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The Pope prays for the victims of the earthquake in Sumatra

After praying the Angelus, the Holy Father mentioned that yesterday, Wednesday 7 December, an earthquake shook the island of Sumatra in Indonesia, and assured his prayers for the victims and their families, for the injured and all those who have lost their homes. "May the Lord give strength to the population and support the rescue efforts", he said.

He also greeted the families and parish groups present in St. Peter's Square and noted that the feast of St. Mary Immaculate is the day on which Italian Catholic Action renews its membership. "I address a special thought to all diocesan and parish associations", he said. "May the Virgin bless Catholic Action and make her increasingly a school of holiness and generous service to the Church and to the World".

"This afternoon, I will go to Piazza di Spagna to renew the tradition act of homage and prayer at the foot of the monument to Mary Immaculate. Afterwards I will go to St. Mary Major to pray to the Salus Populi Romani. I ask you to join me spiritually in this gesture, that expresses our filial devotion to our heavenly Mother. I wish you all a good feast day and a good Advent journey under the guidance of the Virgin Mary. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch, and goodbye".