 Reading time: 51 min.

The booklet by Don Bosco, “Association of the Devotees of Mary Help of Christians canonically erected in the church dedicated to her in Turin,” arises from the need to document the founding of an association of the faithful devoted to Mary Help of Christians, which was to gather the faithful into a stable “pious association.” The work unfolds along three complementary lines: first, a historical excursus on the title Auxilium Christianorum, from its scriptural origins to the decisive events of Lepanto and Vienna, up to the liberation of Pius VII, who established the feast on May 24; second, the official documentation of the canonical erection and pontifical privileges, with particular reference to the indulgences granted; finally, the statutes of the association, the spiritual benefits for members, and an articulated collection of prayers. The result is an authentic manual of Marian and Eucharistic devotion, conceived to foster the unity of the faithful, so that they may be “of one heart and one soul” in the Church.

Maria Auxilium christianorum, ora pro nobis.
Mary Help of Christians, pray for us. (Indulgence of 300 days, Pius IX, 14 Feb. 1869).

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Author's Protest

To obey the decrees of Urban VIII, I declare that concerning anything said in this book about miracles, revelations, or other facts, I intend to give no other authority than human; and in giving anyone the title of Saint or Blessed, I intend to do so only according to opinion; with the exception of those things and persons that have been approved by the Holy Apostolic See.

To the reader

The church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians in Turin was barely under construction, and already repeated requests were being made for the initiation of a pious association of devotees, who, united in the same spirit of prayer and piety, would pay homage to the great Mother of the Saviour invoked with the beautiful title of *Help of Christians*.

After the consecration of the sacred edifice was completed, such requests multiplied from all sides and from people of all ages and conditions. It is to second this pious and general desire that the Association was formulated, whose rules will be briefly explained here.

A historical account of the title *Maia Auxilium Christianorum* will precede, followed by the Decree of the canonical erection of the Association; then the Brief by which the Supreme Pontiff with great kindness deigned to grant special Indulgences to the aggregated members, with the statutes of the pious Association and with analogous

Indulgences and some prayers for the convenience of those who wish to use them to direct the affections of their heart to this great benefactress of wretched mortals. The Holy Virgin Mary, who in so many ways has blessed and favoured those who have supplicated her with the precious title of Help of Christians, continues to pour out abundant heavenly treasures, not only upon those aggregated to this pious Association, but upon all those who will invoke her in their spiritual or temporal necessities, so that all may have reasons to bless her on earth to then one day go to praise and thank her eternally in heaven. So be it.

I. Mary Help of Christians

The title of *Help of Christians*, attributed to the august Mother of the Saviour, is not new. In the holy books themselves, Mary is called Queen who stands at the right hand of her Divine Son, clothed in gold and surrounded by variety. *Adstitit Regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato, circumdata varietate* (Ps. 44). This gilded mantle surrounded by variety, according to the spirit of the Church, are as many gems and diamonds, or titles, by which Mary is usually called. Therefore, when we call the Holy Virgin *Help of Christians*, it is nothing other than naming a special title that befits her, like a diamond upon her gilded garments. In this sense, Mary was hailed as *Help of humankind* from the earliest times of the world, when, Adam falling into sin, a liberator was promised, who was to be born of a woman, who with her immaculate foot would crush the head of the insidious serpent.

Indeed, this great Woman is symbolised in the tree of life, which existed in the earthly paradise; in Noah’s ark, which saves the worshippers of the true God from the universal deluge; in Jacob’s ladder, which rises to heaven; in Moses’ burning bush, which burns and is not consumed, and which alludes to Mary virgin after childbirth; in the ark of the covenant; in David’s tower, which defends from every assault; in the rose of Jericho; in the sealed fountain; in Solomon’s well-cultivated and guarded garden; she is figured in an aqueduct of blessing: in Gideon’s fleece. Elsewhere, she is called star of Jacob, beautiful as the moon, chosen as the sun, rainbow of peace, pupil of God’s eye, dawn bringing consolations, Virgin and Mother and Parent of her Lord. These symbols and expressions, which the Church applies to Mary, make manifest the providential designs of God, who wanted to make her known to us before her birth, as the firstborn among all creatures, the most excellent protectress, help, and support, indeed the restorer of the evils to which humankind succumbed.

In the New Testament, She is not only called help of humanity in general with symbols and prophecies, but help, support, and defence of Christians. No more figures, no more symbolic expressions; in the Gospel, everything is reality and

fulfilment of the past. Mary is greeted by the Archangel Gabriel who calls her full of grace; God beholds Mary's great humility and raises her to the dignity of Mother of the Eternal Word. Jesus, immense God, becomes the son of Mary. From her He is born, educated, assisted, and the Eternal Word made flesh submits in everything in obedience to His august Parent. At her request, Jesus performs the first of His miracles in Cana of Galilee; on Calvary, she is effectively constituted the common Mother of Christians. The Apostles take her as their guide and teacher of virtue. With her, they gather to pray in the Upper Room; with her, they attend to prayer, and finally receive the Holy Spirit. To the Apostles, she directs her last words and flies gloriously to heaven.

From her exalted seat of glory, she casts her maternal gaze and says: *Ego in altissimis habito, ut ditem diligentes me et thesauros eorum repleam.* I dwell on the highest throne of glory to enrich with blessings those who love me and to fill their treasures with heavenly favours. Hence, from her Assumption into heaven began the constant and never-interrupted recourse of Christians to Mary, nor was it ever heard, says St. Bernard, that anyone with confidence had recourse to this most merciful Virgin and was not heard. Hence the reason why every century, every year, every day and, we can say, every moment is marked in history by some great favour granted to those who invoked her with faith. Hence also the reason why every kingdom, every city, every country, every family has a church, a chapel, an altar, an image, a painting or some sign that recalls the universal veneration paid to Mary and, at the same time, recalls some of the many graces granted to those who had recourse to her in the necessities of life. We could present a long series of facts recounted in ecclesiastical history, from which what we say, would be abundantly confirmed. But we limit ourselves to presenting only some of those that gave reason to the Supreme Pontiffs to propagate the cult of Mary invoked under the glorious title of Help of Christians.

II. Battle of Lepanto

Having thus briefly exposed some reasons that always led Mary to be called the help and support of Christians, let us move on to some particular facts that gave reason to the Church to call her *Auxilium Christianorum*. The first is the Battle of Lepanto.

In the mid-16th century, our Peninsula enjoyed some peace, when a new insurrection from the East came to cause turmoil among Christians.

The Turks, who had been established in Constantinople for over a hundred years, saw with regret that the peoples of Italy, and especially the Venetians, possessed islands and cities in the midst of their vast empire. They therefore began to demand

the island of Cyprus from the Venetians.
This being refused, they took up arms and with an army of eighty thousand infantry, and three thousand cavalry and, with formidable artillery, led by their emperor Selim II himself, they besieged Nicosia and Famagusta, which were the strongest cities on the island. These cities, after heroic defence, both fell into the power of the enemies.
The Venetians then turned to the Pope so that he would come to their aid to fight and humble the pride of the enemies of Christianity. The Roman Pontiff, who was then St. Pius V, fearing that the Turks, if they were victorious, would bring desolation and ruin among Christians, thought of engaging the powerful intercession of Her whom Holy Church proclaims terrible as an army arrayed for battle: *Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata*. He therefore ordered public prayers throughout Christendom. He had recourse to King Philip II of Spain, and to Duke Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy.
The King of Spain, having raised a powerful army, entrusted it to a younger brother named Don John of Austria. The Duke of Savoy willingly sent a chosen number of brave men, who, joining the rest of the Italian forces, went to unite with the Spaniards near Messina.
The clash with the enemy army took place near Lepanto, a city in Greece. The Christians fiercely attacked the Turks; the latter offered very strong resistance. But after a long, fierce, and bloody battle on both sides, victory remained completely with the Christians.
The Turkish ships fled towards land; the Venetians pursued them and shattered them. The sea was strewn with clothes, fabrics, fragments of ships, blood, and mangled bodies. Thirty thousand Turks were dead; two hundred of their galleys fell into the hands of the Christians.
The news of that victory brought universal joy to Christian countries.
The Senate of Genoa and Venice decreed that October 7th should be a solemn and festive day in perpetuity because on that day, in the year 1571, that great event had taken place.
Among the prayers that the holy Pontiff had ordered for the successful outcome of that great battle was the Rosary, and at the hour of the battle, he himself recited it with a group of faithful gathered with him. At that moment, the Holy Virgin appeared to him, revealing the triumph of the Christian ships, which triumph St. Pius V immediately announced to the city of Rome before anyone else could have brought that news. Then the holy Pontiff, in gratitude to Mary, to whose patronage he attributed the glory of that day, ordered that the ejaculation: *Maria Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis*, Mary Help of Christians, pray for us, be added to the

Litany of Loreto.
The same Pontiff, so that the memory of that prodigy might be perpetual, instituted the Solemnity of the Most Holy Rosary to be celebrated every year on the first Sunday of October.

III. The liberation of Vienna

In the year 1683, the Turks, to avenge the defeat of Lepanto, formed the design of carrying their arms beyond the Danube and the Rhine, thus threatening all of Christendom. With an army of two hundred thousand men, advancing by forced marches, they came to lay siege before the walls of Vienna. The Supreme Pontiff, who was then Innocent XI, thought of appealing to Christian princes, urging them to come to the aid of threatened Christendom. Few, however, responded to the Pontiff's invitation. For this reason, following the example of his predecessor Pius V, he decided to place himself under the protection of the august Queen of Heaven. He prayed, and had invited the faithful from all over the world to pray with him.
The city of Vienna was already reduced to a heap of ruins when, on the day of the Nativity of Mary, the Christians redoubling their prayers, as if by a miracle received news of nearby help. It was John Sobieski, King of Poland, who, almost alone among Christian princes, yielding to the Pontiff's invitation, came with his brave men to the aid of the besieged. Convinced that victory would be impossible with his small number of soldiers, he too resorted to Her who is formidable in the midst of the most ordered and seasoned armies.
On 12th September, he went to church with Prince Charles of Lorraine, and there they heard Holy Mass, which he himself wished to serve with his arms outstretched in the form of a cross. After receiving Communion and the holy blessing for himself and his entire army, that prince rose and said aloud: Soldiers, for the glory of Poland, for the liberation of Vienna, for the salvation of all Christendom, under the protection of Mary we can safely march against the enemies and victory will be ours.
The Christian army then descended from the mountains and advanced towards the Turkish camp, who, after fighting for some time, retreated to the other side of the Danube. The retreat occurred with such precipitation and confusion that they left in the camp the Ottoman standard, about one hundred thousand men, most of their equipment, all their war munitions with one hundred and eighty pieces of artillery. There was never a more glorious victory that cost so little blood to the victors. Soldiers laden with spoils were seen entering the city, driving before them many herds of oxen that the enemies had abandoned.
Emperor Leopold, hearing of the Turks' defeat, returned to Vienna that same day,

and had a Te Deum sung with the greatest solemnity. Being then convinced that such an unexpected victory was entirely due to the protection of Mary, he had the standard found in the Grand Vizier's tent brought into the main church. That of Muhammad, even richer and which was raised in the middle of the camp, was sent to Rome and presented to the Pope. That holy Pontiff, also convinced that the glory of that triumph was entirely due to the great Mother of God, and desirous of perpetuating the memory of the benefit, ordered that the feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary, already practised for some time in some countries, should henceforth be celebrated throughout the Church on the Sunday falling within the octave of her Nativity.

IV. Institution of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians

These and many other facts so glorious to the Blessed Virgin made one desire the express intervention of the Church to set the limit and the manner in which Mary could be invoked with the title of *Help of Christians*. The Church had already in a certain way intervened with the approval of confraternities, prayers, and many pious practices to which holy Indulgences are attached, and which throughout the world proclaim *Maria Auxilium Christianorum*.

One thing was still missing, and that was a fixed day of the year to honour the title of Mary Help of Christians, which is to say, a feast with a rite, Mass, and Office approved by the Church, and that the day of such solemnity be fixed. For the Pontiffs to decide on this important institution, some extraordinary event was needed, which was not long in manifesting itself to men.

The miraculous way in which Pius VII was freed from his captivity is the great event that gave occasion to the institution of the feast of *Mary Help of Christians.*

Emperor Napoleon I, had already in many ways oppressed the Supreme Pontiff, stripping him of his possessions, dispersing Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, and Friars, likewise depriving them of their goods. After this, Napoleon demanded things from the Pope that he could not concede. To Pius VII's refusal, the Emperor responded with violence and sacrilege. The Pope was arrested in his own palace and, with Cardinal Pacca, his secretary, taken on a forced journey to Savona where the persecuted but always glorious Pontiff spent over five years in severe captivity. But since where the Pope is, there is the Head of religion and therefore the concourse of all true Catholics, Savona thus became in a certain way another Rome. So many demonstrations of affection moved the Emperor to envy, who wanted the Vicar of Jesus Christ humiliated; and therefore, he commanded that the Pontiff be transferred to Fontainebleau, which is a castle not far from Paris.

While the Head of the Church groaned as a prisoner, separated from his counsellors

and friends, nothing remained for Christians but to imitate the faithful of the early Church, when St. Peter was in prison, to pray. The venerable Pontiff prayed, and with him all Catholics prayed, imploring the help of Her who is called: *Magnum in Ecclesia praesidium*: Great presidium in the Church. It is commonly believed that the Pontiff promised the Blessed Virgin to institute a feast to honour the august title of *Mary Help of Christians*, if he could return to Rome to the pontifical throne.
Meanwhile, everything smiled upon the terrible conqueror. After having made his dreaded name resound throughout the earth, walking from victory to victory, he had carried his arms into the coldest regions of Russia, believing to find new triumphs there; but divine Providence instead prepared disasters and defeats for him.
Mary, moved to pity by the groans of the Vicar of Jesus Christ and the prayers of her children, changed in a moment the destinies of Europe and the whole world.
The rigour of winter in Russia and the infidelity of many French generals dashed all of Napoleon’s hopes. Most of that formidable army perished frozen by the ice or buried in the snow. The few troops spared by the rigours of the cold abandoned the Emperor and he had to flee, retreat to Paris, and surrender himself into the hands of the English, who took him prisoner to the island of Elba. Then justice could again take its course. The Pontiff was immediately set free; Rome welcomed him with the greatest enthusiasm, and the Head of Christendom, made free and independent, could resume the administration of the universal Church. Having thus been freed, Pius VII immediately wished to give a public sign of gratitude to the Blessed Virgin, to whose intercession the whole world attributed his unexpected freedom.
Accompanied by some Cardinals, he went to Savona where he crowned the prodigious image called Our Lady of Mercy, which is venerated in that city; and with an unprecedented concourse of people in the presence of King Victor Emmanuel I and other Princes, the majestic ceremony took place in which the Pope placed a crown of gems and diamonds on the head of the venerable image of Mary.
Having then returned to Rome, he wished to fulfil the second part of his promise by instituting a special feast in the Church, which would attest to posterity the great prodigy.
Considering therefore how at all times the Blessed Virgin was always proclaimed Help of Christians, relying on what St. Pius V had done after the victory of Lepanto, ordering the insertion of the words: *Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis*; into the Litany of Loreto; explaining and expanding ever more what Pope Innocent XI had decreed when he instituted the feast of the Name of Mary; Pius VII, to render perpetual the memory of his prodigious liberation, that of the Cardinals, of the Bishops, and of the freedom restored to the Church, and so that there might exist a

perpetual monument among all Christian peoples, instituted the feast of *Mary Auxilium Christianorum* to be celebrated annually on 24th May. That day was chosen because it was precisely on that day in the year 1814 that he had been set free and was able to return to Rome amidst the liveliest applause of the Romans.
The glorious Pontiff Pius VII, as long as he lived, promoted devotion to Mary; he approved associations and confraternities dedicated to Her, and granted many Indulgences for pious practices performed in Her honour. Let one single fact suffice to demonstrate the great veneration of this Pontiff towards Mary Help of Christians. In the year 1817, a painting was completed which was to be placed in Rome in the Church of St. Mary in Monticelli, directed by the Priests of Christian Doctrine. On 11 May, that painting was brought to the Pontiff in the Vatican so that he might bless it and impose a title upon it. As soon as he saw the devout image, he felt such great emotion in his heart that, without any prior thought, he instantly burst forth into the magnificent praise: *Maria Auxilium Christianorum*, *ora pro nobis*. These words of the Holy Father were echoed by the devout children of Mary, and at the first unveiling of it (on the 15th of the same month) there was a true outpouring of people, of joy and devotion. The offerings, vows, and fervent prayers have continued to the present day. So much so that it can be said that that image is continuously surrounded by devotees who ask for and obtain graces through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians.

