

MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS SHRINE



Tampa, Florida

50¢

Prayer and Consecration To Mary Help of Christians

Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin, Help of Christians, we consecrate ourselves entirely to you, and we promise always to labor for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.

We pray you to turn your eyes of pity on the Church, on its Supreme Pontiff, priests and missionaries; on the Salesian Family; on our relatives and benefactors; on the youth of our country; on poor sinners and the dying, and on all the souls in Purgatory.

Teach us, O most tender Mother, to copy in ourselves the virtues of Saint John Bosco, particularly his angelic modesty, profound humility and ardent charity.

Grant also, O Mary Help of Christians, that through your powerful intercession we may be victorious over the enemies of our souls in life and in death, so that with Saint John Bosco we may be gathered round you in Heaven. Amen.

Foreword

This modest booklet about the Mary Help of Christians Shrine in Tampa, Florida, seeks to convey a twofold message: one of appreciation and one of explanation. Much like the church which it purports to illustrate, it is a work of love. The author would like to consider it a loving tribute to God and His Holy Mother, in humble token of grateful affection for the incomparable privilege of having been associated in the work of planning and constructing this beautiful temple to the Mother of God.

The number of people who are responsible for the finished product, the material shrine, is legion. Without trying to list all the names—for that would be plainly impossible—we want to express public and sincere thanks to Brother Fiore DaRoit, a Salesian coadjutor brother belonging to the same order that staffs Mary Help of Christians School and Shrine, for creating the classical design with a flourish of contemporary art. He worked long hours at his desk and away from his desk, seeking to formulate a pleasing structure that would both harmonize with existing buildings and be at the same time uniquely different. In this he was happily successful.

John Sultenfuss, the contractor, is justly proud of this edifice, in his own estimation the finest he has ever erected. In his work he was ably assisted by a number of local firms and artists, each one an expert in his own field. To all of them a hearty thank you for a job well done.

Having named the architect and the contractor, here is where we stop. All the other names are included in a memorial book that is encased in the main altar. A copy of this book is to be found in the vestibule of the church, for everyone to examine. Their memory is in benediction in the annals of Mary Help of Christians Shrine, and their goodness is known to God, Who in His own divine way will know how to repay them.

The explanation, for those who need it, is simply to justify the huge expense that was made in connection with the shrine. On the assumption that nothing we do for God is quite worthy of Him, for He is infinite in majesty, we have not spared any expense, in an effort to make this temple, which is His house, as beautiful and attractive as possible. It is true that we have many and pressing obligations and there are many more things that we might and should do; but these can wait. At the time we were interested in a fitting dwelling place

for Our Divine Lord. He Himself will later help us to provide for our other obligations.

While we want to cut down expenses in our way of living, in the seeking of comforts and conveniences for ourselves, we do not want in any way to economize in things that pertain to divine worship. To God and to His Holy Mother we want to give the very best that we have, without stint, without measure; for their goodness far exceeds our power of giving. We have had countless blessings at Mary Help of Christians School, ever since its beginning. It is time that we give concrete expression to our appreciation.

The shrine of Mary Help of Christians will endure as a reminder of our indebtedness and as a token of our undying gratitude—a thank you in stone, in anticipation of the unending thank you in love that we shall say to God and to His Holy Mother in eternity.

—FATHER ALVIN MANNI



From this graceful tower, the electronic peal of bells summons all of Mary's children to prayer.

From Dream to Reality

Like all things of lasting value, the Mary Help of Christians Shrine has a long history. The mighty oak germinates in the underground obscurity of Mother Earth, within the encompassing limitations of a tiny acorn. So do the gigantic enterprises of man. They first take form in the mind of the artist and are at first but the timid brainchild of his mind, before assuming the huge proportions of reality.

