

24 May
Our Lady, Help of Christians
(memorial)
Day of Prayer for the Church in China

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

The disciples were constantly at prayer together, with Mary the mother of Jesus. (*cf. Acts 1:14*)

OPENING PRAYER

God our Father, you gave the Holy Spirit to your apostles as they joined in prayer with Mary, the mother of Jesus. By the help of her prayers, keep us faithful in your service, and let our words and actions be so inspired as to bring glory to your name.

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

FIRST READING (*With one heart the disciples continued in steadfast prayer with Mary, the mother of Jesus.*)

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 1:12-14

After Jesus had been taken up into heaven, the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away.

When the apostles entered the city they went to the upper room where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.—The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM(*Lk 1:46-47, 48-49, 50-51, 52-53, 54-55*)

R. *My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. (R)

For he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. (R)

He has mercy on those who fear him, in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. (R)

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. (R)

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever. (R)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are you, holy Virgin Mary, deserving of all praise; from you rose the sun of justice, Christ our God. (R)

GOSPEL (*Woman, this is your son. This is your mother.*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 19:25-34

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

—The word of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Father, as we celebrate the memory of the Virgin Mary, we offer you our gifts and prayers. Sustain us by the love of Christ, who offered himself as a perfect sacrifice on the cross, and is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

PREFACE (*The mystery of the Ascension*)

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For the Lord Jesus, the King of glory, conqueror of sin and death, ascended to the highest heavens, as the Angels gazed in wonder. Mediator between God and man, judge of the world and Lord of hosts, he ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state but that we, his members, might be confident of following where he, our Head and Founder, has gone before.

Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim:

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Rejoice, virgin mother, for Christ has arisen from his grave, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, may this sacrament strengthen the faith in our hearts. May Mary's Son, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaim to be God and man, bring us to eternal life by the saving power of his resurrection, for he is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO OUR LADY OF SHESHAN
ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
FOR THE CHURCH IN CHINA (24 MAY 2008)

Virgin Most Holy, Mother of the Incarnate Word and our Mother, venerated in the Shrine of Sheshan under the title "Help of Christians",
the entire Church in China looks to you with devout affection.
We come before you today to implore your protection.
Look upon the People of God and, with a mother's care, guide them along the paths of truth and love, so that they may always be a leaven of harmonious coexistence among all citizens.

When you obediently said "yes" in the house of Nazareth,
you allowed God's eternal Son to take flesh in your virginal womb
and thus to begin in history the work of our redemption.
You willingly and generously cooperated in that work,
allowing the sword of pain to pierce your soul,
until the supreme hour of the Cross, when you kept watch on Calvary,
standing beside your Son, who died that we might live.

From that moment, you became, in a new way,
the Mother of all those who receive your Son Jesus in faith
and choose to follow in his footsteps by taking up his Cross.
Mother of hope, in the darkness of Holy Saturday you journeyed
with unfailing trust towards the dawn of Easter.
Grant that your children may discern at all times,
even those that are darkest, the signs of God's loving presence.

Our Lady of Sheshan, sustain all those in China,
who, amid their daily trials, continue to believe, to hope, to love.
May they never be afraid to speak of Jesus to the world,
and of the world to Jesus.

In the statue overlooking the Shrine you lift your Son on high,
offering him to the world with open arms in a gesture of love.
Help Catholics always to be credible witnesses to this love,
ever clinging to the rock of Peter on which the Church is built.
Mother of China and all Asia, pray for us, now and for ever. Amen!

BLESSING

Bishop: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Deacon: Bow down for the blessing.

Bishop: Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All: Now and for ever.

Bishop: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Bishop: May almighty God bless you, ✠the Father, ✠and the Son,
✠and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Deacon: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.