V. Devotion to Mary Help of Christians in Munich and Turin
When the Christian troops were fighting in Vienna, a Capuchin friar, who zealously preached in the church of St. Peter in Munich, Bavaria, with fervent expressions exhorted the faithful to place themselves under the protection of Mary Help of Christians. After that victory, devotion to the Blessed Virgin increased so much that a very celebrated confraternity was established in that city under the title of *Mary Help of Christians*. The Duke of Bavaria, who had led a body of troops in the famous battle of Vienna, himself wished to ask the Supreme Pontiff Innocent XI for the approval of the new association. The Pope readily assented and granted the implored approval and analogous Indulgences with a Bull dated 18th August 1684.
But among the cities distinguished for devotion to Mary Help of Christians, Turin must certainly be counted. – Cardinal Maurizio, Prince of Savoy, greatly promoted this devotion among the people of Turin from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Among other things, he had a chapel built in the church of San Francesco di Paola with an altar and statue dedicated to the Virgin Help of Christians. That celebrated cardinal was very devoted to Mary, and dying, he left in his will that his heart, as the dearest pledge of himself, should be placed in a casket and located in

the wall to the right of the altar (see Wonders of the Mother of God, page 163). Time having worn out and rendered that chapel abject, Victor Emmanuel II ordered that everything be restored and renewed at his expense.
Once the people of Turin were certain that recourse to Mary Help of Christians was a most effective means of obtaining graces from the Lord, they began to join the confraternity of Munich, which already numbered confreres of every age and condition throughout Europe. But due to the overwhelming and ever-increasing number of members, a confraternity was established in the same church, which received apostolic approval from the Supreme Pontiff Pius VI with a rescript dated 9th February 1798.
Thus, among the people of Turin, devotion to Mary Help of Christians grew and spread when the project of a church to be dedicated precisely to the Blessed Virgin in Valdocco, a very populous district of the city of Turin, was conceived. – The means by which the undertaking was to be carried forward were entirely entrusted to the protection of her whom the Church constantly calls *Virgo potens*, Powerful Virgin.
While deliberations were underway regarding the title under which the new edifice should be erected, an incident resolved all doubts. The Supreme Pontiff, the reigning Pius IX, to whom nothing escapes that can redound to the glory of Religion, informed of the necessity of a church in the aforementioned place, sent his first gracious offer of 500 Lire, making it understood that Mary Help of Christians seemed to him a title certainly pleasing to the great Virgin Mary. He then accompanied the charitable oblation with these words: May this meagre offering have more powerful and generous donors, who cooperate in promoting the glories of the august Mother of God on earth, and thus may the number of those who one day will go to form a glorious crown for her in heaven increase. The wish and blessing of the supreme Hierarch achieved their effect, and the Blessed Virgin protecting her work, within about three years it was completed and on 7th June 1868, with great solemnity, it was consecrated to divine worship by our most revered Archbishop of Turin, Monsignor Alessandro Riccardi.

VI. Favours of the Supreme Pontiff for this church

The Supreme Pontiff repeatedly came to the aid of the commenced edifice both with material offerings and even more with spiritual favours. On 12th January 1867, he granted the following indulgences to all those who had contributed to the construction of this church.

1. Apostolic blessing with plenary indulgence at the hour of death;

2. Plenary indulgence, whenever they had worthily approached Holy Communion;
3. These indulgences by way of suffrage are applicable to the souls in purgatory.
To encourage all Christian faithful to take part in the consecration of this church, by a special brief dated 22 May 1868, he granted a plenary indulgence to all those who, having confessed and received Communion, had visited this church of Mary Help of Christians on the day of the consecration or on another day of the octave. After the solemnity of the consecration, with a concourse that seems to us more unique than rare, the loving Pontiff deigned to express his satisfaction with the following letter, which in his great goodness he was pleased to address to us.

“Health and apostolic blessing.

“We have experienced almost the same joy that you and the imitators of your zeal have experienced, when we learned that the new temple dedicated to the name of the most blessed Virgin *Help of Christians* had been completed in that most noble city, and had already been consecrated to God. For, although we could not be present at that joyful spectacle, nevertheless your industry almost brought before our eyes the external facade of the Church, through the medals you sent us, exquisitely carved, and allowed us to contemplate the very image of the Mother of God. The sight of that altarpiece will greatly increase our confidence, for we are of the opinion that it was not without divine counsel that the heavenly Patroness was celebrated with new honours under the title of *Help of Christians*. Indeed, under her protection, we trust that, protected by divine providence, we shall be delivered from impending evils, and that we shall emerge unharmed from our enemies. Meanwhile, to attest all our gratitude and benevolence, we wholeheartedly impart the apostolic blessing to you and to the pious priests who work with you, and to the young people entrusted to your care, as a pledge of our great affection.

Given in Rome on 23 September 1868.
In the twenty-third year of our pontificate.
PIUS PP. IX.

Supplication to the Archbishop of Turin
For the canonical erection of an Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians

Most Reverend Excellency,

The undersigned humbly submits to Your Most Reverend Excellency that, solely out

of a desire to promote the glory of God and the good of souls, he would intend that in the Church of Mary Help of Christians, consecrated by Your Excellency to Divine worship a year ago, a pious union of the faithful be initiated under the name of the *Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians*; its main purpose would be to promote the veneration of the Most Holy Sacrament and devotion to *Maria Auxilium Christianorum*, a title that seems to be very pleasing to the august Queen of Heaven.
To this end, some Rules were compiled, which were modelled and almost copied from the statutes of the celebrated Confraternity of Mary Help of Christians erected in Munich, so that these exercises of piety may have a stable form and be entirely in accordance with the spirit of Holy Church.
The humble petitioner implores Your Excellency to kindly consider this pious project, humbly praying you to examine these statutes, to add, remove, or change whatever you deem appropriate, and then, as he humbly implores You, to approve it with all those clauses that Your Excellency deems most opportune to promote the glories of the august Queen of Heaven and the good of souls.
The altar of the Association would be the high altar of the said church, as it is privileged, and where most of the exercises of piety that form the purpose of this Association are already performed.
Full of hope of obtaining favour, with the deepest gratitude he implores Your holy Blessing and professes himself.

Your most humble petitioner
Priest GIOVANNI Bosco.

[Decree of the Curia of Turin]

Alexander Octavianus Riccardi, Count of Netro, Knight of the Supreme Order of the Most Holy Annunciation, etc. etc., by the grace of God and the Holy Apostolic See, Archbishop of Turin, domestic prelate of His Holiness Pope Pius IX and assistant to the pontifical throne

Having seen the memorial presented to us by the Most Reverend Don Giovanni Bosco, rector of the church recently erected in this city under the invocation of the Immaculate Virgin Help of Christians, and having considered its tenor, gladly assenting to the pious wishes of the Orator, to foster and increase the devotion of the faithful towards the holy Mother of God and the august Sacrament of the Eucharist, by the tenor of these presents, we erect and canonically declare erected

for the faithful of both sexes at the high altar of the aforesaid church the pious sodality which shall be named: Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians, so that all who enrol in it, by fulfilling the prescribed works, may participate in the treasures of the Church; and since we have found the statutes likewise presented to us and signed by us to be suitable for the governance and increase of the pious society, we approve them, reserving to ourselves the faculty of adding or varying those things which we shall judge to be more expedient for the benefit of the said pious sodality. We order this our decree, together with the aforesaid petitions and statutes, to be recorded in the registers of our Curia and an authentic copy to be delivered to the Orator.

Given in Turin on the eighteenth day of April in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine.
Signed † ALEXANDER Archbishop and manually subscribed TH. GAUDI for the Chancellor.
So in the original with which the collation agrees.
Given in Turin on the day, month as above.
Th. GAUDI for the Chancellor.

Alessandro Ottaviano Riccardi dei Conti di Netro, Knight of the Supreme Order of the Most Holy Annunciation, etc. etc., by the grace of God and the Holy Apostolic See, Archbishop of Turin, domestic prelate of His Holiness Pope Pius IX and assistant to the pontifical throne

Having seen the memorial presented to us by the Most Reverend priest John Bosco, Rector of the Church recently erected in this city under the invocation of the Immaculate Virgin Help of Christians, and having considered its tenor, gladly assenting to the pious wishes of the Orator, to foster and increase the devotion of the faithful towards the holy Mother of God and the august Sacrament of the Eucharist, by the tenor of this present decree, we erect and canonically declare erected for the faithful of both sexes at the high altar of the aforesaid Church the pious society which shall be named the *Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians*, so that all who enrol in it, by fulfilling the prescribed works, may participate in the treasures of the Church. And since we have found the statutes likewise presented to us and signed by us to be suitable for the governance and increase of the pious Association, we approve them, reserving to ourselves the faculty of adding or varying those things which we shall judge to be of greater utility for the said pious Association. We wish this our decree, with the aforesaid petition

and statutes, to be recorded in the registers of our Curia and an authentic copy to be issued to the Orator.

Given in Turin on 18 April 1869.
† ALEXANDER Archbishop.
Theol. GAUDI for the Chancellor.

