questions

Course 1

- Why does your church baptize people? What does baptism achieve?
- Have you ever attended a baptism in another church? How did it compare with the celebration of baptism in your church in terms of its wording, participants, setting?
- What is the importance of baptism for Christian unity? Into which Church is a person baptized? Is there more than one Church?
- What are the controversies you have come across on the subject of baptism? What position does your church take on these?

Course 2

- How is Christ the source of our Unity?
- What unites us as Christians?
- What does the passage from John say to you about Christian Unity?

Course 3

- What can we do to foster ecumenism and grow in our understanding of one another?
- How can we work together to bring God's compassion to our community?

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A Week of Prayer & Unity

Day 8: We Believe: Creed & Conversion

Document/Sources

Creed
Acts 9

Activity

Individual

Self reflection on areas for personal conversion that opens you to Christ and a greater understanding of Ecumenism.

Group

Plan with others 2-3 activities you can do in the coming year to foster ecumenism. Some suggestions can be found on the Archdiocese Santa Fe Ecumenism Website, such as [ONE](#): Operation Neighborhood Ecumenism

Prayer

Meditate on St. Paul's conversion (Acts 9), his faith and love of Christ.

Concluding Prayer

*God our Father,
you taught the gospel to all the world
through the preaching of Paul your apostle.
May we who celebrate his conversion to the faith
follow him in bearing witness to your truth.
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord.
Amen.*

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen