

24 May
Our Lady, Help of Christians
Memorial
Day of Prayer for the Church in China
(*during the season of Ordinary Time*)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

People will never cease to praise you, as they recall the power of the Lord for ever. (*cf. Jdt 13:19*)

OPENING PRAYER

Lord our God, you chose the Mother of your beloved Son to be the Mother and help of Christians; grant that we may live under her protection and that your Church may enjoy unbroken peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING (*Behold, the virgin shall conceive.*)

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (7:10-14)

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying: Ask for a sign from the Lord, your God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky! But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not tempt the Lord!" Then Isaiah said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary people, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.—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 (*And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke (1:39-45)

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."—The word of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Lord, we offer you this sacrifice of praise as we rejoice in this memorial of the Mother of your Son; grant that through the help of so great a mother we may find you coming to our rescue in every trial. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

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, and to praise, bless, and glorify your name in veneration of the Blessed ever-Virgin Mary.

For by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit she conceived your Only Begotten Son, and without losing the glory of virginity, brought forth into the world the eternal Light, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him the Angels praise your majesty, Dominions adore and Powers tremble before you. Heaven and the Virtues of heaven and the blessed Seraphim worship together with exultation. May our voices, we pray, join with theirs in humble praise, as we acclaim: *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts . . .*

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord, who has done great things for you, is your praise and your God. (*Deut 10:21a*)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord God, refreshed by this heavenly Sacrament and relying on the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we ask that we may cast aside the old ways of sin and put on Jesus Christ, the author of the new creation. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

It is optional to recite:

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 unflinching 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!

Cum Approbatione Ecclesiastica