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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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Act of veneration of the Immaculate Conception and visit to St. Mary Major

At 4 p.m. today, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis made the customary visit to Piazza di Spagna to carry out the act of veneration of Our Lady. At the foot of the statue of Mary Immaculate he recited the following prayer, which he had composed himself:

“O Mary, our Immaculate Mother,

On your feast day I come to You,

And I come not alone:

I bring with me all those with whom your Son entrusted me,

In this city of Rome and in the entire world,

That You may bless them and preserve them from harm.

I bring to you, Mother, children,

Especially those who are alone, abandoned,

And for this reason are tricked and exploited.

I bring to you, Mother, families,

Who carry forward life and society

With their daily and hidden efforts;

In a special way the families who struggle the most

For their many internal and external problems.

I bring you, Mother, all workers, men and women,

And I entrust to you especially those who, out of need,

Are forced to work in an unworthy profession

And those who have lost work or are unable to find it.

We have need of your immaculate gaze,

To rediscover the ability to look upon persons and things

With respect and awareness,

Without egotistical or hypocritical interests.

We have need of your immaculate heart,

To love freely,

Without secondary aims but seeking the good of the other,

With simplicity and sincerity, renouncing masks and tricks.

We have need of your immaculate hands,

To caress with tenderness,

To touch the flesh of Jesus

In our poor, sick, or despised brethren,

To raise up those who have fallen and support those who waver.

We have need of your immaculate feet,

To go toward those who know not how to make the first step,

To walk on the paths of those who are lost,

To find those who feel alone.

We thank you, O Mother, because in showing yourself to us

You free us of all stain of sin,

You remind us that what comes first is the grace of God,

The love of Jesus Christ who gave his life for us,

The strength of the Holy Spirit which renews all things.

Let us not give in to discouragement,

But that, trusting in your constant help,

We engage ourselves fully in renewal of self,

Of this city and of the entire world.

Pray for us, Holy Mother of God!"

The Holy Father left a crown of white roses at the foot of the statue of the Virgin, and then greeted the authorities and the faithful present, before proceeding to the Basilica of St. Mary Major to pray before the image of the Salus Populi Romani.