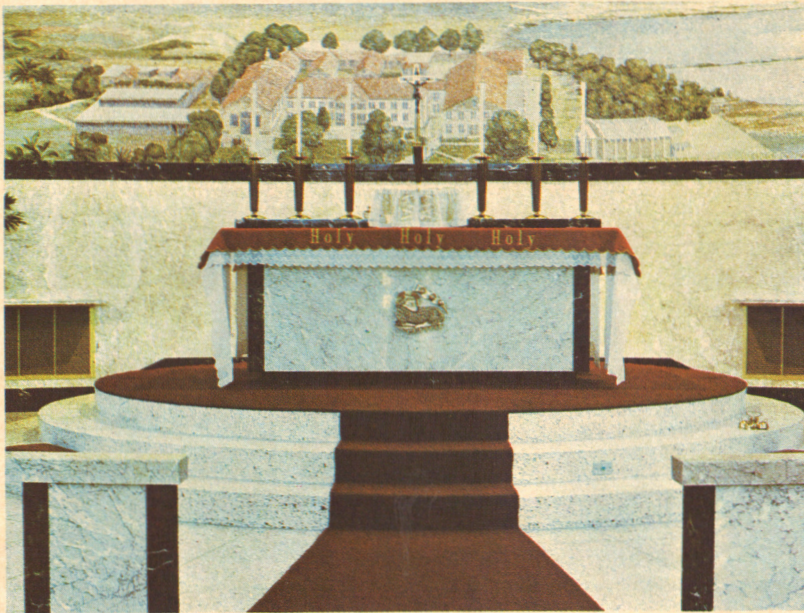
The first idea of a church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians on the grounds of the school bearing the same name, to serve both the student population and the general public, dates to the year 1938, when the east wing of the school building, known as the Anna Pitsch Memorial, was dedicated. Giving expression to a common aspiration, Father Peter Rinaldi, brother of the most cherished and best remembered director of the school, the late Father Louis Rinaldi, wrote the following lines, in a souvenir booklet published for the occasion:

"Our present chapel, devout and beautiful though it be, is too small . . . A structure that will comfortably seat not only our boys, but also a goodly number of friends visiting us on our annual festivals, is a very real and pressing necessity . . ."

The successor of Father Louis Rinaldi in the direction of Mary Help of Christians School, the forward-looking and practical-minded Father Dominic Battistello (1941-1947) saw immediately the need of a church, but realized that nothing could be done, especially during those trying war years, without the necessary funds. Accordingly, he set about paring here and economizing there, in an effort to lay something by for that "very pressing necessity." But most of the savings were swallowed up in the new shop buildings, that had become an even more urgent necessity than the church.

The campaign was started again by Father Joseph Kormann (1947-1950) and continued by Father Emil Fardellone (1950-1956). But once again, as is often the case, new needs arose that claimed priority. Although a preliminary sketch had already been drawn up for a chapel-auditorium complex, the idea was abandoned in favor of an auditorium-gymnasium complex, which became a reality in 1956.

The need for growth and expansion of the academic facilities drove the new director, Father August Bosio (1956-1961) to channel all his efforts in the direction of a scholastic building—a low one story structure in two sections, that would nearly double the available classroom space—before considering the possibility of providing an adequate place of worship.



Partial view of sanctuary area, showing the main altar rising on three circular steps of terrazzo marble.

Even as plans were being resumed for the construction of a chapel, there was another change in administration. The new director, Father Alvin Manni (1961-1965) lost no time taking up the challenge that had faced former directors. With God's blessing and Our Lady's protection, all other considerations being brushed aside, the work of planning began in earnest in the fall of 1962 and was finalized in the fall of 1963, when ground was broken for the new venture. Work continued unabated until the fall of 1964, when the corner stone was laid and the church began to be used, even though unfinished. Additional work of decorating, painting, and furnishing took up another calendar year.

The final dedication ceremony was reserved for the early part of 1966, when yet another director, Father Vincent Duffy, had taken over the helm of the school. It was on the feast of St. John Bosco, January 31, 1966, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the saint's birth, that our most revered bishop and chief shepherd, His Grace Archbishop Joseph Hurley, solemnly blessed and dedicated our shrine. Truly a memorable day, to be engraved in letters of gold in the annals of Mary Help of Christians School.

God's Temple

Basic to the formal style and architectural symbol of every church is the concept that a church is God's house. The thought is expressed in diverse ways, all of which converge on the one great reality that God lives and operates within the confines of this sacred edifice. For that reason a church, any church, is dedicated primarily to the greater honor and glory of God. D.O.M. was the inscription on ancient temples, an abbreviation of the Latin phrase: Deo Optimo Maximo—To the One God, Supreme and Omnipotent. And thus ought it to be, because only the Supreme Being can lay claim to our unqualified worship.

Our Mary Help of Christians Shrine, therefore, is dedicated first of all to the Almighty and Everlasting God. This is His home. This is His temple. And first among all our goals was that of making the finished product result in a devout harmonization, a happy blending of all the component parts, that would create a fitting place of worship. Everything had to be the best and the finest, because it was meant to serve the incomparable majesty of God. It had to be devotional and conducive to prayer, because "it is written: my house shall be a house of prayer." Nothing alien, nothing commonplace, nothing derogatory, nothing offensive to the august majesty of the Most Holy Trinity should be admitted.

Look well and closely scrutinize each and every detail—nothing was so unimportant as to escape attention and receive careful consideration. The artists have all tried to make this church a symbol of the holiness, the beauty, the majesty, the grandeur of God, an invitation to prayer.



Mary's Shrine

After God's Son, the person that means the most to us is God's Mother. It is to her that, after God, we have dedicated this new church. This is her temple. This is her shrine. This is her home.

The mystery of Mary is not different from the mystery of Jesus. Actually the two are one and the same mystery, because the Mother is nothing without the Son, and the Son awaited in respectful silence for her consent, before beginning His redemptive mission, through the mystery of the Incarnation. She is the channel, at once lowly and sublime, that God chose for His entrance into the world. It was through Mary that Christ came to us and it is through her that we shall go to Him.

For this reason, we feel that we are perfectly justified in making our Church a shrine to Mary Help of Christians: not that we should run the risk of detracting from the glory that is God's due or from the all-sufficient mediation of Christ, God's Son and Mary's; but that God's glory may be perfected the more by the honor that we show to His Mother. For in honoring God's Mother we honor God and in glorifying Mary's power of mediation, we glorify Christ's, Who chose to share His power with His Mother.

Wherever you look, inside or outside the building, you shall find Mary etched in image, in sign, and in symbol. Her earthly life, so completely intertwined with her Son's, is portrayed in many different ways. And the message of her all-powerful intercession is written on stone and on glass.

The school that bears her name, Mary Help of Christians School, came into being and is kept in existence, by the loving care, by the maternal solicitude of her who at Cana of Galilee whispered to her Divine Son, "They have no wine." Countless are the graces and favors that have been obtained through her intercession right here in Tampa, and our school is an enduring witness to the glorious efficacy of that most powerful intercession.

For this reason, we express a wish that the shrine of Mary Help of Christians should be a hymn of thanksgiving to God and His Holy Mother, for making all this marvelous work possible. Far more than words can express, far greater than we can know, is the saving power of Mary's suppliant prayer. And we have been the object of her prayer. Here at Mary Help of Christians School we have become her favorite sons, in spite of our unworthiness.

This shrine, then, is an enduring monument to the "almighty" power of Mary's intercession. What God can do by His own divine almighty power, Mary can do by a mother's "almighty" prayer.



The carved image of Mary Help of Christians, high over the main altar, beckons all of God's people to draw close to the source of grace and power.



The twelfth Station of the Cross shows artistic detail of white Carrara marble statuary group, against a contrasting background of black and gold.

Many long hours of patient work by loving hands have gone into these pews. The hands belong to the boys of Mary Help of Christians School, who waited long years for their dream to come true.