[Decree of the Roman Curia]

Pius PP. IX
for future memory of the matter

Our beloved son John Bosco, a priest of Turin, has taken care to explain to Us that he intends, in order to foster and increase the devotion of the faithful towards the holy Mother of God and the august Sacrament of the Eucharist, to institute, with the permission of the Ordinary, in the Church under the invocation of the Immaculate Virgin Help of Christians in the City of Turin, a pious sodality, commonly called the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians, whose members shall principally intend to promote the cult of the Immaculate Mother of God and the august Sacrament.
In order that the faithful may, with greater zeal, enrol in this sodality and apply themselves to the prescribed works of piety, by offering them more abundant means to attain heavenly beatitude, he has humbly addressed fervent prayers to Us, that We might deign, out of Our benevolence, to unlock the treasures of the Church, the dispensation of which the Most High has entrusted to Us.
Therefore, greatly commending these salutary and fruitful cares of Our beloved son, in order that this sodality may, with God's help, daily receive greater increase, trusting in the mercy of Almighty God, and in the authority of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, We mercifully grant in the Lord to all and singular Christ's faithful of both sexes, now and for the time being existing in the pious sodality commonly called the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians*, canonically instituted in the church of the same name in the City of Turin, truly penitent and confessed, and refreshed by Holy Communion, who shall have devoutly visited the same Church, and the oratory or altar of the sodality, on the feasts of the Nativity, Circumcision, Epiphany and Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, on Pentecost Sunday, on the solemnity of the Most Holy Body of Christ, and likewise on the seven principal feasts of the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, from the first vespers until sunset of such days, each year, and shall have poured forth pious prayers to God*

therein for the concord of Christian Princes, the extirpation of heresies, and the exaltation of Holy Mother Church, on whatever day of those enumerated they shall have done so, a Plenary Indulgence of all their sins and remission.
Furthermore, to the same members who, on any day of the solemn supplications, which are accustomed to be made in honour of the holy Mother of God in the said Church for three or nine continuous days, shall have performed the works of piety described, at least with a contrite heart, We relax seven years and as many quarantines: and whenever they shall have devoutly attended the Exercise which is accustomed to be held in the said Church every morning with the permission of the Ordinary, and likewise with a contrite heart, shall have recited the customary prayers as above for the concord of Christian Princes, the extirpation of heresies, and the exaltation of Holy Mother Church, We grant one hundred days of indulgence.
All and singular these Indulgences, remissions of sins, and relaxations of penances, We mercifully grant in the Lord that they may also be applied by way of suffrage to the souls of Christ's faithful who, united to God in charity, have departed from this life. These presents shall be valid for ten years only.

Given in Rome at St. Peter's under the Fisherman's ring on the 16th day of March 1869. In the twenty-third year of Our Pontificate.
N. Card. PARACCIANI CLARELLI
Pius PP. IX
for future memory of the fact

Our beloved son John Bosco, a priest of Turin, explained to us that he intended, in order to excite and increase the devotion of the faithful towards the holy Mother of God and the august Sacrament of the Eucharist, to institute, with the permission of the Ordinary, in the church dedicated to Mary Most Holy Help of Christians in the city of Turin, a pious society with the name of the *Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians*, whose members would have as their main purpose to promote the cult of the Immaculate Mother of God and the august Sacrament.
And in order that, by offering them greater aids to attain heavenly beatitude, the faithful might with greater commitment enrol in this Association and attend to performing the prescribed works of piety, he humbly prayed us that we would, for this purpose, out of our benevolence, unlock the treasures of the Church, the dispensation of which the Most High God entrusted to us.
Therefore, greatly commending the salutary and fruitful cares of our aforesaid beloved son, in order that, with divine help, this Association may daily receive

greater increase, relying on the mercy of God and the authority of his blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, to all and singular Christian faithful of both sexes who now and in the future shall be enrolled in the pious society named the *Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians*, canonically erected in the church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians in the city of Turin, truly penitent and confessed and communicated, and who shall have devoutly visited this same church, the oratory or the altar of the Society, from the first vespers until sunset, on the feasts of the Nativity, Circumcision, Epiphany and Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, on Pentecost Sunday, on the solemnity of the Most Holy Body of the Lord, and likewise on the seven principal feasts of the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, and there shall have prayed for the concord of Christian Princes, for the extirpation of heresies, and for the exaltation of Holy Mother Church, on whatever of the aforesaid days they shall have done so, we mercifully grant in the Lord a plenary Indulgence and remission of all their sins.
Furthermore, to the same members who, at least with a contrite heart, shall perform the aforesaid works of piety on any day of novenas or triduums which are solemnly accustomed to be made in the said church in honour of the Mother of God, we grant seven years of Indulgence and as many quarantines: and whenever they shall attend the devout exercise which, with the permission of the Ordinary, is celebrated every morning in the said church, and likewise with a contrite heart, shall recite the customary prayers for the concord among Christian princes, the extirpation of heresies, and the exaltation of Holy Mother Church, we grant one hundred days of Indulgence.
All and singular these Indulgences, forgiveness of sins and remissions of penalties, we mercifully grant in the Lord that they may also be applied by way of suffrage to the souls of Christian faithful who, united to God in charity, have passed from this life.
These presents shall be valid for ten years only.

Given in Rome at St. Peter’s under the Fisherman’s ring on 16 March 1869, in the 23rd year of our pontificate.
N. Cardinal PARACCIANI CLARELLI

Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians
1. In the Church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians in Turin, with the authorisation of His Most Reverend Excellency the Archbishop of Turin, an Association of her Devotees has been canonically instituted, who propose to promote the glories of the divine Mother of the Saviour in order to merit her protection in life and particularly

at the hour of death.
2. Two special means are proposed: To spread devotion to the Blessed Virgin and veneration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.
3. To this end, they will endeavour, by word, counsel, deed, and authority, to promote decorum and devotion in the novenas, feasts, and solemnities that are performed throughout the year in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Most Holy Sacrament.
The dissemination of good books, images, medals, prayer cards, attending and recommending attendance at Processions in honour of Mary Most Holy and the Most Holy Sacrament, frequent Communion, attendance at Holy Mass, and accompanying the Viaticum are the things that the Aggregates propose to promote by all means compatible with their state.
4. The Associates will take the utmost care for themselves and for those dependent on them to prevent blasphemy and any discourse contrary to religion, and as far as lies in their power, to remove any obstacle that might hinder the sanctification of holy days.
5. Every Associate, according to the counsels of catechisms and spiritual masters, is warmly exhorted to approach Holy Confession and Communion every fortnight or once a month, and to hear Holy Mass every day, provided that the obligations of their state permit it.
In honour of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the Associates will recite daily, after their ordinary morning and evening prayers, the ejaculation: *Praised and thanked be at every moment the Most Holy and Divine Sacrament.* And in honour of the Blessed Virgin: *Maria, Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis*. For priests, it is sufficient that in Holy Mass they have the intention of praying for all those aggregated to this pious Association. These prayers will serve as a bond to unite all the Associates in one heart and one soul to render due honour to Jesus hidden in the Holy Eucharist and to His august Mother, and to participate in all the works of piety that will be performed by each Associate.

Spiritual benefits of the associates

All the Aggregates, in order to give mutual help to walk the path of salvation, intend to make a communion of all the good works that each one does privately or in the Church of Mary Help of Christians or elsewhere.
1. They will also participate in the practices of piety that are performed at the altar of the Association, which is the High Altar of this Church: a daily privileged altar according to the Decree of the Sacred Congregation dated 22 May 1868. At this Altar, among other things, every morning around six o’clock on weekdays, and

around seven o’clock on feast days, a Mass will be celebrated, with the recitation of the third part of the Most Holy Rosary, with particular prayers and with the communion of all who can attend.
The reigning Pius IX benignly grants 100 days of Indulgence to all and for each time they take part in this exercise of piety.
Every evening there will be the singing of sacred lauds, spiritual reading, prayers, benediction with the Most Holy Sacrament, followed by the recitation of the Most Holy Rosary as in the morning.
Every Aggregate can gain a plenary Indulgence on the solemnities of the Most Holy Nativity, Circumcision, Epiphany, and Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ; on Pentecost Sunday, on the day of Corpus Christi.
2. Likewise, a plenary Indulgence on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin; of her Nativity, Presentation in the Temple, Annunciation, Purification, Visitation, her Assumption into Heaven.
3. The same plenary Indulgence can also be gained on any day of the novena or on the feast of *Maria, Auxilium Christianorum*; on the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and on that day of each month which they choose to make the Exercise of a Good Death. – The Indulgences noted in this number can also be gained by those who are not enrolled in the pious Association.
Every Aggregate attending the practices of piety that are performed in this church during the year on the occasion of triduums or novenas can once a day gain an Indulgence of seven years and as many quarantines. – It is good to note here that for the acquisition of the aforesaid plenary Indulgences, Sacramental Confession and Communion are prescribed, unless the Aggregate has the commendable practice of approaching Confession every week. In this case, only the state of grace is sought.
4. Every year, on the first unimpeded day after the feast of Mary Help of Christians, a *Requiem* Mass is sung with other particular suffrages for the souls of deceased Confreres in general and particularly for those who have been called by God to eternal life during that year.
Should a Confrere or Confraternity member fall ill, or should it please God to call them to a better life, they will be specially recommended to the prayers that are made daily at the altar of Mary Help of Christians, provided that notice is given to the Director of the church.

