
MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

A DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE & GUIDE



NATIONAL SHRINE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

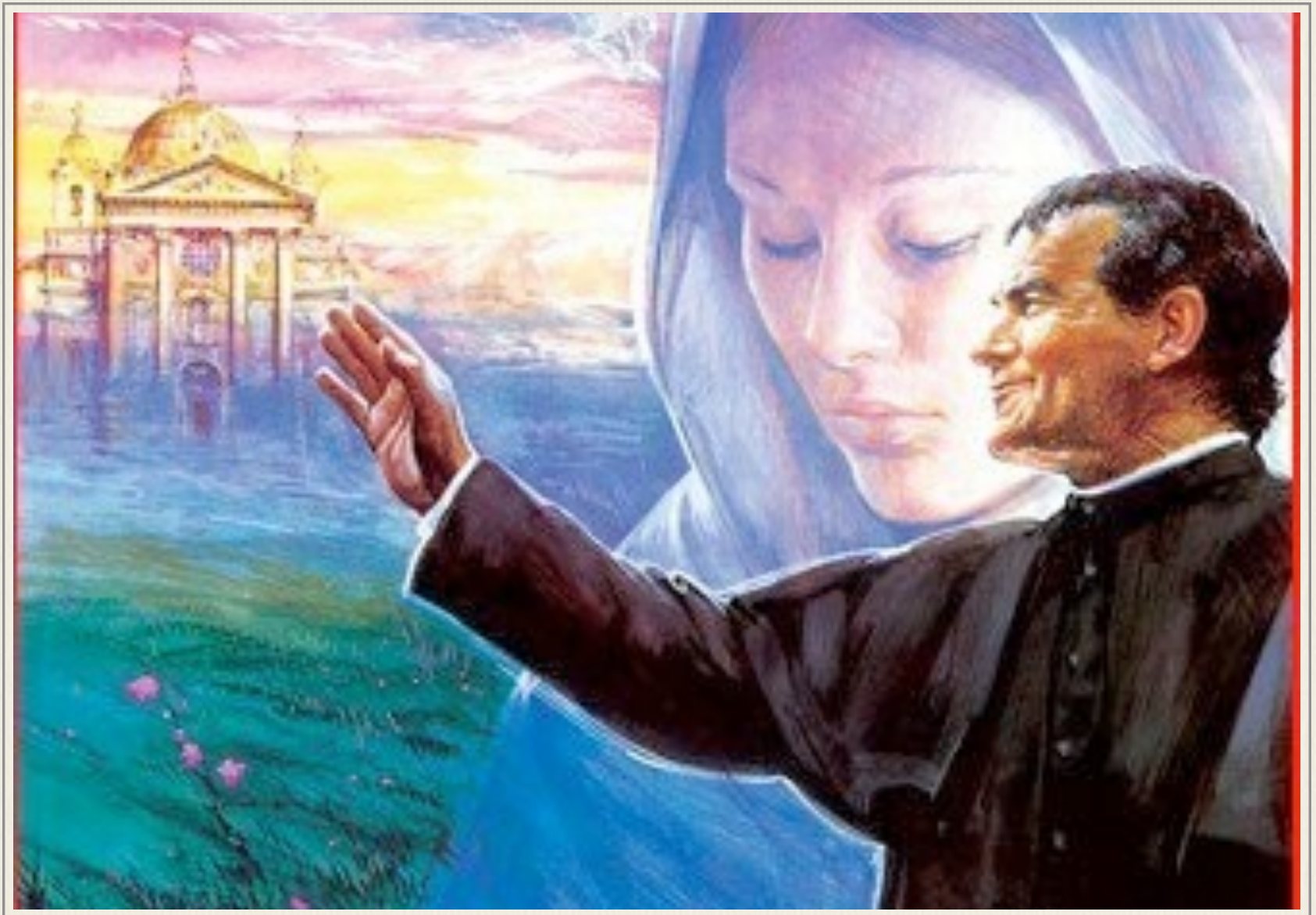
Barangay Don Bosco, Better Living Subdivision, Paranaque City

DIOCESAN SHRINE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

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A Scriptural and Salesian Background



What immediately follows is a suggested second look at **Don Bosco's Madonna** and her emerging relevance to the conditions existing right now in Philippine shores. Both Scripture and Salesian historiography seem to indicate the validity and significance of the devotion to Mary under the title of **Help of Christians**.

A Quick Glance at Scripture

We all know how Scripture is clear about her role in the plan of salvation wrought by God, in and through Jesus Christ His Son, become man like us, through the cooperation of the woman of faith, Mary! From Scripture, we can deduce the following: First, we can say that God the Father entrusted His Son to Mother Mary, who gave birth to him, took care of him, and acted as a real mother to him (cf. Lk 2:1-14). Second, this same woman, we may deduce in Luke's gospel, ended up taking care of her kinswoman, Elizabeth (Lk 1:39-45), after the angel Gabriel pointed to her being with child, too, as a sign of the veracity of his prophetic words. In fact, the Gospel passage tells us that she went in haste to the hill country of Judea to be of help to her cousin, herself with child (Lk 1:39-45).

Third, at the foot of the Cross, we are told that Jesus entrusted his mother to John, and he also entrusted John to his mother (Jn 19:26-27). Fourth, although there is no direct support from Scripture, we can also infer that Jesus most likely would have wished some kind of mutual support between the apostles and his mother. Mary was, in fact, with the apostles when the Holy Spirit came down on Pentecost day (Acts 1:14). We also know that Mary acted like a real mother who came to the rescue of the newlyweds at Cana, and literally entrusted them to her Son Jesus, when she said: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2: 1-11).

But the most poignant and touching image is that of Jesus being taken down from the Cross and laid on the lap and arms of the grieving Mother – an image immortalized by Michelangelo's "La Pieta'." John's account is certain that the mother of Jesus was at the foot of the cross, passed on by tradition in the hymn "Stabat Mater," (the mother was there!) (cf. Jn 19:25).

