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Rosary for Peace

At the conclusion of the Marian month, Pope Francis wishes to offer a sign of hope to the world, suffering from the conflict in Ukraine, and deeply wounded by the violence of the many still ongoing theatres of war. On Tuesday 31 May at 18.00, the Pope will pray the Rosary before the statue of Mary *Regina Pacis* in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome. The statue of Mary *Regina Pacis* is located in the left aisle of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major. It was commissioned by Benedict XV and made by the sculptor Guido Galli, at the time deputy director of the Vatican Museums, to ask the Virgin Mary for an end to the First World War in 1918. The Madonna is depicted with her left arm raised as a sign to order the end of the war, while with her right she holds the Baby Jesus, ready to drop the olive branch symbolizing peace. Flowers are sculpted on the base, symbolizing the blossoming of life with the return of peace. It is traditional for the faithful to lay small handwritten notes with prayer intentions at the feet of the Virgin. The Pope will lay a wreath of flowers at the feet of the statue before addressing his prayer to Our Lady and leaving his particular intention.

Various categories of people representing the People of God will be present to support the Pope's prayer. There will be boys and girls who have received their First Communion and Confirmation in recent weeks, scouts, families from the Ukrainian community of Rome, representatives of the Marian Ardent Youth (GAM), members of the Vatican Gendarmerie Corps and the Pontifical Swiss Guard, and the three parishes in Rome named after the Virgin Mary Queen of Peace, together with members of the Roman Curia.

As a sign of closeness to those most involved in the dynamics of these tragic events, a Ukrainian family, people related to war victims and a group of military chaplains with their respective corps were invited to pray the decades of the Rosary.

Another important sign is the involvement of international shrines from all over the world, together with some shrines located in countries still affected by war or strong internal political instability, the cause of many episodes of violence. These shrines will pray the rosary at the same time as the Holy Father and will be connected via streaming to the live broadcast from Rome. They will be in connection with the Pope: the Shrine of the Mother of God (Zarvanytsia) in Ukraine; the Cathedral of *Sayidat al-Najat* (Our Lady of Salvation) in Iraq; the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace in Syria; and the Cathedral of Mary Queen of Arabia in Bahrain. Alongside these are the

International Shrines: the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage; the International Shrine of Jesus Saviour and Mother Mary; the Shrine of Jasna Góra; the International Shrine of the Korean Martyrs; the Holy House of Loreto; the Blessed Virgin of the Holy Rosary; the International Shrine of Our Lady of Knock; the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary; Our Lady Queen of Peace; Our Lady of Guadalupe; and Our Lady of Lourdes.

All the faithful in every part of the world are invited to support Pope Francis in his prayer to the Queen of Peace.

The prayer will be broadcast live on the official channels of the Holy See. All the Catholic networks of the world will be connected and it will be accessible to those who are deaf or hard of hearing through translation into the *LIS* Italian sign language.
