

This second form contains the invocation *Auxilium Christianorum*. Possibly the warriors, who returning from Lepanto (7 Oct., 1571) visited the sanctuary of Loreto, saluted the Holy Virgin there for the first time with this new title; it is more probable, however, that it is only a variation of the older invocation *Advocata Christianorum*, found in a litany of 1524. Torsellini (1597) and the Roman Breviary (24 May, Appendix) say that Pius V inserted the invocation in the litany of Loreto after the battle of Lepanto; but the form of the litany in which it is first found was unknown at Rome at the time of Pius V.

The feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians, was instituted by Pius VII. By order of Napoleon, Pius VII was arrested, 5 July, 1808, and detained a prisoner for three years at Savona, and then at Fontainebleau. In January, 1814, after the battle of Leipzig, he was brought back to Savona and set free, 17 March, on the eve of the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, the Patroness of Savona. The journey to Rome was a veritable triumphal march. The pontiff, attributing the victory of the Church after so much agony and distress to the Blessed Virgin, visited many of her sanctuaries on the way and crowned her images (e.g. the "Madonna del Monte" at Cesena, "della Misericordia" at Treja, "della Colonne" and "della Tempesta" at Tolentino). The people crowded the streets to catch a glimpse of the venerable pontiff who had so bravely withstood the threats of Napoleon. He entered

Rome, 24 May, 1814, and was enthusiastically welcomed. To commemorate his own sufferings and those of the Church during his exile he extended the feast of the Seven Dolours of Mary (third Sunday in September) to the universal Church. When Napoleon left Elba and returned to Paris, Murat was about to march through the Papal States from Naples; Pius VII fled to Savona, where he crowned the image of Our Lady of Mercy, 10 May, 1815.

After the Congress of Vienna and the battle of Waterloo he returned to Rome, 7 July, 1815. To give thanks to God and Our Lady he (15 Sept., 1815) instituted for the Papal States the feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians, to be celebrated, 24 May, the anniversary of his first return. The Dioceses of Tuscany adopted it, 12 Feb., 1816; it has spread nearly over the entire Latin Church, but is not contained in the universal calendar. The hymns of the Office were composed by Brandimarte. This feast is the patronal feast of Australasia, a double of the first class with an octave, and in accordance with a vow (1891) is celebrated with great splendour in the churches of the Fathers of the Foreign Missions of Paris. It has attained special celebrity since St. Don Bosco, founder of the Salesian Congregation, dedicated to Our Lady, Help of Christians, the mother church of his congregation at Turin. The Salesian Fathers have carried the devotion to their numerous establishments.

Commentary from The Catholic Encyclopedia (1911).

Proper Prayers of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form

MAY 24

Our Lady Help of Christians



But He said: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.

INTROIT (Sedulius)

SALVE, sancta Parens, enixa puérpera Regem: qui cœlum, terrámque regit in sæcula sæculórum. Allelúia, allelúia. *Psalm.* Eructávit cor meum verbum bonum: dico ego ópera mea regi. *V.* Glória Patri, et Fílio, et Spíritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculórum. *R.* Amen. — Salve, sancta Parens ...

HAIL, holy Parent, that didst bring forth the King who ruleth Heaven and earth for ever and ever, alleluia, alleluia. *Ps. 44. 2.* My heart hath uttered a good word: I speak of my works to the King. *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. — Hail, holy Parent ...

COLLECT

Omnípotens et miséricors Deus, qui ad defensionem pópuli christiáni in beatíssima Virgine María perpétuum auxiliúm mirábiliter constituísti: concéde propitiús; ut, tali præsidio muniti certátes in vita, victóriam de hoste maligno cónsequi valeámus in morte. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

O almighty and merciful God, Who didst wondrously appoint the most Blessed Virgin perpetual help for Christians in need of protection: grant in Thy mercy that after battling in life under such a protectress, we may be able to conquer our enemy at death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son: Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end.

LESSON

From the Book of Ecclesiasticus, 24. 14-16.

FROM THE BEGINNING, and before the world, was I created, and unto the world to come I shall not cease to be, and in the holy dwelling place I have ministered before Him. And so was I established in Sion, and in the holy city likewise I rested, and my power was in Jerusalem. And I took root in an honorable people, and in the portion of my God his inheritance, and mine abode is in the full assembly of the saints.