All the above Scriptural allusions show us Mary to be not just Mother, but one who comes to the "help" (*auxilium*, *succor*, *socorro*, and the Tagalized "*saklolo*") of all those in dire need. She comes to help precisely because she is mother.

Parallels in Salesian History

But there is more ... We see parallels and equivalents in the life of St. John Bosco, who, understandably, worked all his life to propagate love and devotion to her, under the title of Help of Christians (*Auxilium Christianorum*). Let us mention

some of them ... First of all, we read how early on in his childhood, Mamma Margherita, his mother, had to entrust her young son, no more than 9 years old then, to a family at Moncucco, just so he could study and pursue his dream. Little John Bosco then, was also, some kind of a migrant worker as a boy. She also entrusted him to the care of Mother Mary. But at age nine, we see how in that mysterious dream (or vision), Mother Mary, in turn, entrusted the wayward kids to John Bosco in his future mission. His followers, the Salesians, imitated him in his filial affection for the Mother of the Lord, Don Bosco's Madonna, who, they consider as the very same Mother who now entrusts to them countless young people in need of guidance, just as she did to little Johnny Bosco then. It is not surprising that all through his priestly life, Don Bosco entrusted all his dreams and plans to Mary.

Contemporary Philippine Situation

Fast forward now to the present Philippine situation ... We Filipinos are now the new denizens of the world. Many families now are not whole for one simple reason ... millions of young parents are separated from their children due to migration, in search for the proverbial greener pasture, and in order to assure a bright future for their children. Many young people are also internal migrants in our country, coming in droves from the provinces looking for work at urban areas. We are exactly like what the Holy Family was, when Jesus, Mary and Joseph had to migrate temporarily to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod. Families, individuals, young fathers and mothers, children, adolescents, and young adults, all need help. Our people need help and they need someone who can assure them not only of earthly, but more so, heavenly help.

This, the Blessed Mother, Mary Help of Christians, continues to do even here, even now. The biggest challenge our society is facing now is that which threatens the psychological and spiritual health of the family. The Filipino family is hemmed in on all sides by so many problems related to migration, both internal and external, along with the insidious forces of secularism.

Mary, in the tradition of St. John Bosco, is presented as one who, not only cares, but also spiritually takes the place of an absentee parent, who heals all rela-

tionships broken, or at least threatened by migration, exactly like the migrant little Johnny Bosco was cared for as he left home at such a tender age. With so many absentee parents at home, it all makes a lot of sense to do the act of entrustment of the home to Mary, Help of Christians, for after all, according to Scriptures, she was not one to shy away from helping those who needed help, especially on the home front.

I ask all my readers and devotees of **Mary Help of Christians** to allow themselves to be re-enchanted by Don Bosco's Madonna. I ask you all to find new meaning in the **Act of Entrustment of the Home** to her, whom Scriptures portray as one who is perpetual help to those in need, and as one who keeps all migrants and exiles for whatever reason, economic or political, ever close to her maternal heart.

This booklet also offers a prayer close to the heart of many Filipino families - ***An Act of Entrustment of Families Separated from Each Other Due to Migration***. Mary, in a most special way, remains to be Mother and Protectress, not only of the home, but most especially, of the Filipino family now spread and scattered in all corners of the world.

AN ACT OF ENTRUSTMENT OF THE HOME TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Most Holy Virgin Mary,
appointed by God to be the Help of Christians,
we choose you as the Mother and Protectress of our home.
We ask you to favor us with your powerful protection.
Preserve our home from every danger:
from fire, flood, lightning, storm, earthquake, thieves,
vandals, and from every other danger.
Bless us. Protect us. Defend us.

Keep as your own, all the people who dwell in this home.
Protect them from all accidents and misfortunes, but above
all obtain for them the most important grace of avoiding sin.

Mary Help of Christians, pray for all those who live in this home which is entrusted to you for all time. Amen.

**AN ACT OF ENTRUSTMENT OF FAMILIES
SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER DUE TO MIGRATION**

O Mary, Mother and Helper, you helped fulfill God's plan of salvation by cooperating with Him, / and accepting the words and promises of the Archangel Gabriel. / You went out of your village in order to be of help to your cousin Elizabeth. / You were with the Apostles gathered together when the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost. / You did not hesitate to accept John as your very own son, / and allowed him to accept you as his mother, and take you to his home. / Most of all, at the foot of the Cross, you enfolded your arms around the crucified Lord when he was taken down from the cross. / Though torn with indescribable grief, you did not hesitate to support the Lord's disciples, / even when they themselves were faced with so much uncertainty, / when they needed most the support of a loving mother in their midst. /

Mary Help of Christians, / succor to all those torn by painful separations owing to migration, / we entrust to you our family. / We beg you to stay with our beloved (brother, sister, father, mother, uncle, aunt, etc), / just as you did with Jesus and Joseph while on exile in Egypt. / We entrust to you, Loving Mother, our absentee family member, / forced by circumstances to be far away from us right now. / We entrust to you our family, whole but separated by immense distances / in our

desire to pursue legitimate dreams, just as you legitimately did / as you ran away from persecution in your own homeland./

Bless us. Protect us. Defend us. / Keep as your own, all the members of this family, present or not present./ Keep us all in your care, and deliver us from all dangers, most especially from all spiritual harm. /Guard us with your grace, here or abroad, so that we might live in perpetual union with God, / and in communion with our brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic faith. /Teach us to be patient in suffering, and steadfast before temptation./ Enfold us with your loving arms, just as you embraced your Son after he was taken down from the Cross./

Mary, Immaculate Help of Christians, we ask you to accompany us as we journey through this earthly life,/ until we reach the rewards of heaven, our only true home. Amen.