Acceptance
1. Anyone wishing to join this pious Association shall have their full name and place of residence written in a special register kept in the sacristy of the Church of Mary

Help of Christians. On that occasion, if desired, they will be given an image, a medal with the Association's booklet.
2. Parish Priests and any other person with care of souls, Directors of colleges or educational houses or institutions or charitable institutions may aggregate any of their dependents; provided they send the names of the Aggregated to the Director of the church who is also the Director of the pious Association.
There is no annual monetary fee; each person, if they wish, will make an oblation each year to cover the expenses incurred in the Novena and feast of Mary Help of Christians, and for all other sacred functions performed throughout the year in the Association's church.

We approve the above-written statutes or chapters signed by us as consistent with the aforesaid pious society and the piety of the faithful, reserving to ourselves the faculty of varying them, according to the circumstances of things and times.

Given in Turin on 18 April 1869.
Signed † ALEXANDER Archbishop.
Manual. TH. GAUDI pro Chancellor.
Thus in the original with which etc.

TH. GAUDI pro Chancellor.

Prayers and Devotional Practices
Suitable for the spirit of the Company, and which everyone is free to perform according to their devotion, for the day on which they enrol in the Association.

Glorious Virgin Mary, Queen of heaven and earth, in whom after God I have placed all my confidence, I humbly cast myself at your feet, as the last of your servants, to consecrate myself to your service in this pious Association erected under Your Protection, and I promise with all my heart to practice all the things that its rules prescribe with the greatest possible devotion (*these words, as well as others of consecration, dedication, offering, donation, and promise should not be taken as a vow, but rather as a purposal, a resolution, etc.*), so that through the merits of Jesus Christ your dear Son, and through your powerful intercession all Associates may be preserved from all spiritual and bodily evil in their lives; that they may be blessed by the Lord in all their actions, and that finally they may obtain the grace of dying the death of the just. As the sole desire to please you is what leads me to embrace this devout Association; so I humbly implore you, O holy Virgin, to deign to receive me among your children, and obtain for me the grace to correspond with the

goodness of manners, and with the holiness of works to the exalted character of your servant.
O glorious Virgin Mary, deign from your high Throne to look upon me with that benign eye, which is always open, for those who have consecrated themselves to your service; and since today I have my name noted in the book of this pious Association, so deign to write it in your maternal heart; pray to your Divine Son, that He may be pleased to number me among those who are written in the book of eternal life. Amen.

Act of filiation by which the Virgin Mary is taken as mother
My Lord Jesus Christ, true God, and true man, only Son of God and of the holy Virgin, I acknowledge you, and I adore you as my first principle and ultimate end. I implore you to renew in my favour that mysterious loving Testament, which you made on the Cross, giving to the beloved Apostle St. John the quality and title of son of your Mother Mary. Say also for me these words: Woman, behold your Son. Grant me the grace to belong to Her as a son, and to have Her as Mother throughout the time of my mortal life on this earth.
Most Blessed Virgin Mary, my principal Advocate, and Mediatrix, I N. N. miserable sinner, the most unworthy, and the lowest of your servants, humbly prostrate before You, trusting in your goodness, and mercy, and animated by a lively desire to imitate your beautiful virtues, I elect you this day as my Mother, imploring you to receive me into the fortunate number of your dear children. I make an entire and irrevocable donation of my whole self to you. Graciously receive my protest; accept the confidence with which I abandon myself into your arms. Grant me your maternal protection throughout the course of my life, and particularly at the hour of death, so that my soul, freed from the bonds of the body, may pass from this valley of tears to enjoy with You eternal glory in the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

Prayer of His Holiness Pius IX
Lord, almighty God, who permit evil to derive good from it, hear our humble prayers, with which we ask You to remain faithful amidst so many assaults, and to persevere faithful until death. For the rest, give us strength through the mediation of Most Holy Mary, to always conform ourselves to Your most holy Will.

The Holy Father on 15 June 1862, granted 100 days of Indulgence to be gained once a day.

Series of prayers and ejaculations to which holy indulgences are attached.
To the Most Holy Trinity

Angelic Trisagion
Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus exercituum! Plena est terra gloria tua! Gloria Patri, gloria filio, gloria Spiritui Sancto.

Indulgence of 100 days for anyone who recites this Trisagion once a day. Plenary indulgence once a month on a chosen day.

CLEMENT PP. XIV, with decree of 1770.

Seven *Gloria Patri* in union of three persons
A daily Indulgence of one hundred days is granted to three persons who unite together to recite seven *Gloria Patri* and one *Ave Maria* in the morning, after midday and in the evening in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, or also each for themselves: and on all Sundays an Indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines. Those who recite them every day acquire a perpetual plenary Indulgence twice a month, that is, on two chosen Sundays.

Pius PP. VI, Decree of 1784.

Triduum or novena to the Most Holy Trinity
Indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines to be gained each day: and Plenary Indulgence at the end of the triduum or novena in honour of the Most Holy Trinity.

Pius PP. IX, 1847.

Three *Gloria Patri* in thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity for the graces and privileges granted to Most Holy Mary
Three hundred days of Indulgence to all those who recite the aforesaid three *Gloria Patri* in the morning, at midday, in the evening; one hundred days for each of the said times; and plenary once a month.

Pius PP. VII, Rescript of 1815.

Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity
Whoever recites the acts of Faith, Hope and Charity every day acquires a plenary indulgence in *articulo mortis* and once a month; furthermore, an Indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines whenever they recite them.

BENEDICT PP. XIV, decree of 1756.

Praise to the Holy Name of God
Blessed be God.
Blessed be His holy name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.
Blessed be the name of Jesus.
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar.
Blessed be the great Mother of God, Most Holy Mary.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints.

An Indulgence of one year is gained each time. Whoever recites it for a month gains a plenary Indulgence on the day they make holy Confession and Communion.

Pius PP. IX, decree of 1847

Prayers and requests
O Father, O Son, O Holy Spirit!
O Most Holy Trinity! O Jesus! O Mary!
Blessed Angels, all Saints of paradise, obtain for me these graces that I ask for through the most precious blood of Jesus Christ:

1. To always do the will of God.
2. To always remain united with God.
3. To think of nothing but God.
4. To love God alone.
5. To do everything for God.
6. To seek only the glory of God.
7. To become holy only for God.
8. To know my nothingness well.
9. To know the will of my God ever more.

Most Holy Mary, offer to the Eternal Father the most precious blood of Jesus Christ for my soul, for the holy souls in purgatory, for the needs of holy Church, for the conversion of sinners, and for the whole world.

Then three Gloria Patri will be recited to the most precious blood of Jesus Christ, one *Ave Maria* to Our Lady of Sorrows and one *Requiem aeternam* for the holy souls in Purgatory.

Indulgence of 300 days each time the aforesaid Ejaculations are recited, and plenary for those who recite them for a month.

LEO PP. XII, with Rescript of 1827.

To the Holy Spirit
Veni, Creator Spiritus, and the sequence *Veni, Sancte Spiritus.*

Whoever recites the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, or the sequence, *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, every day, acquires a plenary Indulgence once a month; and on Pentecost Sunday and its octave 300 days; on all other days of the year, 100 days are acquired each time by reciting only the Veni Creator, or only the sequence.

Pius PP VI, with Brief of 1796.

To Jesus
Invoke the Most Holy Name of Jesus.
Praised be Jesus Christ. Always be praised.

Each time one greets another by saying the aforesaid Ejaculation and the other responds as above, 100 days of Indulgence are acquired: plenary Indulgence at the point of death if the Most Holy Name of Jesus is then invoked at least with the heart.

SIXTO PP. V, with Bull of 1587.

My Jesus mercy
100 days of Indulgence are gained each time this ejaculation is recited.

Pius PP. IX, Decree of 1846.

Three ejaculations
Jesus, Joseph and Mary, I give you my soul with my heart.
Jesus, Joseph and Mary, assist me in my last agony.
Jesus, Joseph and Mary, may my soul breathe forth in peace with you.

Three hundred days of Indulgence for those who recite all three together each time, and 100 days for those who recite only one of the three.

Pius PP. VII, Decree of 1807.

Ejaculation
Sweetest Jesus, do not wish to be my Judge, but my Saviour.

Fifty days of Indulgence to be gained each time it is recited, and if recited at least once a day, plenary Indulgence on the feast of St. Jerome Emiliani, and in its octave.

PIO PP. IX, Decree of 1853.

To the Child Jesus
Novena preceding the birth of the Child Jesus.

Indulgence of 300 days to be gained by all those who precede this solemnity with a novena, for each day of the same; and having practiced it entirely, a plenary Indulgence on the solemnity of Holy Christmas, or on a day of the octave. Said Indulgences can also be gained by anyone who wishes to make such a novena during the year in honour of the Child Jesus.

Pius PP. VII, Rescript of 1815.