AB INÍTIO, et ante saecula creata sum, et usque ad futurum saeculum non desinam, et in habitazione sancta coram ipso ministravi. Et sic in Sion firmata sum, et in civitate sanctificata similiter requievi, et in Jerusalem potestas mea. Et radicavi in populo honorificato, et in parte Dei mei hereditas illius, et in plenitudine sanctorum detentio mea.

ALLELUIA

ALLELUIA, alleluia. (*Num. 17. 8.*) The rod of Jesse hath blossomed: a Virgin hath brought forth God and man: God hath restored peace, reconciling in Himself the lowest with the highest.

Alleluia. (*Luke 1. 28, 42.*) Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Alleluia.

ALLELUIA, alleluia. Virgo Jesse floruit: Virgo Deum et hominem genuit: pacem Deus reddidit, in se reconcilians ima summis.

Alleluia, Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Continuation of the holy Gospel according to St. Luke, 11. 27-28.

AT THAT TIME, as Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to Him: Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the paps that gave thee suck. But He said: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.

IN ILLO TEMPORE: Loquente Jesu ad turbas, extollens vocem quaedam mulier de turba, dixit illi: Beatus venter, qui te portavit, et ubera quae suxisti. At ille dixit: Quinimmo beati qui audiunt verbum Dei, et custodiunt illud.

OFFERTORY (Luke 1. 28, 42)

HAIL Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Alleluia.

Ave, Maria, gratia plena: Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui. Alleluia.

SECRET

For the triumph of the Christian faith we immolate to Thee, O Lord, these victims of propitiation; may the Blessed Virgin's help render them of profit to us, for such a perfect victory ever comes through her. Through our Lord...

Pro religionis christianae triumpho hostias placationis tibi, Domine, immolamus: quae, ut nobis proficiant, opem auxiliatrix Virgo praestet; per quam talis perfecta est victoria. Per Dominum ...

PREFACE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

VERE dignum et justum est, aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper, et ubique gratias agere: Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeterno Deus. Et te in Festivitate beatae Mariae semper Virginis collaudare, benedicere et praedicare. Quae et Unigenitum tuum Sancti Spiritus obumbratione concepit: et virginitatis gloria permanente, lumen aeternum mundo effudit Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum. Per quem majestatem tuam laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates. Coeli, caelorumque Virtutes, ac beata Seraphim, socia exultatione concélebrant. Cum quibus et nostras voces, ut admitti jubeas, deprecamur, supplici confessione dicentes: — *Sanctus.*

IT is truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to Thee, holy Lord, Father almighty, eternal God: and that we should praise and bless and proclaim Thee in the Festivity of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin: who conceived Thine only-begotten Son by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and the glory of her virginity still abiding, gave forth to the world the eternal Light, Jesus Christ our Lord: through Whom Angels praise Thy Majesty, Dominations worship, Powers stand in awe. The Heavens and the hosts of heaven with blessed Seraphim unite, exult, and celebrate; and we entreat that Thou wouldst bid our voices too be heard with theirs, singing with lowly praise: — *Sanctus.*

COMMUNION

BEATA viscera Mariae Virginis, quae portaverunt aeterni Patris Filium. Alleluia.

BLESSED is the womb of the Virgin Mary, which bore the Son of the Eternal Father, alleluia.

POSTCOMMUNION

Adesto, Domine, populis, qui participatione corporis et sanguinis tui reficiuntur: ut, sanctissima tua Genetrix auxiliante, ab omni malo et periculo liberentur, et in omni opere bono custodiuntur: Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus Sancti, Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum.

After refreshing Thy people with a participation of Thy Body and Blood, O Lord, come to their aid, so that with the help of Thy Blessed Mother they may be freed from all evil and danger, and preserved in good works: Who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end.

The Feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians

THE INVOCATION *Auxilium Christianorum* (Help of Christians) originated in the sixteenth century. In 1576 Bernardino Cirillo, archpriest of Loreto, published at Macerreta two litanies of the Bl. Virgin, which, he contended, were

used at Loreto: One a form which is entirely different from our present text, and another form ("Aliae litaniae B.M.V.") identical with the litany of Loreto, approved by Clement VIII in 1601, and now used throughout the entire Church.