THE OLDEST STATUE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS IN THE PHILIPPINES: A SHORT HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1922, Msgr. William Piani, a Salesian and then Papal Pro-Nuncio to the Philippines, brought this statue of Mary Help of Christians to Manila. This statue was first enthroned at the Manila Cathedral since our Lady, under the title of Help of Christians, was suggested to be the secondary Patroness of the Philippines. In 1942, during the Japanese occupation, this statue was brought to Our Lady of Loreto Church in Sampaloc for safekeeping. Since then it has stayed there where members of the Archconfraternity of Mary Help of Christians continuously organized novenas and Masses every 24th of the month until the present. In August 29, 1994, 73 years after it was first brought to the Philippines, this statue was given to the National Shrine after representations made by the Archconfraternity mem-

bers, some Salesians, and Bishop Teodoro Bacani. Our Blessed Mother had finally come home.

PRIVATE NOVENA TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Suggested by St. John Bosco

Don Bosco was a most zealous propagator of the devotion to Mary Help of Christians. To all who asked him for help, he always suggested that they have recourse to the Madonna through a special novena. Many extraordinary favors were granted to those who followed Don Bosco's advice.

1. Recite each day for nine days, three times in honor of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the "Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be" and the short prayer, "*O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine.*"
2. Then recite three times in honor of Our Lady, the "Hail Holy Queen," with the short prayer "Mary Help of Christians, pray for us."
3. Approach the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion during the novena.
4. Make an offering in favor of Don Bosco's work of charity in accordance with your means.

Novena to Mary Help of Christians



*MARIA, AUXILIUM CHRISTIANORUM
Ora pro nobis!*

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of
the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening Prayer:

Remember, O Most
gracious Virgin
Mary, that never
was it known that
anyone who fled to
your protection, im-
plored your help,
and sought your in-
tercession, was left

unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin
of virgins, my Mother! To you I come. Before you I stand, sin-
ful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word incarnate, despise
not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me.

Amen. *(to be recited every day for nine days)*

DAILY PRAYERS

FIRST DAY

Hail, Star of the sea, Blessed Mother of God, ever fecund Virgin, happy gate of heaven.

"And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." (Apoc. 12: 1)

"And the dragon was angry against the woman: and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Apoc. 12: 17

Two distinguishing signs of the authentic faithful: Jesus and Mary, salvation of believers and help of Christians. Unto death I promise that I shall remain faithful to my religion: the Holy, Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Prayer:

O Holy Mary, powerful help of Christians, I turn to you with faith. In your mercy hear the prayers of this poor sinner who implores your help to avoid sin and all its occasions.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. Hail Holy Queen.

(what follows is to be recited at the end of each day's novena prayer)

Pray for us, O Immaculate, Help of Christians

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

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, place deep in our hearts the love of Mary, our help and the help of all Christians. May we fight vigorously for the faith here on earth, and may we one day praise your victories in heaven. Grant this in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SECOND DAY

Taking that sweet Ave, which from Gabriel came, peace confirm within us, changing Eve's name.

"And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to your word." (Luke 1: 38)

In short, Mary Most Holy offers us an example of humility, obedience and readiness to do the Will of God and cooperate in the realization of His Plan of Salvation. "Lord, what dost Thou want me to do? Make me an instrument of thy peace."

O Holy Mary, Mother of goodness and mercy, with your visible aid you have often delivered Christians from the attacks of their enemies, defend my

soul, I pray, from the assaults of the devil, the world, and the flesh so that I may be victorious over the enemies of my soul.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. Hail Holy Queen.

THIRD DAY

Break the sinners' fetters, make our blindness day, chase from us all evils, for all blessings pray

“And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth... And Mary abode with her about three months. And she returned to her own house.” (Luke 1: 39-40, 56)

Certainly, Mary remained until the birth of St. John the Baptist, for she knew that expectant mothers need special care and help. Here, we have a beautiful example of charity. I too promise to always practice charity and acts of mercy.

Mary, most powerful Queen, you alone triumphed over the many heresies which sought to tear away many of your children from the bosom of the Church, help me, I pray, to hold on firmly to my faith and to keep myself free from the snares and poison of so many perverse doctrines.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. Hail, Holy Queen.

FOURTH DAY

Show thyself our Mother by taking our voice to One Who deigned to be born for us, from Thee

“And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why have you done so to us? Behold your father and I have sought you sorrowing.” (Luke: 2, 48)

With what admirable kindness Mary admonishes her lost Son found in the temple. It is a beautiful example to parents. Children grow in wisdom, stature and grace before God and men when they receive the good example of their parents. In raising my children I promise to always practice patience, prudence and seriousness.

O Mary, my sweetest Mother, the Queen of Martyrs, do infuse into my heart the strength to persevere that, overcoming all human respect, I may be able to live my religion and show myself, on every occasion, a devout child of yours.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. Hail Holy Queen.

FIFTH DAY

O Virgin unexcelled and most gentle, make us meek and pure and preserve us from evil.

“And the third day, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. Seeing the wedding feast’s lack

of wine, Jesus performed a miracle upon the confident request of his mother. She invites us to also obey Jesus in a special way, saying: "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do it." "Happy are those that hear the Word of God and fulfill it" (John 2: 1-11).

Dear Mother Mary, in the triumph of Pope Pius VII, you showed your powerful patronage. Protect the whole Church and especially her supreme head on earth, the Holy Father. Defend him always from the attacks of his many enemies. Deliver him from physical sufferings and always assist him so that he may safely steer to port the boat of St. Peter and triumph over the proud billows which strive to submerge it.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. Hail Holy Queen.

SIXTH DAY

Keep our life all spotless, make our way secure till we find in Jesus, joy for evermore

The Lord "is your praise, and your God, that has done for you these great and terrible things, which your eyes have seen." (Deut. 10:21)

In fact, God, gazing at the humility of his faithful servant, Mary Most Holy, gave us through her the Savior of all men, Our Lord Jesus Christ. "O Mary, grant us the grace to imitate thy love of God and neighbor."

O Mary, Queen of the Apostles, take under your powerful protection the bishops, priests, and all the children of the Catholic Church. Obtain for them the spirit of union, of perfect obedience to the Holy Father, and of fervent zeal for the salvation of all. I beg of you especially to extend your loving patronage to missionaries, that they may be able to bring all the races of the earth to the true faith of Jesus Christ, so that there may be just one flock under one Shepherd.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. Hail Holy Queen.