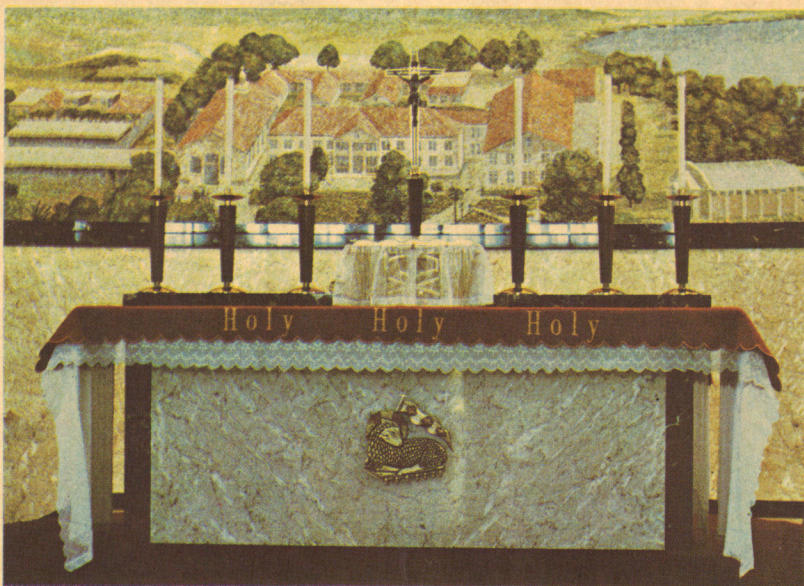
Lights

and

Shadows

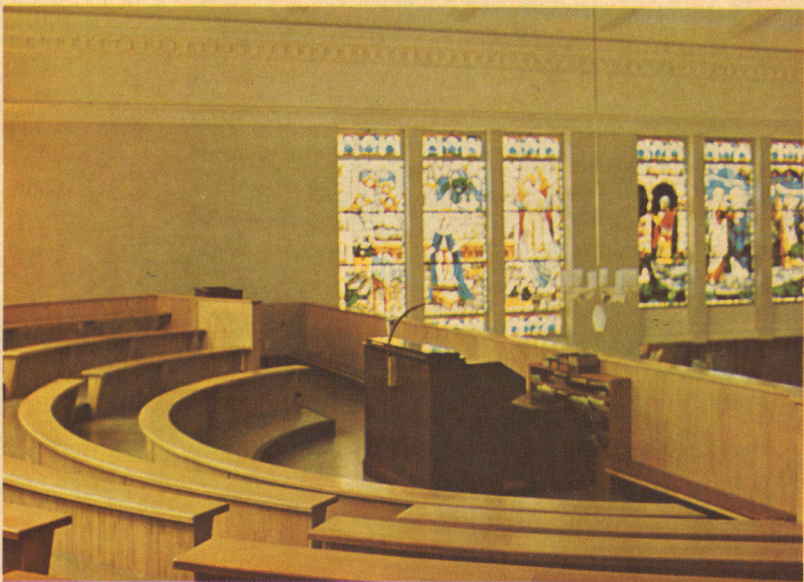
The theme of the artistic composition which is the Mary Help of Christians Shrine is the basic theme of Christianity: light and darkness, life and death. The mystery of Christ's work of redemption is summed up in the dual concept of life and death. Christ redeemed us by passing from death to life. We are redeemed when we pass from the death of sin to the life of grace. Sin, which is death, is symbolized by darkness; and grace, which is life, is symbolized by light. There is a constant interplay of these two basic concepts, even after we have been exposed to the beneficent influence of grace, so that our entire existence may be said to be a constant recurrence of light and shadows, life and death.

The dominant note in the artist's conception of our chapel is light, plain white light and multi-colored light. This effect is achieved by the large windows over the main entrance and along both lateral walls the high ceiling that makes it possible for intense shafts of light to stream through the windows, the plain white walls, the white marble of the Stations of the Cross, the aluminum doors and window frames, the light-colored furniture, etc. In sharp contrast to all this whiteness and to all these vivid colors, is the arresting blackness of the trim around the altar and altar rail, of the wainscot and baseboard around the sanctuary, of the moulding for the pews, of the setting for the Stations, etc. The black border is thin and sparingly used, for it must be relegated to the background—Life has triumphed over Death, and we have been brought from the shadows of death into the light of the children of God.



The main altar, plainly visible to all in church, is the focal point of our shrine. On it Christ, our Victim, is immolated and adored.

Partial view of choir loft, with circular risers. Here our youngsters vie with the Angels in praising God and His Holy Mother.



The Altar — Center of Gravity

The focal point which forms the very center of our church is the altar, on which the sacrifice of Christ is renewed every day.

Elevated on three ample circular steps of terrazzo marble, with a circular predella or platform of the same material, the altar is of imported Italian marble, rectangular in shape. The beautiful, soft veins of the rose marble are heightened by contrasting shafts of black and gold marble at the base and at each end of the altar table.

Concentric circles of polished brass, with spokes of the same metal, converging on the altar from every corner of the sanctuary floor, create the impression of rays radiating from the altar and returning to it, and representing the "wondrous exchange" of gifts between God and man.

The face of the altar is decorated by a hammered bronze lamb and book, which symbolize Christ. The symbol is hinged and forms the door to a receptacle, recessed in the altar, that contains a book of memorials. In this book are listed all those who have helped us build the church. They are to be remembered daily at all the Masses ever to be celebrated therein.

Simple, yet distinctive candlesticks of brass and polished walnut, with matching crucifix, enhance the beauty and simplicity of our altar appointments. The crucifix, slender and tall, has the corpus on both sides, so that both priest and people can look on the image of Him Who suffered and died for us, and Whose sacrifice is mystically renewed in every Mass.

Set squarely in the center of the altar top or mensa, is an artistic tabernacle, specially made according to our specifications. This is the true earthly home of our God: Emmanuel—God with us. For that reason it is artistically made, of polished brass, with fluted sides and crenellated top. Its overall height is only ten inches, so that the priest who says Mass facing the congregation may be clearly visible to all in church.