Assisting or reciting the Divine Offices on the day of Holy Christmas
To anyone who, having confessed and communicated, says or assists at the divine offices on this day, an Indulgence of 100 years is granted for matins with lauds; similarly, one hundred years for the Mass, and for the first and second vespers; for each of the hours of Prime, Terce, Sext, None and Compline, an Indulgence of 40 years.

SIXTO PP. V, with Brief of 1586

To the Crucified Jesus
Five Our Fathers and Hail Marys on Friday at 9 p.m. Italian time, which is 3 p.m. after midday.

Whoever recites five *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys* kneeling at that hour, at the sound of the bell, in memory of the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, shall gain 100 days of Indulgence.

BENEDICT XIV, with Decree of 1838.

The three hours of agony on Good Friday and other Fridays.

Whoever on Good Friday, starting from after midday, remains in prayer for three consecutive hours gains a plenary Indulgence, and on every other Friday 200 days and a plenary Indulgence once a month.

Pius PP. VII, with Decree of 1815.

Whoever on the seven Fridays of Lent performs some act of piety in honour of the passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ, gains for each Friday an Indulgence of 300 days; and on one of them a plenary Indulgence. The same Indulgence is gained by whoever visits a church or public Oratory on each Friday, and recites seven *Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glories* before an image of the Crucifix
GREGORY PP. XVI, with Rescript of 1837

Prayer to the Crucified Jesus

Before any of His images
Behold me, O my beloved good Jesus, prostrate in Your most holy presence, I pray You with the most fervent zeal to imprint in my heart sentiments of faith, hope, charity, and sorrow for my sins, and a resolution to offend You no more; while I with all love and all compassion contemplate Your five wounds, beginning with what was said of You, O my Jesus, by the holy prophet David: They pierced my hands and my feet, and they numbered all my bones.

Plenary Indulgence to whoever, having confessed and received communion, recites the above prayer before any image of the Crucified Jesus.

Pius PP. VII, with Decree of 1821

Prayers and devout aspirations
Long live, long live Jesus, who for my good
Shed all His blood from His veins.
The blood of Jesus was my life;
Blessed be His infinite goodness.
May this blood be eternally praised
Which redeemed the world from hell.
This blood became our drink
And the washing of our souls.
The blood of Jesus appeases the wrath
Of the Father and leads us to the Kingdom.

Abel’s blood cried out for vengeance,
That of Jesus awaits forgiveness for us.
If our heart is sprinkled with such blood,
The minister of divine fury flees.
If the divine blood of Jesus is exalted,
Heaven rejoices, hell trembles and languishes.
Let us therefore say together with energy:
To the blood of Jesus be glory.

Whoever recites these aspirations gains 100 days of Indulgence for each day.

Pius PP. VII, with rescript of 1815

Offering
Eternal Father, I offer You the most precious blood of Jesus Christ in atonement for my sins and for the needs of Holy Church.

Indulgence of 100 days for each time.

POPE PIUS VII, Rescript of 1817.

Another offering
With an *Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*.

Eternal Father, we offer You the most precious blood of Jesus shed for us with so much love and sorrow from the wound of His right hand, and by its merits and virtue, we implore Your divine Majesty to grant us Your holy blessing, so that by virtue of it we may be defended from our enemies, and be delivered from all evils, saying: *Benedictio Dei Omnipotentis, Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti descendat super nos, et maneat semper. Amen.*

Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

One hundred days of Indulgence each time it is recited; if for a month, a plenary Indulgence on a chosen day.

LEO PP. XII, Rescript of 1823.

Feast and Octave of *Corpus Christi*
Eugene PP. IV granted 200 days of Indulgence to whoever fasts or performs some

other pious work according to the confessor’s advice on the vigil of Corpus Christi; on the feast day, to those who, having confessed and received communion, devoutly attend or recite the first and second Vespers, Matins and Mass, an Indulgence of 400 days for each of these functions; and 160 days for each of the minor Hours, Prime, Terce, Sext, None and Compline. On the days of the octave, an Indulgence of 200 days for each Vespers, Matins and Mass, attending as above; and an Indulgence of 80 days for each of the minor hours. An Indulgence of 200 days to any priest who has celebrated Holy Mass, and to any lay person who has received Holy Communion, accompanying the Most Holy Sacrament in the Procession, which is held on that feast or within the octave. An Indulgence of 200 days for accompanying the procession of the Most Holy Sacrament that is usually held on the third Sunday of each month, and on Holy Thursday.

Constitution of 1433.

The sanctified hour on Holy Thursday, on the feast of *Corpus Christi* and on other Thursdays

Pius PP. VII granted a plenary Indulgence to whoever, publicly or privately, on Holy Thursday, performs an hour of some devout exercise in memory of the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament; a plenary Indulgence on the feast of Corpus Christi, and 300 days on other Thursdays of the year, by practising said pious exercise.

Rescript of 1815.

Invocation

To be recited after Mass, or after Holy Communion, or at any time.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me!
Body of Jesus Christ, save me!
Heart of Jesus Christ, vivify me.
Blood of Jesus Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Jesus Christ, purify me.
Passion of Jesus Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within Your wounds hide me.
From the malignant enemy defend me.
Permit not that I should ever be separated from You.
At the hour of my death call me,
That I may come to praise You with Your Saints,

For ever and ever. Amen.

Indulgence of 7 years for whoever recites this prayer after Communion; Indulgence of 300 days for each time, and a plenary Indulgence for whoever recites it every day once a month.

Pius PP. IX, with Decree of 1854.

Accompanying the Most Holy Sacrament to the sick
Indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines to whoever accompanies the Most Holy Viaticum to the sick with a light each time; without a light, 5 years and 5 quarantines; if someone is sent with a lit light, an Indulgence of 3 years and 3 quarantines. If prevented, provided an *Our Father and Hail Mary* are recited, an Indulgence of 100 days is gained.

INNOCENT PP. XII, Const. of 1695.

Visiting it exposed at the Forty Hours
Plenary Indulgence to whoever has confessed and received communion; and ten years and as many quarantines for each visit.

PAUL PP. V, with Brief of 1606.

Pange lingua* etc. or the *Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Three hundred days of Indulgence once a day to whoever recites the Pange with the Tantum ergo; and 100 days to whoever recites only the Tantum ergo. Whoever recites either one or the other at least 10 times a month, gains a plenary Indulgence on Holy Thursday, and on the feast of Corpus Christi, and on a chosen day of said Octave.

Pius PP. VII, with Decree of 1818.

Ejaculation
May the most holy and divine Sacrament be praised and thanked every moment.

Indulgence of 100 days for once a day; if for a month, a plenary Indulgence on a chosen day. By reciting it three times on all Thursdays of the year as in the Octave of Corpus Christi, 300 days are gained.

Pius PP. VI, with Rescript of 1776.

To whoever recites it at the stroke of the hours, when the elevation is made at Mass, and at the sign of the blessing, an Indulgence of one hundred days is granted.

Pius PP. VII, with Decree of 1818.

Ejaculations
I adore You every moment,
O living Bread of heaven, great Sacrament.
Jesus, Heart of Mary,
I pray You to bless my soul.
To You I give my heart,
Most holy Jesus, my Saviour.

One hundred days of Indulgence each time any of the above ejaculations are recited.

LEO PP. XII, with Rescript of 1828.

Frequent Holy Communion
Whoever receives communion once every month, and on the solemnities of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, of all Saints, and the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, as well as on all feast days, gains 10 years of Indulgence in the first case, and 5 in the second, i.e., if they receive communion on all feast days. A plenary Indulgence then when the main feast of the country where they live is celebrated.

GREGORY PP. XIII, Const. of 1580

Offering
To be made before an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

I, N. N., to be grateful to You, and to repair my infidelities, give You my heart, and entirely consecrate myself to You, my amiable Jesus, and with Your help I resolve to sin no more.

Plenary Indulgence to whoever recites the above offering every day for a whole month; and 100 days for once.

Pius PP. VII, Resc. of 1807.

The Rosary
Whoever recites the entire Rosary, that is, fifteen decades, or the third part, that is, five decades, gains 100 days of Indulgence for each *Our Father and Hail Mary.*

BENEDICT PP. XIII, with Brief of 1726.

Indulgence of 10 years to whoever recites the third part of the Rosary with other faithful for each time. Whoever recites it three times a week gains a plenary Indulgence on the last Sunday of each month.

Pius PP. IX, with Decree of 1851

Litany of Loreto
To whoever recites the Litany of Loreto, 300 days of Indulgence each time. Whoever recites it every day gains a plenary Indulgence on the feasts of the Conception, Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption of the Most Holy Mary.

Pius PP. VII, Decree of 1817.

The *Angelus Domini* or the *Regina Coeli*
Indulgence of 100 days each time the *Angelus* is recited at the sound of the bell. Whoever recites it every day gains a plenary Indulgence once a month; the same Indulgences are also gained by reciting the Regina Coeli during Eastertide.