SEVENTH DAY

Praise be to God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.

"Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount that is called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, within a Sabbath day's journey. And when they had come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James of Alpheus and Simon Zelotes and Jude the brother of James. All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." (Acts 1: 12-14)

O Mary, gracious and merciful Mother, by your efficacious intercession, you have saved Christians from plagues and other bodily scourges. Help me and deliver me from the disease of impiety and irreligion which creeps into my soul

in many ways to turn away from the Church and the practices of religion. I implore you: watch over the good that they may persevere. Strengthen the weak and call poor sinners to repentance, that truth and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ may triumph here on earth, so that your glory and the number of the elect may be increased in heaven.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. Hail Holy Queen.

EIGHTH DAY

Glorious Lady, more brilliant than the sun, with thy breast thou feedest the God who created thee.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he says to his mother: Woman, behold your son. After that, he says to the disciple: Behold your mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own..

We can never forget the words of the dying Jesus, "Mother, behold thy son. Son, behold thy Mother." "Upon death, he entrusted his mother Mary to his disciple so that the faithful might have such a Mother present in their last agony." (John 19: 25-27)

O Mary, Pillar of the Church and Help of Christians, I ask you to keep me firm in my holy faith and to preserve in me the liberty of a child of God. With the help of grace, I promise obedience to the Holy Father, and to the bishops in communion with him, desiring only to live and to die in the bosom of the Catholic faith, where only I can hope with certainty to attain eternal salvation.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. Hail Holy Queen.

NINTH DAY

What Eve had destroyed, thou creates once again in the Son, opening Heaven's gate and giving refuge to the sad.

When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he says to his mother: Woman, behold your son. After that, he says to the disciple: Behold your mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own. (John 19: 26-27)

Mary Most Holy, lovingly consenting with maternal fervor to the immolation of the victim she bore, through Jesus Himself dying on the cross, was given as a mother to the disciple and all of us. The Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Mary, help of Christians, cooperates in the work of the Redeemer to restore the supernatural life in souls. "Behold, thy Mother."

Most kind Mother, in every age you wished to be the help of Christians. Assist me with your invincible aid in life, and especially at the hour of my death, so that after having loved and praised you on earth, I may deserve to come and sing your mercies for ever in heaven.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be. Hail Holy Queen.

Pray for us, O Immaculate, Help of Christians

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

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, place deep in our hearts the love of Mary, our help and the help of all Christians. May we fight vigorously for the faith here on earth, and may we one day praise your victories in heaven. Grant this in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER AFTER NINE DAYS

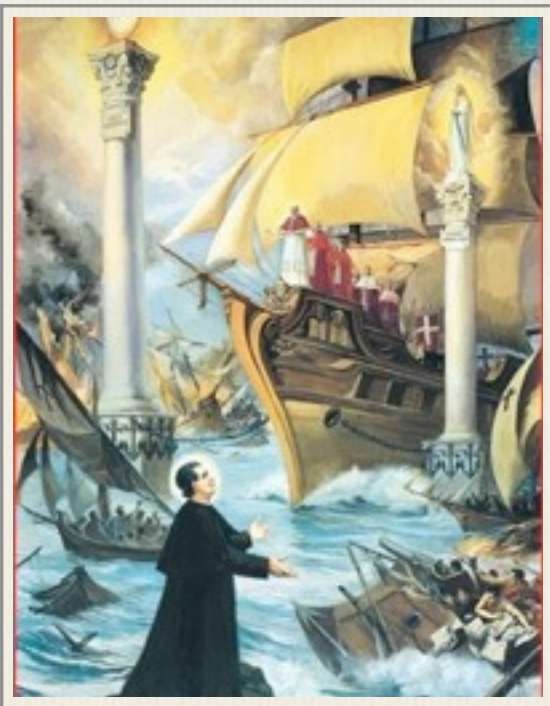
O Almighty and merciful God, you have given the Blessed Virgin Mary to all Christians as their everlasting Protectress. Graciously grant now, that, strengthened by her aid and striving onward in life, I may be victorious over the wicked one in the hour of my death. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary Help of Christians, pray for us! (thrice).

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Devotion to Mary Help of Christians in History

One of the greatest sea battles of all time took place at the Battle of Lepanto (now called the Gulf of Corinth) on October 7, 1571, when a mighty fleet of Turks threatened to invade and overrun the whole of Europe. A tiny fleet defeated the superior Turkish armada. But that is jumping ahead of the story.



The Eucharist, Mary &

Don Bosco

It appeared that in the face of tremendous odds, the Pope's first impulse was to kneel and pray. Admitting that the solution was not in the hands of man, Pope Pius V organized a Rosary Crusade and public processions of the Blessed Sacrament, to implore God's intervention through the intercession of the Blessed Mother. It was to be recalled that throughout the centuries Christians sought and experienced the miraculous intercession and help of Mary in most dramatic ways.

The Christians on the tiny fleet also prayed the Rosary and received Holy Communion before embarking to face the vastly superior enemy who outnumbered them four to one. At the start of the battle, the Christian fleet started to lose as expected, and was irreversibly bound for total perdition. But, all of a sudden, as the battle progressed, the winds changed direction and it favored the tiny Christian fleet, throwing the mighty Turkish fleet into unexplainable chaos, causing for example, one of their ships letting out its cannon salvos against another of their ships.

Later in the afternoon at the very height of the naval battle, a great storm arose! Some of their powerful ships took in water and sank, and the rest fled in unexpected confusion. This resulted to the defeat and irreparable destruction of the much vaunted and mighty Turkish armada. After the smoke of battle subsided,

the Christian forces gathered in a victorious celebration, their Christian commander, Don Juan of Austria, made a historic public proclamation in that gathering that their victory was due to the powerful intercession of the Queen of the Holy Rosary, for which the Venetian Senate wrote to other states in Europe, claiming that “it was not the Generals, nor the battalions, nor the arms that brought us to victory; but it was our Lady of the Rosary.” Indeed, under the circumstances, there could be no other plausible reason!