Memorial Book of Donors

On your visit to the Mary Help of Christians Shrine you will be able to pause in the vestibule of the church, to leaf through "The Memorial Book of Donors." This black loose-leaf binder contains the names of all those who have wished to be a part of our shrine. This is but a copy of the original book located in the middle of the main altar.

The first page contains a statement of grateful appreciation that reads as follows: "In appreciation of their contribution made to the erection of this shrine-chapel, dedicated to the glory of God and to the honor of Mary Help of Christians, by the persons whose names are here contained, a pledge is hereby made that each and all shall be remembered in perpetuity in all Masses ever to be celebrated in this church. A copy of this book is encased in the main altar, which is dedicated to Mary Help of Christians, directly under that portion of the altar top whereon the Sacred Mysteries rest."

On the very next page a dedication follows in the form of a prayer, which we are transcribing: "O Lord, be mindful of all those who have ever helped us in the past, in establishing this school, furthering its development, and bringing this present project to completion. Be mindful of all those who have preceded us in death: from Mrs. Alicia Neve, founder of this school, and Bishop Patrick Barry, its first benefactor, down to the present. Be mindful of all those who have ever helped us, or will help us for Thy name's sake, in the care of these children confided to our care. Be mindful, in particular, of all those who have helped us build this beautiful temple to Thy honor and glory, both those who are listed in the following pages and those who have wished to remain anonymous, whose names and goodness are known to Thee, O God."



Behind this hammered bronze Lamb is a recessed shelf with a Book of Donors, containing the names of all shrine benefactors. They are remembered daily at Mass.

Detail of classical design ornamenting the stain-glass windows.





Wood carving of the Sacred Heart of Jesus spells His compassionate goodness for all mankind.



St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and foster father of Jesus, protects and defends all the members of Christ's Mystical Body.

A Song in Stone

The chief ornament of our shrine consists of an unusual kind of painting, rarely seen in our country, but quite common in Europe. Instead of canvas, the artist uses a bare wall. Instead of pigments, colored chips of marble or glass. Instead of a brush, his own deft fingers, that place the colored chips exactly in the right spot, to give the uncommon effect of a beautiful painting in stone. This type of painting is what is known as "mosaic."

The first step in the almost forgotten art is to choose an appropriate subject. A sketch is then made, translating the idea into concrete reality. After many and repeated alterations, to satisfy all those concerned, a full scale drawing, with all details and contrasting colors, is prepared. This serves as the model for the apprentices, who patiently choose the exact shade of colored stone, to match the shade of color on the drawing board. Many long hours are needed and more importantly, a skill that is truly artistic, to create the impression of a genuine painting.

The mosaics in our chapel are Venetian mosaics, resembling marble, but actually chips of colored glass, set in orderly pattern to create a life-like impression. As such, they are different from the Vatican mosaics, that are picture murals made with multi-colored marble chips. Five pictorial mosaics, two on the outside, and three on the inside, grace the walls of our sacred edifice. You will find the description of the scenes represented in them quite interesting.





View of the interior.

The Outside Mosaics

At eye level, on either side of the main entrance, two arresting scenes from the life of St. John Bosco catch your attention. To the left is a scene from Johnny's boyhood days: a dream he had at the age of nine. The future mission that awaited him was outlined in cryptic form through an unusual apparition. He found himself in the midst of ruffians cursing and swearing. Even as he hurled himself in their midst and started swinging right and left to stop the irreverent behavior, Jesus and Mary stood by his side to tell him, "Not so, but by gentle persuasion, you are to change the heart of these lads." And as he looked, the boys were gone and wild animals: dogs, cats, wolves, and bears stood in their place. These in turn changed into bleating lambs, frisking all around him. It is this last scene that is captured by the artist.

To the right of the main door is a scene from St. John Bosco's later life, again portraying one of his frequent dream-visions. The church of Christ is represented as the bark of Peter on a stormy sea. The Pope, Pius IX, is at the helm and steering the bark forward. On all sides are skiffs and schooners of all kinds attacking the bark of Peter, while others try to defend it. Out of the sea rise two majestic columns. On one is the Sacred Host, on the other, Mary Immaculate. And a voice is heard, "Steer the ship between the two columns." The Holy Father, obeying the voice, turns the prow of the ship towards the columns, and having attained the desired goal, securely anchors it to them. Instantly, the waves fall, the wind ceases, and calm is once again restored to the stormy waters.

Meaning of the parable: Devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary Most Holy will save the church from the storms of persecution.



On your left, as you enter the church, you have this mosaic mural of St. John Bosco's first dream-vision.

