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BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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Visit to the “Salus Populi Romani” in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major and Act of Veneration of Mary Immaculate in Piazza di Spagna

This afternoon, *Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, the Holy Father Francis visited the Basilica of Saint Mary Major to pray before the image of the “Salus Populi Romani”.

Immediately afterwards, the Pope transferred to Piazza di Spagna for the traditional Act of veneration of Mary Immaculate.

The following is the prayer composed for the occasion by the Holy Father, and recited during the Act of veneration of Mary Immaculate in Piazza di Spagna:

Prayer of the Holy Father

Our Immaculate Mother,

today the people of Rome gather around you.

The flowers, laid at your feet

from so many urban realities,

express their love and devotion for you

who watch over us all.

And you also see and welcome

those invisible flowers that are so many invocations,
so many silent supplications, sometimes stifled,
hidden, but not from you, who are Mother.

After two years in which I came
alone to pay homage to you at the dawning of the day,
today I return to you together with the people
of this Church and this City.

And I bring you the thanks and supplications
of all your children, near and far.

From Heaven where God has welcomed you,
you see earthly things far better than we do;
but as Mother you listen to our invocations
to present them to your Son,
to His Heart full of mercy.

First of all I bring you the filial love
of countless men and women, not only Christians,
who nourish for you the greatest gratitude
for your beauty, full of grace and humility:
for in the midst of so many dark clouds
you are a sign of hope and consolation.

I bring you the smiles of the children,

who learn your name before one of your images,
in the arms of their mothers and grandmothers,
and who begin to know

that they also have a Mother in Heaven.

And when it happens in life that those smiles
give way to tears,
how important it is to have known you,
to have had the gift of your motherhood!

I bring you the gratitude of the elderly and the old:
a thanks expressed with their lives,
woven of memories, of joys and sorrows,
of achievements that they are well aware
have been achieved with your help,
holding their hands in yours.

I bring you the worries of families,
of fathers and mothers who often struggle
to make ends meet at home,
and, day by day, face
small and large challenges to get by.

In particular, I entrust to you the young couples
who, looking to you and to Saint Joseph,
go forward courageously in life
trusting in God's Providence.

I bring you the dreams and anxieties of young people,
open to the future but held back by a culture
rich in things and poor in values,
saturated with information and deficient in education,
persuasive in deluding and ruthless in disappointing.
I especially commend to you the children,
who have been most affected by the pandemic,
that little by little they might resume
spreading and flapping their wings
and rediscover the enjoyment of flying high.

Immaculate Virgin, I would have liked
to have brought to you today
the thanksgiving of the Ukrainian people
for the peace we have long been asking the Lord for.
Instead, I still have to present to you the supplication
of the children, of the elderly,
of the fathers and mothers, of the young people
of that tormented land.
But in reality we all know
that you are with them and with all who are suffering,
just as you were beside the cross of your Son.

Thank you, our Mother!

Looking to you who are without sin,
may we continue to believe and hope
that love might conquer hatred,
that truth might conquer lies,
that pardon might conquer offenses,
that peace might conquer war. So be it!