Pope St. Pius V, in commemoration of the miraculous victory, proclaimed the celebration of the feast of the Most Holy Rosary, and the additional invocation “Auxilium Christianorum, Ora pro nobis,” or “Mary Help of Christians, Pray for us,” to the Litany of Loreto.

As early, however, as the 16th century, the title of Mary Help of Christians was conferred to the Blessed Virgin. The first shrine built in her honor under this title was the one in Passau, South Germany in 1624.

The devotion to Mary Help of Christians became widespread in Europe, especially in Italy. The following significant events attracted more devotees to our Blessed Lady ...

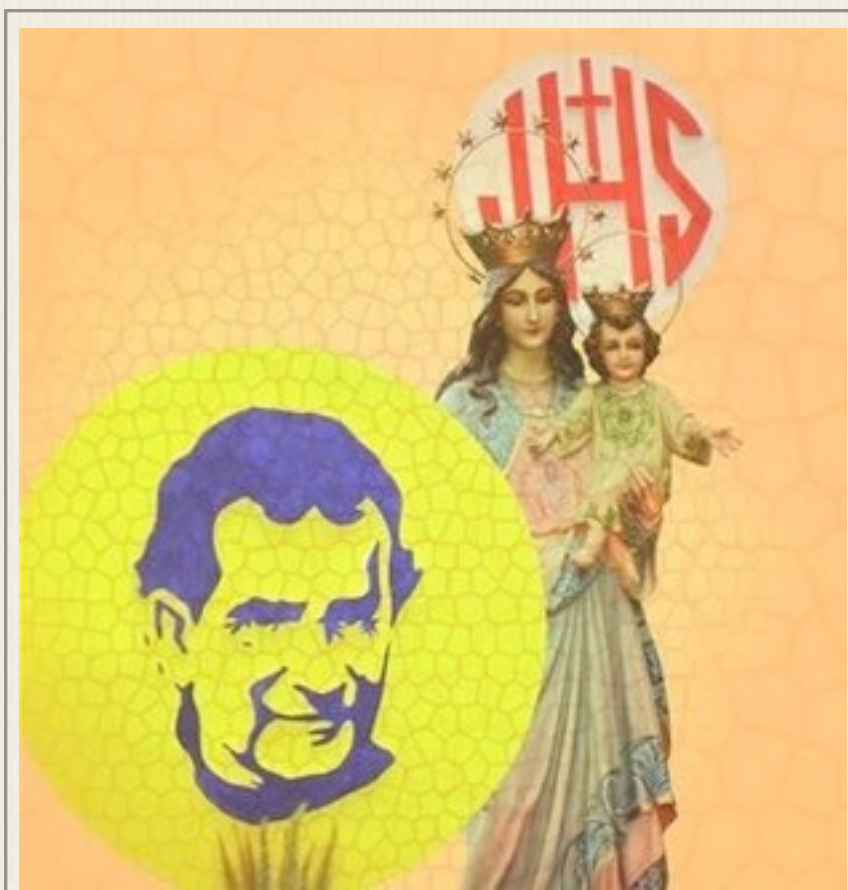
In 1863, Emperor Leopold I of Austria took refuge in the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Passau, when the Turks took over the city of Vienna. “Maria Hilf!” “Mary Help!” was the rallying cry of all Christendom as Catholics were led in prayer by Pope Innocent XI. Through the help of the Blessed Mother, Vienna and the whole of Europe were miraculously freed.

In 1804, after Napoleon Bonaparte had proclaimed himself the Emperor and as this act was confirmed by the French Senate, the persecution of Pope Pius VII began. The Pope was imprisoned in 1809. With unfailing trust in our Lady, the Pope enjoined all Christians to pray and ask for the intercession of Mary, Help of Christians. A series of events took place, but in the end, Napoleon vacated the throne and Pope Pius VII was freed.

This was in 1814. In thanksgiving, Pope Pius VII led a Marian parade from France to Rome, stopped in every city and town during the parade to place a crown on our Blessed Mother’s statue. In gratitude for his release from four years

of incarceration, the Pope established the liturgical feast of Mary Help of Christians on May 24, 1815 “to commemorate the unhelped for help of Mary Most Holy towards the Pope and the Christian people.”

Don Bosco's Madonna



Don Bosco had many dreams but the one which set the tone of his life was a dream he had when he was just nine years old. In that dream, he came face to face with a man, who was apparently Jesus, and a Lady, immaculately dressed in a mantle that glittered, whom we can deduce as our Blessed Mother. This vision left a strong imprint in his life. From that time on, Jesus and His Blessed Mother became the central figures in the life of Don Bosco. The kind, gentle and loving words he received from them in that dream guided Don Bosco in his mission which

he accomplished with a gentle, apostolic love and which his followers have faithfully imitated up to this day.

One day in 1863, when a vision of Our Lady appeared to John Bosco, then already a priest, to ask him to build a Church for Mary Help of Christians, the result was that Church in Turin, Italy, known as the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians. It was built under miraculous circumstances with financial help coming from unknown devotees. Lack of funds and the attendant strong anticlerical current from civil officials never deterred Don Bosco. Against all odds, the Basilica was completed in 1868.

