

Australia; eight years later, the feast day was authorized on a national basis.

On the other side of the world, Our Lady appeared to Don Bosco in 1844 and commanded him to build her a church under the title Mary Help of Christians, providing him with precise instructions down to the last detail of its construction. When work began, the saint could offer the contractor only eight cents towards the total cost, yet donations began to pour in from all parts of the world, so that when the magnificent basilica was completed...not a cent was owing.

Advice from St. Don Bosco

It is the office of a mother to give help to her children in all their needs. This title expresses in practice Our Lady's position as our mother. She has all the help we need and she wants to give it to us, if only we ask for it.

Call on Mary in all your difficulties with the little prayer,
"Mary Help of Christians, Pray for us" and you will never call in vain. "Spread devotion to Mary, Help of Christians, and you will see what miracles are".
*(excerpted from: missionbell.homestead.com)

Prayer to Mary Help of Christians

***Almighty God, deepen in our hearts our love of Mary Help of Christians.
Through her prayers and under her protection,
may the light of Christ shine over our land.
May Australia be granted harmony, justice and peace.
Grant wisdom to our leaders and integrity to our citizens.
Bless especially the men and women
of the Australian Defense Force and their families.
We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.***

Mary Help of Christians, pray for us.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinspire.com

Our Lady Help of Christians **Patroness of Australia**



This statue of Mary, Help of Christians, stands in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart, St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, Australia.

The History of the Devotion to Mary Help of Christians

The Blessed Virgin Mary is venerated under many titles and over the centuries when invoked by the faithful she has come to the aid of individuals, of families, of towns, kingdoms and whole nations: but the title under which Mary has performed her greatest prodigies is that of "Help of Christians": three times in the course of two and one-half centuries Mary has virtually saved Christendom from eclipse and from a 'spiritual dark age'.

Constantinople had fallen in 1453 and the whole of the East was under Arab rule: in the year 1571, a huge Turkish armada set sail to capture the Eternal City; an insignificant fleet manned by Christians assembled at Lepanto; from the human point of view the outcome was inevitable—destruction, enslavement, spoliation, desecration. The pope of the day, St. Pius V, called upon every Catholic to invoke the aid of the Mother of God under her title 'Help of Christians'. And to storm heaven unceasingly with Rosaries; the faithful responded and the battle got under way; it would be many days afterwards before word reached Rome of the outcome of the struggle; but the pope had been granted a vision in which he saw that Christendom was saved that day; forthwith he proclaimed on that day October 7th, 1571, a new feast in honor of Our Lady—Feast of the Most Holy Rosary.

But though the Arab power had been broken the determination ultimately to prevail remained and finally motivated the Arab leaders to try again. The new threat came in 1683, when an army of 200,000 Turks faced an army of 30,000 Christians who they besieged in Vienna; once again the outlook, by human standards was hopeless, the Christians outnumbered seven to one. When the reigning Pontiff Bl. Innocent XI heard of the predicament of the Christian forces, he immediately commended the Christian cause to Our Lady Help of Christians and besought all Christendom to recite her Rosary. The battle for Vienna began on the birthday of Our Lady, September 8th, it raged on for four terrible days; and when it ended on the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, the Turkish army was crushed and would never again present a threat to Christendom.

A little over a century later, in 1800, what the Turks had failed to do, the French under Napoleon, succeeded in doing; The Eternal City fell; fifty venerable churches in Rome were put to the torch and the pope, Pius VI was carted off to France where he died in prison from the effects of ill—treatment; the forces of atheism had triumphed...God was dead, the pope was dead and when the new Pope Pius VII was elected, the anti—clerical newspapers made the pun; "Not Pius VII...but Pius the last!"

In 1809 Bonaparte again seized the Pope and had him dragged off to France where he languished in prison suffering greatly at the hands of his anti-Catholic gaolers (jailers). The whole of Europe was now subservient to Bonaparte; yet the despot wished to rule the world and with this in mind he made a proposition to the pope: "If you will show your approval and crown me," he said, "I will set you free and when I have conquered the world, we will rule it together — I its secular head and you its spiritual head." The pope only smiled at such vanity and impudence; and instead of ceding to the tyrant's request, he made a vow to Our Lady that if she would restore freedom to the church, he would honor her with a new feast; forthwith he succeeded in smuggling out from prison a message beseeching the bishops to call on the faithful to pray to Our Lady Help of Christians for deliverance.

Napoleon, at the head of an army of one million men, set out on the next stage of his conquest of the world—Russia! By the spring, all his fine troops were dead, except a mere thirty thousand and the mighty Bonaparte was no longer emperor. On the very day Napoleon signed his abdication, Pope Pius VII made his triumphal re-entry into the Eternal City, after five agonizing years incarceration and on that same day, May 24, 1814, the pope true to his vow to Our Lady proclaimed as his first official act the Feast of Mary Help of Christians.

Seven years later a disenfranchised Catholic minority in the British colony of New South Wales, began to build the first basilica dedicated to Mary Help of Christians, known today as St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney; in 1844 the first in the British realm since the Reformation proclaimed Mary Help of Christians patroness of