



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

**ACT OF VENERATION TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AT THE SPANISH
STEPS**
PRAYER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Spanish Steps

Friday, 8 December 2017

[Multimedia]

Immaculate Mother,

*For the fifth time I come to your feet as Bishop of Rome,
to honour you on behalf of all the residents of this city.*

*We wish to thank you for the constant care
with which you accompany our journey,
the journey of families, of parishes, of religious communities;
the journey of those who each day, at times with difficulty,
pass through Rome to go to work;*

*of the sick, of the elderly, of all the poor,
of so many people who have immigrated here from lands of war and hunger.
Thank you because, as soon as we address a thought to you
or a gaze or a quick 'Hail Mary',
we always feel your maternal, tender and steadfast presence.*

*O Mother, help this city to develop "antibodies" against some of the viruses of our time:
indifference, which says: "It doesn't concern me";
the civic discourtesy which disregards the common good;*

*fear of those who are different or foreign;
transgression disguised as conformity;
the hypocrisy of accusing others while we do the same things;
resignation to environmental and ethical decay;
the exploitation of countless men and women.*

*Help us to reject these and other viruses with the antibodies that come from the Gospel.
Help us to develop the good habit of reading a passage from the Gospel each day
and, after your example, to cherish the Word in our hearts,
so that, as a good seed, it may bear fruit in our lives.*

*Immaculate Virgin,
175 years ago, not far from here, in the Church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte, you touched the heart
of Alphonse Ratisbonne, who at that moment
from an atheist and enemy of the Church became Christian.
To him you revealed yourself as Mother of grace and mercy.*

*Grant that we too, especially in trials and in temptation,
may fix our gaze on your open hands,
which let the Lord's grace come down to the earth,
and divest ourselves of any proud arrogance
so as to recognize ourselves as we truly are:
small and poor sinners, but always your children.
And thus to place our hand in yours*

*so as to be led back to Jesus, our brother and Saviour,
and to our heavenly Father, who never tires of waiting for us
and of forgiving us when we return to Him.
Thank you, O Mother, for always listening to us!*

*May you bless the Church that is in Rome,
bless this city and the entire world.
Amen.*