We can say that the devotion to Mary Help of Christians could have been forgotten had not the Spirit raised up St. John Bosco. As a young priest, Don Bosco

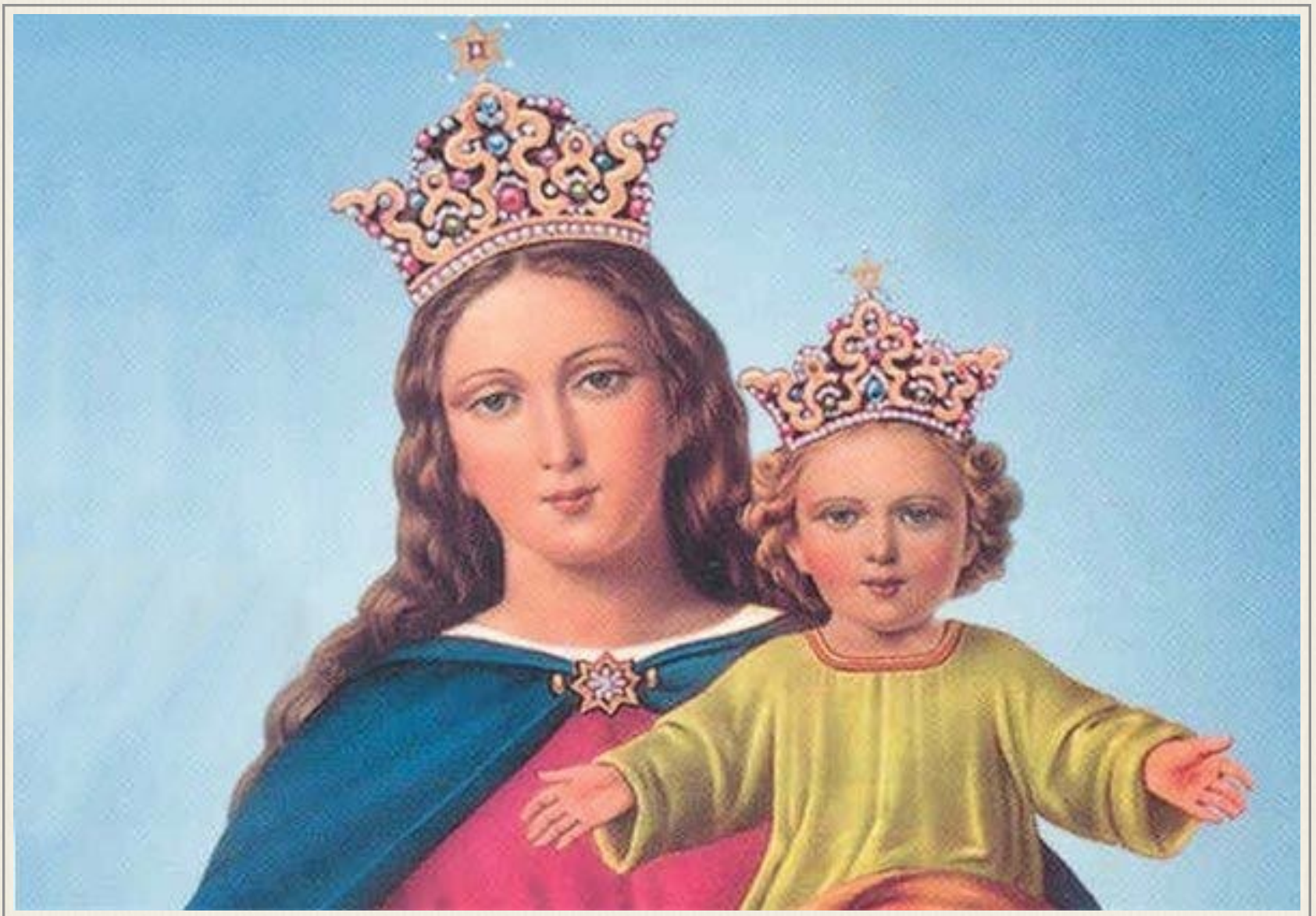
had promoted the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to Our Lady of Sorrows, devotions which had been popular for centuries.

But, like we said above, in 1863, Don Bosco began to honor Mary under the title of Help of Christians. It was in those years that the anticlericals were busy attacking the Church and the Papacy. From the human viewpoint, the Bark of Peter was sinking, and was desperately in need of help. In 1862, a painting of Mary which the Archbishop of Spoleto venerated as the Help of Christians was seen by many to have shed tears miraculously. It was also said that Pius IX, in a talk with Don Bosco, had shown his predilection for this title of Mary. Most of all, Don Bosco had been led through supernatural guidance to construct a Church dedicated to Mary, Help of Christians. In spite of numerous obstacles from anticlerical forces, as well as constant lack of funds, the grand Basilica of Mary Help of Christians was miraculously completed in 1868.

For Don Bosco then, Mary's help was needed more than ever in his days because "there were so many lukewarm Christians," "sinners to convert," and "innocent souls to protect." Under the invocation "Mary Help of Christians," he worked many miracles and labored tirelessly for the salvation of youth. He worked with zeal to spread this devotion, encouraging all to have confidence in Mary's intercession. "Have devotion to Mary Help of Christians, and you will see what miracles are," was something he said very often.



A COLLECTION OF PRAYERS TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS



What follows is a collection of short prayers and invocations to Our Lady Help of Christians, including those that Don Bosco himself had written. But beyond giving the pious reader simply short prayers to use on a daily basis, this collection heightens the importance of understanding how much we need the help of Mary in our times now, beset as we are by so many challenges that come from the prevailing spirit of secular humanism, materialism, hedonism, and what Pope emeritus Benedict XVI called the “tyranny of relativism.” In our Philippine context, this takes

the form of so many attacks against the sacredness of life, the integrity of the family united by God in Holy Matrimony, the progressive loss of attachment and attunement to the Church, on account of the insidious power of both mainstream media and social media to draw them away from a Christian culture, toward a “cultural decline” that results in both moral and metaphysical materialism.

We would like to uphold **Mary Help of Christians**, as **Mother and Protectress** of both **home** and **family**, now forcibly separated due to the phenomenon of labor migration. We would like to suggest that devotion to her as **Protectress of the Integrity of the Christian Family**, is clearly indicated by the seemingly irreversible trends present in contemporary Philippine society.

It goes without saying, that, like as in the times of Don Bosco, the phenomenon of “lukewarm Christians” then, now known as “disengaged Catholics” as contrasted from “dynamic Catholics,” continue to pose as challenges to evangelization.