Right of the main door is this other scene from the life of St. John Bosco. Read about it on the opposite page.





Altar of St. John Bosco. The saint is leading his boys to Mary's shrine. In the background is the Basilica of Superga, standing guard over the city of Turin, scene of St. John Bosco's activity.

Altar of St. Dominic Savio, a pupil of St. John Bosco, who learned the simple lesson from his master: God wants you to be a saint. On the scroll he holds in hand are the words: "My friends shall be Jesus and Mary."



The Side Altar Mosaics

Notwithstanding the fact that our chapel is a shrine to Mary Help of Christians, it is still primarily intended to serve as a place of worship for the boys who attend the Mary Help of Christians School. You will not, then, be surprised to find so many young people depicted here and there. This is strikingly the case when you consider the side altar mosaics.

One of the altars is dedicated to St. John Bosco, the patron saint of boys and founder of the Salesians who staff Mary Help of Christians School and hundreds of other schools throughout the world. The one great love of this saint, as indeed of all other saints, was, together with love for Jesus, love for Our Blessed Lady. As the Help of Christians, she actually came to be known the world over as "Don Bosco's Madonna." In this mosaic the saint is pointing to a statue of Our Lady and inviting his boys to go to her. They fall, naturally enough, under the magic spell of the saint, who would not prescribe anything for them that would not bring them greater happiness, and remain transfixed looking in the direction of Our Blessed Lady. Such is the natural response written on their faces.

The best proof of St. John Bosco's success in education is the youthful Dominic Savio, the youngest canonized saint who is not a martyr in the calendar of the church. He died at the age of 15. He is shown in the mosaic that tops the altar dedicated to him in the act of leading his companions to the feet of Our Lord hidden in the tabernacle. On the scroll that he holds in hand is written the secret of his sanctity, "My friends shall be Jesus and Mary." No sissy he, no selfish individual, but a courageous apostle, who has overcome the inhibiting effects of human respect. He wins the admiration of his peers and leads them unashamedly to the altar of God.

The Mary Help of Christians Mosaic

As you enter the main door, the one giant painting that immediately catches your attention and arrests your gaze is the mosaic of Mary Help of Christians over the main altar. It is, of course, meant to be the special feature of our shrine, giving it meaning and coherence.

The center of the mural is occupied by a more than life-size statue of Mary Help of Christians on a cumulus of clouds. It is a natural-tone tinted wood carving of unsurpassed beauty. High above the statue is a symbol of the Holy Ghost (dove) overshadowing her. In the words of the sacred liturgy, she is "the Holy Virgin descending from her starry home to help the needy." (*Venit adiutrix pia Virgo coelo lapsa sereno.*)

On your left as you face the picture, Pope John, clad in his pontifical vestments, is leading members of the clergy and religious orders to the feet of Our Lady, who has been invoked by this pope as the Help of Christians and the Help of Bishops. In the background, dominating the group of people, towers the impressive basilica of St. Peter's in Rome, the largest temple in the world and the symbol of the church's universality.

The right field represents a portion of the universal church that is particularly dear to Mary Help of Christians, the Salesian Family. All the three branches of this family are represented: the Salesians (priests and brothers) the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (nuns) and the Cooperators (lay people), along with a sprinkling of children to whom the Salesians are especially committed. Behind this group of people is the church of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, the church that St. John Bosco built in honor of Our Lady. The Saint is outstanding at her feet.

Below the statue of Mary Help of Christians lies the school of Mary Help of Christians here in Tampa. It represents the very spot and the surroundings on which this shrine rises. Thus, the two are forever bound together: the school, that has become the symbol of the Tampa charities during the past 40 years, and Mary the Mother of God, the Help of Christians, who has become a symbol of God's favors and blessings showered on this community. Spreading her protective mantle over the school, she will be forever a guiding star, a haven of rest, a mother most tender and mild to all those who will enter the portals of this her earthly home.



"Behold the handmaid of the Lord," Mary answered. And at that moment, the Word was made flesh.

"I am going to prepare a place for you," were the reassuring words of the Savior before He ascended into heaven. His footprints are a reminder that He will come again.



A Song in Glass

Most of the artistic work that adorns our chapel is the product of European talent. The mosaic murals were designed and executed by the Felix Lorenzoni Studios of Italy. The white Carrara marble Stations of the Cross were carved at Pietrasanta (Italy) by local artists. The tinted wood carvings of the three statues are from South Tyrol in the Alps. All these works of art, whether painting or sculpture, were done in the best traditional style of the great masters of the Renaissance.