Ejaculation to the Immaculate Conception
O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.

100 days of Indulgence are gained each time it is recited and the medal is kissed.

Pius PP. IX, 1852.

The *Salve Regina* and the *Sub tuum praesidium*
To whoever recites the *Salve Regina*, 100 days of Indulgence for each day, an Indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines to all who recite the Salve Regina with the *Dignare me* etc. in the morning. The same Indulgence is gained by whoever says the *Sub tuum praesidium* in the evening. Finally, a plenary Indulgence is granted to whoever recites it every day in the aforementioned manner twice a month, i.e., on two chosen Sundays; and a plenary Indulgence on each feast day of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and solemnity of all Saints and at the hour of death.

Blessed be the holy and immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Indulgence of 100 days each time.

Pius PP. VI, Rescript of 1793.

Sanctify the month of May
An indulgence of 300 days to those who honour the Blessed Virgin with particular reverence each day of this month, and a plenary indulgence on the closing day or even once on any day of the month on which confession and communion are made.

Pope Pius VII, with Rescript of 1815.

Prayer
God save you, most august Queen of peace, Mother of God, through the most sacred Heart of your Son Jesus, Prince of peace, make His wrath subside, and may He reign over us in peace. Remember, O most pious Virgin Mary, that it has never been heard, since the world began, that anyone who implores your favours has been rejected and abandoned by you. Animated by this confidence, I present myself to you. Do not, O Mother of the Word, despise my prayers, hear them favourably, and grant them, O merciful, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary.

An indulgence of 300 days each time, and a plenary indulgence to those who recite it for a month.

Ejaculatory prayer to the Most Sacred Heart of Mary
Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation.

An indulgence of 300 days for each time, and a plenary indulgence to those who recite it once a month.

Pope Pius IX, decree of 1852.

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin and St. Anne
God save you, full of grace, the Lord is with you, and your grace be with me, blessed are you among women, and blessed be St. Anne your mother, from whom you were born, O Virgin Mary, without stain and sin; and then from you was born Jesus Christ, Son of the living God. Amen.

An indulgence of 100 days is gained each time it is recited. And for 10 times a

month, a plenary indulgence on the feast of St. Anne.

Pope Pius VII, Rescript of 1815.

Prayer
to be recited during Holy Mass.

Eternal Father, I offer you with my heart the Most Holy Sacrifice of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, for Your glory and that of the whole triumphant Church, for the needs of my soul and of the whole militant Church, in suffrage for my deceased relatives and of the whole purgatorial Church.

Whoever recites it gains an indulgence of 100 days each time.

Pope Pius IX, 1848.

Stabat Mater
One hundred days of Indulgence for each time it is recited.

INNOCENT XI with Brief of 1681

Ejaculatory prayer of resignation to the will of God
May the most just, most high, and most amiable will of God be done, praised, and eternally exalted in all things.

An indulgence of 100 days to those who recite it once a day. To those who recite it every day, a plenary indulgence every year: at the hour of death to those who have recited it often in life.

Pope Pius VII, with Decree of 1818.

***Angele Dei*, etc.**
An indulgence of 100 days for each time. Whoever recites it in the morning and in the evening throughout the year would gain a plenary indulgence on the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels and at the hour of death.

Pope Pius VI, Brief of 1795 and Brief of 1796.

Whoever recites it for a month gains a plenary indulgence on a day of their choice.

Pope Pius VII with Decree of 1821.

One hour of prayer during the year
Whoever performs one hour of prayer during the year on a day of their choice in honour of Our Lady of Sorrows will gain a plenary indulgence.

CLEMENT XII, with Decree of 1736, BENEDICT XIV, of 1757

Antiphon and prayer to implore peace
Grant, O Lord, peace in our days, for there is no one else who fights for us but you, our God.

May there be peace in your virtue.
And the abundance of your help in your defenders.

Lord, my God, from whom come to us holy desires, right counsels, and just operations: grant to your servants that peace which the world cannot give, so that our hearts may be wholly dedicated to your commandments, and the fear of enemies removed, our days may be quiet and tranquil by your protection. Through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

An indulgence of 100 days each time. And whoever has recited it every day for a month gains a plenary indulgence.

Pope Pius IX, Decree of 1848

In honour of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
To those who feed three poor people in honour of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph with a contrite heart, 7 years and 7 quarantines of Indulgence are granted; if they approach the Holy Sacraments on the same day, a plenary Indulgence. Furthermore, 100 days of indulgence are gained for those of the family or servants of those who perform this work of mercy.

Pope Pius VII, with Rescript of 1815.

Mental prayer
To those who perform half an hour or a quarter of an hour of mental prayer every day, a plenary indulgence is granted at the end of the month. Similarly, a plenary indulgence to those who have taught or learned to do so once a month; furthermore, an indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines to those who have shown

the same diligence in attending the explanation of the method of meditating.

POPE BENEDICT XIV, with Bull of 1746.

Attending the explanation of the Gospel
An indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines to all those who attend the explanation of the Gospel on Sundays and major solemnities. A plenary indulgence on the Nativity of Jesus Christ, on Easter Sunday and on the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, on Epiphany, and on Pentecost Sunday.

POPE BENEDICT XIV with Decree of 1756.
Pope Pius VI with Rescript of 1784.

Teaching or learning Christian Doctrine
1. To fathers and mothers who teach Christian Doctrine to their children or to servants, for each time 100 days of Indulgence.
2. To all those who study the Catechism or Christian Doctrine for half an hour to learn it or to teach it, for each time 100 days of Indulgence.
3. To all the faithful who go to schools or churches to learn Christian Doctrine, an indulgence of three years on each feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, those who are admitted approaching Holy Communion.

POPE PAUL V, with the Constitution of 1607.

Furthermore, an indulgence of 7 years and 7 quarantines to all the faithful who, having confessed and received communion, attend Catechism, or teach it. Finally, a plenary indulgence at Christmas, Easter, and on the solemnities of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul.

POPE CLEMENT XII, with Brief of 1735.

The *De Profundis* at one hour of night
Whoever recites it at an hour of night in the evening at the sound of the bell gains 100 days of Indulgence each time. Whoever does so for an entire year will gain a plenary Indulgence on a day of their choice. Whoever does not know the De Profundis need only say a *Pater, Ave with the Requiem*.

POPE CLEMENT XII, with Brief of 1736.
Pope Pius VI with Rescript of 1781.

Spiritual praises
An indulgence of one year to those who teach sacred praises for free. An indulgence of 100 days to those who sing them. A plenary indulgence once a month to those who sing them on feast days. All applicable to the souls in Purgatory.

Of Indulgences
To understand what Indulgence means, it is good to remember that sin produces two very bitter effects in our soul: the guilt that deprives us of God's grace and friendship, and the consequent punishment that prevents entry into Paradise. This punishment is of two kinds: one eternal, the other temporal. Guilt, together with eternal punishment, is totally remitted to us, through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, in the sacrament of Penance, provided we approach it with due dispositions. However, since temporal punishment is not always entirely remitted in the said Sacrament, a large part remains to be satisfied in this life through good works and penance; or in the next through the fire of Purgatory. It is on this truth that the canonical penances, so severe, which the Church in the early centuries imposed on repentant sinners, were founded. Three, seven, ten, up to fifteen and twenty years of fasting on bread and water, of privations and humiliations, sometimes for an entire lifetime, this is what the Church imposed for a single sin; and it did not believe that those satisfactions exceeded the measure of what the sinner owed to God's justice. And who can ever measure the injury that guilt does to the Most High God, and the malice of sin? Who can ever penetrate the deepest eternal secrets, and know how much divine justice demands from us in this life to satisfy our debts; or how much we must remain in the pains of Purgatory? The treasures of holy Indulgences aim to shorten the time we would have to remain in Purgatory, and to shorten the penance we should do in the present life.
Therefore, Indulgences are the remission of temporal punishment due for our sins, which is done through the spiritual treasures entrusted by God to the Church. These spiritual treasures are the infinite merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ, those of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Saints, as we profess in the Symbol of the Apostles when we say: I believe in the Communion of Saints. For the merits of Jesus Christ being infinite, those of Mary Most Holy superabundant, who, conceived without stain, and lived without sin, therefore owed nothing to divine justice for her sins; and the Martyrs, and other Saints having with their sufferings in union with those of Jesus Christ satisfied more than was necessary for their own account; all these satisfactions, in the sight of God, are like an inexhaustible treasure, which the Roman Pontiff dispenses according to the opportunity of the times, and according to the needs of the faithful Christians.