We present Mary as Mother, too, of all Christians born again by water and the Spirit, but whose faith now has been eclipsed by a culture of show business and rabid secularism, enabled and empowered by the new media or social media, that, for the most part, is very far from Gospel culture.

Short Prayers to Our Lady

Prayer to Our Lady

(Written by Don Bosco)

Most Holy Virgin Mary, Help of Christians,
how good it is to come before you:
imploring your constant help.
If earthly mothers cease not to remember their children,
how can you, the most loving of all mothers forget me?
Grant then to me, I implore you,
your perpetual help in all my necessities,
in every sorrow, and especially in all my temptations.
I ask for your unceasing help for all who are now suffering.
Help the weak, cure the sick, convert sinners.
Grant through your intercessions
many vocations to the religious life.
Obtain for us, O Mary, Help of Christians,
that having invoked you on earth
we may love and eternally thank you in heaven.
Amen

A Prayer of Love and Affection to

Mary, Help of Christians

O Mary, You love me with a Mothers heart.
Just as you held your son Jesus in your arms
you hold me in your care.
Help me in my need;
Protect me day by day;

and through your Motherly intercession,
May I become ever more aware
of the breath of God living within me.
Mary, Help of Christians, Pray for us. Amen

Prayer to Mary Help of Christians

(by St. John Bosco)

O Mary, powerful Virgin,
You, great and illustrious defense of the Church!
You, marvelous Help of Christians!
You, terrible as an army arrayed for battle!
You, who alone, have destroyed every heresy the world over!
You, in our anguish, in our struggles, in our temporal needs
Defend us from our enemy
And in the hour of our death,
Welcome our soul into Paradise.
Amen!



GROUP NOVENA TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

(Every Wednesday & the 24th of the Month)



The following is a group novena that can be celebrated either before or after Mass, or as a Bible service that gives a central place to Scripture and communal prayer of petitions of devotees who wish to celebrate in common at Diocesan Shrines and at the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Paranaque City, Metro Manila, PHILIPPINES.

Where it is done just before or right after Mass, the short Penitential Rite may be omitted, and the prayer of petitions need not all be prayed together. For those who wish, the same novena may be prayed in private, in which case, the individual may choose to say all the prayers of petitions as suggested herein.

GROUP NOVENA IN HONOR OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

(Every Wednesday or the every 24th of the month)

ENTRANCE SONG: *(the following hymn or any other Marian song may be sung)*

O HELP OF CHRISTIANS

O Help of Christians, Virgin the fairest,
Hope of our exile, Jesus thou bearest;
Clear star of evening, shine on our pathway,
Guide thou our footsteps, lest we go astray.
*Sinful and erring, thy children on thee call,
Virgin most powerful, pray for us all,
Virgin most powerful, pray for us all,
(REPEAT*)

LEADER: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: AMEN

LEADER:

My brothers and sisters, fellow devotees of Mary, we gather together in God's Holy Name, before the revered image of our Blessed Mother Mary, Help of Christians. We have come here so that, like her and together with her, we might listen to the Word of God, and through her intercession, beseech God for whatever graces we need as individual and as a people.

ACT OF SORROW FOR SINS *(All kneel)*

ALL:

God and Father of us all, we gather before your Holy Presence. We recognize and accept our sinfulness, our inability to love fully, our too much love for self and utter lack of trust in Your Divine Providence. Please forgive us loving Father, and grant that we may fulfill all your commands so that one day, we might share in Your everlasting glory.

OPENING PRAYER

LEADER: LET US PRAY

O Lord our God, you chose the Most Blessed Virgin Mary to be a most loving Mother and Help of Christians. Through her prayers and intercessions, strengthen your people so that they remain victorious over every form of evil. May we be able to freely proclaim the saving mystery of Christ, her Son, to all peoples. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, Our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

GOSPEL READING *(all rise)*

LEADER: A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (*Other Gospel passages based on the attached list may be read*)

While He was saying these, a woman from the crowd called out, “Blest is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!” “Rather.” He replied, “Blest are they who hear the word of God and keep it.”

MEDITATION SONG: *(this or any other appropriate song may be sung)*

IKAW, O MARIA

Minamahal kita, O Maria
Ikaw ang s’yang ligaya ng buhay ko.
Ika’y aming Ina, takbuhan ka ng bayan mo.
Kanlungan at pag-asa’y ikaw.

Sinisinta kita, aking reyna,
Maghari kang lubusan sa buhay ko.
Nawa’y pangarap ko’y maging tapat sa puso mo,
Tanglaw ng buhay ko ay ikaw.

Pinupuri kita, pinagpala

Lipos ka ng pag-ibig ng Maykapal
Ngayon dalangin ko'y dalhin ako sa piling mo,
Kasama ni Hesus ay ikaw.

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS: *(Any of three options may be recited together in big groups particularly every 24th of the month, or every Wednesday before or after Mass. In personal prayer, one may recite all the following three prayers)*

Option 1: Prayer for the Sick

ALL:

O Mary Help of Christians, beloved daughter of God Most High,/ to you was entrusted the task of helping all Christian believers in their need./ For this reason, the sick run to you for healing; /the poor take refuge in you in their want; / the sorrowing in their suffering, /the seafarers in their uncertainty,/ soldiers in the midst of battle,/ wayfarers in time of peril,/ the dying in their final moments, /all have recourse to you and are blessed abundantly with your maternal love and compassion./ Therefore, if it pleases you, / hearken to my earnest prayer, O Mother most merciful,/ and as I entrust myself to your care, help me at all times,/ and be with me in the time of danger./ Deliver me from all harm, and intercede for me before the Lord, / that I may receive the graces I need, now, and most especially at the hour of death. Amen.

(In personal prayer, pray the Hail Mary thrice and the short prayer, “Mary Help of Christians, pray for us.”)

