

Feast Day of Mary, Help of Christians

24th May

Background to the Feast:

The Feast of Mary, Help of Christians, which is celebrated on 24 May, has been celebrated in Australia since 1844. However, the history of this day dates back to an earlier time in Europe (16th Century), when it was not at all peaceful. Catholics across that continent joined in praying the rosary in the hope of saving their homelands from war. Their prayers were answered and the feast day was declared. The prayers we now pray as we say the rosary are special reflections on Mary's life.

The Catholic Church, when beginning in Australia, had a special reason for turning to Mary. In those early days of the NSW colony, there were no Catholic priests. So, it was largely the rosary that kept the Catholic faith alive. Catholic Australians remained faithful to Mary, and Australia was the first nation to choose her, under the title of Help of Christians, as Principal Patron Saint.

We turn to Mary today and ask her for prayers, and we ask her to help all those in any kind of need. We ask her to bless, and guide, all who live and work within our Altona suburb:

Litany of Praise

LEADER: We praise and thank God, through Mary, for the many gifts we have and appreciate as Australians.

-  For peace in our country
-  The beauty of our country and its weather
-  Our standard of living
-  Freedom of religion
-  Our youth
-  Our parents and families and the values we inherited
-  For our multicultural nation
-  For our indigenous brothers and sisters
-  For all that St Mary of the Cross MacKillop inspires in us

Prayers of Thanks

READER: For Mary, who is a sign of hope and source of unity in Christ for all Australians.

ALL: We praise you God.

READER: For Mary, who is woman, wife, mother, a person for us today.

ALL: We praise you God.

READER: For Mary, who, as our Patroness, shows love towards our land and its peoples.

ALL: We praise you God.

READER: For Mary, who is model and bearer of the Truth and Light of the Gospel.

ALL: We praise you God.

LEADER: Trusting in God who cares for all our needs we pray together the prayer that Jesus gave us

Our Father.....

LEADER: May we continue to journey with Mary and all those who love God and seek truth.

ALL: Amen.

Final Prayer

LEADER:

Loving God, you place deep in our hearts the love of Mary, Help of Christians. Through her prayers grant wisdom to our leaders and integrity to our citizens. Mary, Help of Christians, watch over us with love. Intercede for us with your Son, to bless Australia, so that we can be people of peace – people who love and respect each other, and people who love and respect our land, Australia. We make this prayer through Jesus, your Son.

ALL: Amen.