A striking exception to all this artistic work is found in the stain glass windows, a domestic product from start to finish. Hunt's Studios of Pittsburgh is responsible for the design and its execution. The subject of the windows is related to the fundamental concept of a Marian shrine. The east wall windows depict the five joyful mysteries of the Rosary, while the west wall casements display the five glorious mysteries. The theme of light and darkness is strikingly etched in these glass renderings of the principal mysteries of our redemption. The ultimate effect achieved is a happy blending of the stern qualities of the Gothic cathedrals and the buoyant spirit of contemporary art.

Thus, the drama of our redemption is graphically summed up in the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, that complete and complement the decorations in our Marian Shrine: the joyful and glorious mysteries in the stain glass windows, and the sorrowful mysteries in the Way of the Cross. Thus also, the best loved form of prayer in honor of the Mother of God, the Rosary, finds concrete expression in the visual decorations of our shrine to Mary Help of Christians, God's Mother and ours.

A Significant Anniversary

The construction of the church of Mary Help of Christians in Tampa coincided with the one-hundredth anniversary of the construction of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin, by St. John Bosco. The Turin church is the very center, the heart of the Salesian Society, founded by St. John Bosco a little over one hundred years ago. The Tampa church can be said to be the heart of the Salesian work in Florida, started by Father R. Bergamo about forty years ago. St. John Bosco broke ground for his church in May of 1863, and held solemn dedication ceremonies in June of 1868. We broke ground for our church in October of 1963, and held solemn dedication ceremonies in January of 1966. The following table of statistics is given for the purpose of comparison between St. John Bosco's gigantic enterprise and our small venture.

<i>Mary Help of Christians in Turin</i>		<i>Mary Help of Christians in Tampa</i>
March 10, 1863	Ground Breaking	October 20, 1963
April 27, 1865	Laying of Cornerstone	October 18, 1964
June 9, 1868	Solemn Dedication	January 31, 1966
165 feet	Overall Length	120 feet
56 feet in the nave		
112 feet in the transept	Overall Width	52 feet
15,800 square feet	Floor Space	6,240 square feet
appr. \$1,000,000	Total Cost	appr. \$300,000



Close-up of a mosaic mural. Notice how the multi-colored chips create the impression of a real painting.

Appendix I Devotion to Mary Help of Christians Origin of the Title

Devotion to Mary is as old as the Church herself. The thought of Mary as Mother of the Church—that is, as Help of Christians—is founded on Scripture and is the basis of all the early Marian devotion.

It was by Christ's own will that she was constituted Mother of the Church. The words addressed to her from the Cross, "Behold thy son," were said not of John alone, but of the entire Church, of all Christians.

And the Church has always honored Mary with a special form of devotion. Over one thousand early Byzantine texts refer to Mary as the "Empress Helper," while St. Ambrose distinctly speaks of her as the "Mother of the Church."

By the tenth century, the Greek liturgy had a special feast of the Patronage of Mary (October 1), calling on her help, "since God has given you the office of protecting the Christian people."

When the Litany of Loreto came into being in the sixteenth century, the title "Help of Christians" was made one of the invocations.

When the Church's very existence was challenged by the Moslem threat, the Pope and Christian leaders turned instinctively to Mary for help. First in a naval battle at Lepanto in 1571, and then in a military encounter at Vienna in 1683, the Christian forces, far outnumbered, issued victorious because of the miraculous intervention of her "who is terrible as an army set in battle array."

One year after the victory of Vienna, Pope Innocent XI established a Confraternity in honor of Mary Help of Christians, which spread rapidly throughout the world. In 1798 we find two principal centers of this devotion and confraternity: Munich in Bavaria, and Turin in Piedmont.

The devotion of eighteen centuries came to a climax in 1814-1815, when Pius VII was freed from five years' captivity under Napoleon, in response to a universal appeal to Mary's intercession. Returning in triumph to Rome on May 24, 1814, Pius established the feast of Mary Help of Christians, to commemorate the joyful event.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Don Bosco of

Turin undertook to popularize this venerable devotion, because he saw in it the best remedy for our times. He stressed the public and papal aspect of this devotion in a number of books and pamphlets that he published. He then passed on to show the personal and individual help that Mary gives to every Christians. By his efforts, and those of his Salesian followers, the title was world-wide at the time of his death in 1888.