Option 2: Prayer of Hope

All:

O Mary Immaculate, loving Mother of the Redeemer and Help of Christians, / you alone have triumphed against all heresies, and made the Church victorious against all odds./ With your help, many were delivered from all dangers;/ those who seek to destroy the Church are put to rout; /all sicknesses vanished, and even death is vanquished when people call on your name./ Enliven and strengthen our hope in you, O Mary, / so that in all our needs, all might know that you indeed come to the aid of all those who call on you,/ the defender of the persecuted,/ the health of the sick, comfort of the afflicted, the refuge of sinners, / and the cause of perseverance of the just.

(In personal prayer, pray the Hail Mary thrice and the short prayer, “Mary Help of Christians, pray for us.”)

Option 3: Prayer of Sorrow for Sins

All:

O Mary Help of Christians, loving spouse of the Holy Spirit, / Mother most merciful of all believers,/ I come before you in time of need./ I ask you to free me from sin, and deliver me from the wiles of the evil one and the enemies of my soul and body./ Banish far from me the punishments that I deserve on account of my sins,/ and grant that I might understand the goodness of your love./ O powerful Mother, how I pine for the radiance of your face,/ bathed by the light of eternal happiness in

heaven./ But it is wicked of me to doubt my worthiness of the same happiness on account of my sins./ I ask you never to allow me to fall into the abyss of such lack of hope, O sweet Mother./ Intercede for me, I pray, that your son Jesus might lead me to genuine compunction of heart and sorrow for my sins,/ that I might live in peace, die a holy death, as to be one day with God, forever in Paradise.

(In personal prayer, pray the Hail Mary thrice and the short prayer, “Mary Help of Christians, pray for us.”)

PRAYER OF PETITION *(to be recited always, kneeling down)*

ALL:

O Most loving Mother, I come before you in my hour of need./ Trusting in your maternal goodness and graciousness, I fly unto you, O Mary Help of Christians. / Bowed and humbled by my weaknesses, I kneel before your august presence. / I beseech you from the bottom of my heart, to grant what I most sorely need at the moment. *(mention your petition in silence) ...*

I humbly accept, on Most Loving Mother,/ that I can never be worthy of any favor from above on account of my sins/ that pose as blocks to my capacity to recognize God’s loving embrace. / But I am aware too, O Most Sweet Mother, / that you have the power to lift me up from the depths of my current misery, / and make of your unworthy child, a true and humble ser-

vant of Your Son Jesus Christ. / Favored and blessed thus by God, through your loving intercession,/ grant that my life may then be an endless proclamation of the power of your maternal care as Help of Christians./

THE LORD'S PRAYER (all rise)

LEADER:

My brothers and sisters, let us now make our prayers complete by turning to God our Father, who is the source of everything that is good. From Him alone come all graces and favors, which, in His goodness, He choose to dispense through Mary, Mother of Grace, and Help of Christians. It is therefore with confidence and trust that we pray as the Lord has taught us.

ALL: OUR FATHER...

LEADER:

O God and Father of all, hearken to our humble prayers. Though we are your unworthy children, we beg you to grant us, who live in this valley of tears, what we ask for in faith and trust. Come to our aid, and favor us with the singular grace we ask for, if it is in accord with Your holy will, and if it redounds to our good and the good of all in the human family. All this we ask through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. AMEN.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN

FINAL HYMN

OFFERING OF THE DAY TO MARY MOST HOLY

Mary, Mother of the Word Incarnate
and my Mother too,
I am here prostrate at your feet
at the beginning of a new day,
a new gift from the Lord.
I surrender to you my very being.
I'll be yours -
will, mind, heart and body.
In your motherly goodness, form me today
to a new life: Jesus' life!

O Queen of heaven,
watch over and accompany
my smallest actions
with your motherly inspiration
so that everything
may be pure and acceptable within
the immaculate sacrifice.
Make me a saint, my good Mother,
according to Jesus' plans
and your ardent wishes. Amen.

Afterword

This devotional resource and guide was compiled by the Salesians assigned as of date (May 2013) at the **National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians** at Paranaque City, Metro Manila, with the help of those who currently serve at the **Diocesan Shrine of Mary Help of Christians**, in Canlubang, Calamba City, Laguna.

The editor and compiler would like to acknowledge in a special way the contribution of Fr. Daniel Dennis Leyran Meim, SDB, and Fr. Caesar N. Dizon for their invaluable insights and contributions, both in the conceptualization and proofreading.

A Tagalog version, with due ecclesiastic approbation since August of 1985, and reprinted in 1990, will also be made available soon.

As the reader can see, based on the Scriptural and Salesian historical backgrounder, Mary, Help of Christians emerges, too, as Mother and Protectress of Families separated on account of migration, for whatever reason.

May we bask always under the warm glow of Mary's motherly and loving protection, both in our personal and communal lives. More importantly, may we all learn to value and uphold the sacredness of life and the integrity of the Filipino family, and contribute to the Church's call for new evangelization!

Fr. Vitaliano *Chito* Dimaranan, SDB
Rector/ Director of Marian Programs & Initiatives
Editor/Compiler

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

DIOCESAN SHRINE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Canlubang, Calamba City, Laguna

Every 24th of the month:

5:30 PM - Mass

Weekdays:

6:30 AM - Mass

Sundays:

8:30 AM

10:30 AM

5:30 PM

Confessions available on Sundays or upon request.

SHRINE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Don Bosco Technological Institute Compound,
Taurama Road, East Boroko,
Port Moresby, PNG.

Schedule of Sunday Masses:
7:30am and 9:00am.



NATIONAL SHRINE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Barangay Don Bosco, BLS, PARANAQUE CITY

Daily Masses (Mon-Saturday)

6:00 AM (Confessions also available daily)

7:00 AM - Regular Daily Mass

6:30 PM (Confessions also available daily)

12:15 PM (Wednesdays only)

SATURDAY VIGIL MASS

6:30 PM - English

SUNDAYS

(Confessions available in almost all Sunday Masses)

6:00 AM - Tagalog

7:30 AM - English

9:00 AM - Tagalog

10:30 AM - English

11:30 AM - Baptisms

12:00 PM - Tagalog

3:30 PM - Tagalog

5:00 PM - English

6:30 PM - English

8:00 PM - English