

Votive Mass of Mary Help of Christians

On weekdays in ordinary time, when the liturgical calendar allows, this, votive Mass may be celebrated for the spiritual good of the faithful.

The readings are taken from the ferial readings in the Lectionary or, if it be considered more suitable from a pastoral standpoint, they may be chosen from those indicated for 24 May.

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At various points in its history the Church has experienced the powerful help of the Blessed Virgin, especially when persecutions have been unleashed by enemies of the faith; for this reason the custom arose of invoking her under the title *Help, of Christians*.

When Pius VII (*t* 1823), who had been driven out of Rome by armed forces, was being held prisoner, all the Church prayed incessantly for him, invoking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. The Pope was unexpectedly set free and returned to Rome on 24 May 1814. As a sign of thanksgiving he instituted a feast in honour of Mary under the title of *Help of Christians*, and from then on this feast has been celebrated in various local Churches and Religious Institutes. The Mass texts focus on the work of God the Father, who has given Mary to Christian peoples as their sign of help and defence (*Coll.*). Aware of the need to fight bravely for the faith each day, the members of the Church have recourse to the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and invoke her as helper and mother, so that with her they may pass safely through this world's storms and attain the perfect joy of heaven (*Pref.*)

Through their sacramental sharing in God's plan of salvation, Christian people seek this help. In their request they express the intention: — to live always under the protection of Mary to enjoy unfailing peace (*Coll.*); — to betever aware that she is at hand as mother and helper in the trials of life (*Offertory*); — to be able to pass safely through this world's storms (*Pref.*); — and finally, to rid themselves of all that is corrupt and perverse so as to put on Christ the new man (*After comm.*)

From the eucharistic celebration, characterized by the example of Mary as mother and helper, there arises a new commitment for the Church, which is called to carry out today and always a motherly mission: precisely that of a mother who protects and helps all her children who live amid this world's storms, to support them and enable them to fight bravely for the faith (*Pref.*).

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Jud 13,19

**The trust which you have shown will not
pass from human hearts,**

as they commemorate the power of God for evermore.

OPENING PRAYER

**O God, in Mary, the mother of your Son,
you have given us the sign of our defence and our help,
grant that Christian people
may always live under her protection
and enjoy unfailing peace.**

**We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for
ever and ever.**

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL *v. 24 May*

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

**Accept, O Father,
the offerings we present at your altar, as we
commemorate Mary Help of Christians, and grant
that amid the trials of life
we may always be aware that she is close to us as our mother and
helper.**

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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PREFACE

**V. The Lord be with you g. And also with
you.**

**V. Lift up your hearts.
g. We lift them up to the Lord.**

**V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. g. It is right to give
him thanks and praise.**

The Virgin Mary, mother and helper of Christian people

**Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and
everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

You have given the Immaculate Virgin Mary,

**the mother of your Son,
to Christian peoples as their helper and mother,
so that they may fight bravely for the faith,
and being firmly rooted in the teaching of the Apostles
may weather life's storms and attain the perfect
joy of their heavenly home.**

**And so today and always
we join our voices with the angelic choirs as they sing with exultation
the hymn to your glory:**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth
are full of your glory.**

Hosannah in the highest.

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in the
highest.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Deut 10,21

**He it is you must praise, he is your God; for you
he has done great things.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**God, our Father,
you have gathered us around the table
of your holy mysteries;
grant that sustained by the help of Mary our mother,
we may rid ourselves of all that is corrupt and perverse,
and put on Christ the new man,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**