The faculty of dispensing holy Indulgences resides in the Supreme Pontiff. For in every society, in every government, one of the noblest prerogatives of the Head of State is the right to grant pardons and commute sentences. Now the Supreme Pontiff, representative of Jesus Christ on earth, Head of the great Christian society, undoubtedly has the right to grant grace, to commute, to remit in whole or in part the penalties incurred for sin, in favour of those who sincerely return to God. This power, or authority of the Supreme Pontiff in dispensing Indulgences, is supported by the very words of Jesus Christ. When he appointed St. Peter to govern the Church, he said these words to him: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” This faculty undoubtedly embraces a right to be able to grant to the faithful Christians all that can contribute to the good of their souls.

The words spoken by Jesus Christ to St. Peter confer a full and absolute power, and this full and absolute power constitutes Peter as Head of the Church, Vicar of Jesus Christ, dispenser of all heavenly favours, therefore also of holy Indulgences. This appears from the fact that the Lord gave him the keys of the kingdom of heaven: Tibi dabo claves regni Coelorum; and from the words with which he commanded St. Peter to feed, that is, to dispense to Christians what persons and times would have required of him for spiritual and eternal good.

These words have been understood in this sense by the Apostles, and to prove the same, several facts noted in the Bible could be adduced, but we limit ourselves to mentioning only one. This is from St. Paul, and concerns the faithful of Corinth. Among those fervent Christians, a young man had committed a very serious sin, for which he deserved to be excommunicated. He immediately showed himself very repentant, expressing a very strong desire to do the due penance. Then the Corinthians prayed to St. Paul that he would absolve him. This Apostle used indulgence, that is, he freed him from excommunication, and restored him to the bosom of the Church, although due to the gravity of the sin, and according to the discipline then in force, he should have remained separated from the Church for a long time. From these words, and from others of the same St. Paul, it appears that he himself bound and loosed, that is, he used rigour and indulgence, according to what he judged to be for the greater advantage of souls. And here it is also good to note the error of those who say that in the early times there was no talk of Indulgences: for ecclesiastical history is full of facts that demonstrate the divine institution of Indulgences and their constant use from the earliest times of the Church. In the first century of the common era we have the fact mentioned; in the second century we read that in the time of persecution, when some sinner returned

to the Church, he was first obliged to confess his sins, then a time was imposed during which, if he exercised himself with fervour in works of penance, he would obtain indulgence, that is, the time of penance would be shortened for him. To obtain this with greater ease, it was recommended to those who were led to martyrdom that they pray to the Bishop or write him a note, begging him to grant them Indulgence in view of the sufferings of the martyrs and thus grant them peace with God and with the Church (Tertullian, ad Mal. I, 1).

In the third century, St. Cyprian, writing to the faithful detained in prison, advises them not to intercede too easily for Indulgence for those who ask for it, but to wait until they give sufficient signs of sorrow and repentance for their sins. From these words it appears that in the time of St. Cyprian Indulgences were in use, and that the Saint recommended to the martyrs not to interpose their mediation with the Bishops except for those who showed themselves sincerely repentant (Ep. 21, 22, 23).

In the fourth century, in the year 325, a General Council was gathered in the city of Nicaea, in which several matters concerning the universal good of the Church were discussed. Then, when speaking of Indulgences, it was established that those who do penance can obtain Indulgence from the Bishop: and that the more negligent must do their penance for the established time. Which is nothing other than granting Indulgence to the former and denying it to the latter (Conc. Nic., canon 11, 12).

In later times, the facts are countless. St. Gregory the Great in a letter written to the King of the Visigoths sent a small key that had touched the body of St. Peter and had within it a little filing from the chains of the holy Apostle so that, says the Pope, what served to bind the Apostle’s neck when he went to martyrdom, would absolve you from all your sins. Which the holy Fathers interpret as the plenary Indulgence, which the Pope sent together with that blessed key.

Pope Leo, in the year eight hundred and three, having gone with a large retinue of Cardinals, Archbishops and Prelates to Emperor Charlemagne was received by the pious Sovereign with the greatest pomp. That monarch asked for and obtained as a particular favour that he dedicate the royal palace of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) to the Blessed Virgin, and that he enrich it with many Indulgences to be gained by those who went to visit it. If we wanted to recount other facts, almost all ecclesiastical history could be recited, and especially the history of the Crusades, in which circumstances the Popes granted plenary Indulgence to those who enlisted to go to Palestine to free the Holy Places.

In conclusion and confirmation of what has been said so far, we present here the doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding Indulgences.

“The faculty of dispensing Indulgences having been granted by Christ to the Church; the Church has used this faculty granted by God from the most ancient times; therefore the sacred Council commands and teaches that it must be held that Indulgences are useful for the salvation of the Christian, as is proven by the authority of the Councils. Whoever then says that Indulgences are useless, or denies that the Church has the faculty to dispense them, let him be anathema, let him be excommunicated” (Sess. 25, cap. 21).

Acquisition of Indulgences

While we admire the goodness of God in dispensing holy Indulgences to the faithful Christians, in granting heavenly treasures that do not diminish, nor will ever diminish, no matter how much they are spread, like an immense ocean that does not suffer diminution no matter how much water is drawn, we must nevertheless fulfil some obligations for their acquisition. Firstly, it should be noted that it is not at the discretion of each Christian to use these divine treasures as he pleases. He will enjoy them only when, how, and in that greater or lesser quantity, that the holy Church and the Supreme Pontiff determine. Hence Indulgences are commonly distinguished into two classes; partial, or of a few days, months, or years, and plenary. For example, by saying: My Jesus mercy, one gains one hundred days of Indulgence; that is to say, one acquires the merit that corresponds to one hundred days of the rigorous canonical penance that was formerly inflicted on sinners. Every time the Viaticum is accompanied to some sick person, seven years of Indulgence can be gained, corresponding to the merit of seven years of canonical penance. These Indulgences are partial.

The plenary Indulgence is that by which all the punishment for which we are indebted to God for our sins is remitted to us. Such is precisely that which the Pope grants to all those who, on the occasion of the solemnity of Mary Help of Christians or in the novena preceding it, visit the church dedicated to her. By gaining this Indulgence, one returns to being before God as we were when we were baptised: to the extent that, if one were to die after having gained this Indulgence, one would go to Paradise without touching the pains of Purgatory.

To gain this, like any other Indulgence, it is first required that one be in the grace of God, because he who before God is guilty of eternal punishment for grave sin, certainly is not, nor can be capable of receiving the remission of temporal punishment. Therefore, it will be excellent advice for every Christian who wishes to acquire Indulgences when and as they are granted, that he approach the sacrament of Confession, striving to excite himself to true sorrow and make a firm resolution not to offend God again in the future.

The second condition is the fulfilment of what the Roman Pontiff prescribes. For the Holy Church, in opening the treasure of holy Indulgences, always obliges the faithful to some good work to be done at a determined time and place. And this is to prepare our heart to receive those extraordinary favours that God's mercy has prepared for us. Thus, to acquire the Indulgence of this solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, Sacramental Confession and Communion are required. This is still not enough; it is further required that all sins, even venial ones, be detested, and furthermore that affection for all and each of them be laid aside. And this we will certainly do if we dispose ourselves to practice those things that the confessor will impose on us, but above all if we make a firm and effective resolution never to commit any sin again, if we avoid the occasions and practice the means not to fall again.
The Supreme Pontiff Clement VI, to incite all Christians to the acquisition of the plenary Indulgence of the Jubilee, said: "Jesus Christ, with his grace and with the superabundance of the merits of his passion, left to the Church militant here on earth an infinite treasure, not hidden in a cloth, nor buried in a field, but entrusted it to be salutarily dispensed to the faithful, entrusted it to blessed Peter, who holds the keys of Heaven, and to his successors, vicars of Jesus Christ on earth; to which treasure the merits of the Blessed Mother of God and of all the elect provide assistance" (Clem. VI, DD. Eut.).

Decree of His Holiness Pope Pius IX granting the plenary Indulgence on the feast of Mary Help of Christians

POPE PIUS IX.

To all those faithful Christians who read the present, Health and Apostolic Blessing

Intending with pious zeal to promote religion in the faithful and the good of souls with the heavenly treasures of the Church, to all those faithful of both sexes, who, truly repentant and confessed and nourished by holy Communion, will religiously visit the church dedicated in Turin to the Immaculate Virgin Mary under the title of Mary Help of Christians, on the titular feast of the same church or on one of the nine preceding days to be chosen at will by each, and who will pray to God there for the concord of Christian princes, for the extirpation of heresies and for the exaltation of Holy Mother Church, on that day of the aforesaid that they do so, we grant by the mercy of God the plenary Indulgence and remission of all their sins, which they can apply by way of suffrage to the souls of the faithful who, united to God in charity,

have passed from this life.

Given in Rome at St. Peter’s under the Fisherman’s Ring on the 22nd day of May 1868.
In the twenty-second year of Our Pontificate.

With historical report on this title by Father Giovanni Bosco.
Turin, Tip. dell’Orat. di s. Franc. di Sales., 1869
With ecclesiastical approval