

Prayer Entrusting Australia to Mary Help of Christians

Woman, behold your Son! (Jn 19:26).

Leader: We have celebrated the great jubilee of the birth of Christ. We rejoice that the Virgin Mary has offered us Jesus anew, the blessed fruit of her womb most pure, the Word made flesh, the world's redeemer. We now hear more clearly his words on the cross entrusting the apostle John and all of us to Mary, making her the mother and help of all Christians.

All: Mary, our Mother and our Help, through you, there shines the fullness of grace; you are the splendour which does not dim the light of Christ, for you exist in him and through him. Christ our saviour entrusted the apostle John to you, and, with him, the family of the Church and all people. Here, then, are your children, gathered before you at the dawn of the new millennium. The Church today seeks refuge in your motherly help and trustingly begs your intercession as we face the challenges which lie hidden in the future.

Leader: We recall, in this centenary year of Australian federation, the dedication of our nation to Mary Help of Christians by the first Australian provincial synod in 1844. Now we entrust to Mary the future that awaits us. Today's Australia is exhilarating, yet full of contradictions. Humanity has instruments of unprecedented power: we can turn our country into a garden, or reduce it to a pile of rubble. Humanity has the astounding capacity to intervene in the very well-springs of life: we can use this power with respect for every human being or succumb to the pride of a science without limits. As never before in the past, Australia stands at a crossroads.

All: Therefore, O Mother, like the apostle John, we wish to take you into our home, that we may learn from you to become like your Son. We stand before you to entrust to your maternal care ourselves, the Church, and the Australian nation. Plead for us with Jesus your dear Son that he may give us in abundance the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth which is the fountain of life. May the Spirit open our hearts to justice and love, and guide the people of Australia to mutual understanding and a firm desire for peace and reconciliation.

Leader: The Virgin Mary knows the sufferings and hopes of the Church and the world: she comes to the aid of all her children in the daily trials which life brings to each one, interceding on their behalf that the darkness will not prevail over the light.

All: Mary, Help of Christians, we entrust to you all people, beginning with the weakest: the babies yet unborn, and those born into poverty and suffering, the young in search of meaning, the unemployed, and those suffering hunger and disease. We entrust to you all troubled families, the elderly with no one to help them, and all who are alone and without hope. To you, Dawn of Salvation, we commit our journey through the new millennium and the new century of our history in Australia, so that, with your help, all people may know Christ, the light of the world and its only saviour, who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. AMEN.

Leader: Mary Help of Christians, All: pray for us.

Based on the text used by Pope John Paul II in October of the Year of Great Jubilee 2000 © 2001 The Liturgical Commission, GPO Box 282, Brisbane 4001. All rights reserved. Nihil obstat: Rev Dr David Pascoe Imprimatur: J A Bathersby, Archbishop of Brisbane, 26 January 2001