At the close of the century Pope Leo XIII, of immortal memory, issued a special encyclical letter on Mary's title of the "Help of Christians" (1895). And now in our own century with the official proclamation of Mary as Mother of the Church by Pope Paul VI at the Second Vatican Council, the wheel has come full circle. The Church is at its new Pentecost, and this renewal bears the traditional impress of Mary Help of Christians, Mother of the Church.

Mary Help of Christians and St. John Bosco

The names of Mary Help of Christians and St. John Bosco were so closely connected, that they have become synonymous of each other. The entire life and work of St. John Bosco were so completely devoted to Mary Help of Christians that his mission has become her mission, he has become her apostle, and she "Don Bosco's Madonna."

"Don Bosco is a nobody!" was his avowal. "Don Bosco is the lowly instrument in the hands of God and Mary Help of Christians. If God could have found a lowlier instrument, He would certainly have preferred it, so that it might appear the more clearly that it is His work, carried out under the guidance of Our Lady Help of Christians."

Don Bosco attributed everything to Our Lady. If his benefactors helped him in his work, even by large donations, he would frankly admit: "It is Our Lady who is providing for her own work." If the crippled, the paralytic, the blind, the deaf, the dying were blessed by him and obtained their cure, he would say: "Give glory to the Mother of God. See how good she is to you!" If people attributed such wonderful cures to his prayers or to his blessing, he would correct them: "Our Lady Help of Christians is the wonder worker, not Don Bosco."

Truly, it would appear that St. John Bosco was given the mission to popularize devotion to Mary Help of Christians, by word of mouth, by his writings, but more strikingly still by his life's work: "Don Bosco is but an instrument in the hand of Mary Help of Christians."



"I am risen and I am with you still," is the solemn Easter anthem that shatters the darkness of our doubts and fears.

"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." From the lips of the Savior we have naught but words of wisdom.



Appendix II

Mary Help of Christians School

Mary Help of Christians School is quite a unique creation, born of the charity of a one-time famed Tampa citizen, Mrs. Alicia Neve. Situated in the east end of Tampa, between U.S. Highway 92 and Interstate 4, on beautiful East Lake, it is home to hundreds of boys.

Mary Help of Christians School takes the place of the boy's father and/or mother. It does not pretend to replace the boy's parents completely: no one can. But, if misfortune did strike, Mary Help of Christians is there to help regardless of the boy's status.

Mary Help of Christians School comes to the aid of youngsters who cannot be cared for by their parents because of unfortunate circumstances. Our modern social life is a breeding ground for explosive situations that break up the family and leave the children, the innocent party, exposed to all the appalling disadvantages of a broken home.

Mary Help of Christians School comes to the aid of the youngster from the average American family where work takes father and

mother away from home; where the children are unfortunately left very much to their own devices when dad and mother are at work. During their most tender and formative years these children are deprived by a materialistic society, of their parents' help and supervision.

For all these reasons Mary Help of Christians School fills a great need in today's society, but it needs your help to endure.

The most remarkable thing about Mary Help of Christians School is that it should endure at all. For, it has no state, church, United Fund, Community Chest, or other organized support of any sort. It carries on its beneficent work relying solely on the charity and kind-heartedness of good people, like you. Mary Help of Christians School has no trust fund to draw from, no steady income assured. But Divine Providence has never failed these past forty years, and it surely never will.

Remember Mary Help of Christians School in your will and God will remember you. And hundreds of boys will benefit and enjoy a happier life because of you.

Our legal title is: Salesian Society, a Florida non-profit corporation, sole owner and operator of Mary Help of Christians School, Tampa, Florida.





*Altar of Mary Help of Christians
at the National Shrine
of the
Immaculate Conception
Washington, D. C.
dedicated on
Sunday
May 1
1966*

Blessing of Mary Help of Christians

℣. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

℟. Who made heaven and earth.

Hail Mary, etc.

We fly to your patronage, O Holy Mother of God: despise not our petitions in our necessities but deliver us from all dangers O ever-glorious and blessed Virgin.

℣. Mary Help of Christians.

℟. Pray for us.

℣. O Lord, hear my prayer.

℟. And let my cry come unto you.

℣. The Lord be with you.

℟. And with your spirit.

℣. Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, who by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, did prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary, that she might become a worthy habitation for Your Son, grant that as we celebrate her memory, so by her pious intercession, we may be delivered from present evils and eternal death, through the same Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

℣. May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit descend upon you and remain forever.

℟. Amen.



*Basilica of Mary Help of Christians
in Turin, Italy, built
by St. John Bosco
one hundred
years ago.*