

On November 12, 1964 Pope Paul VI made a pilgrimage to the basilica and solemnly proclaimed Our Lady "Mother of the Church."

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

Mary, Mother of God, it is our Christian belief that all who fashion their lives in imitation of your Son, Jesus Christ, and have placed their hope in Him are gathered together in a communion of saints. Those who have gone before us live in intimate communion with Christ. You are the most eminent of them, for you were drawn into His life and being as no other. You who gave Him human life followed Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Mary, look at us. Look at all who are centered on your Son. At the present time some of his disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory, contemplating **in full light**, God Himself Triune and One, exactly as He is. All of God's people hunger to be intimately one with Him.

Mary, we are the wayfarers and we hunger for this exchange of spiritual goods with you who were so intimately close to Jesus Christ. Your image, as protectress of the Roman people, reminds us that you invite us to center on Christ. Your arms embrace Jesus fully, effortlessly. Jesus, whose burden is light and yoke is easy, wishes to be as close to every individual as He is to you. You are both wayfarer and guide to us wayfarers on our pilgrimage of faith.

Teach us, Mary, to embrace Christ fully, to make Him our Way, our Truth, our Life. Teach us, Mary, to carry Christ to the world, and, each in our own way, to give Him birth in the hearts of many. Protect your people, Mary; protect your Church. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen.

* (excerpted from: www.praytherosaryapostolate.com)



Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore

Basilica of Saint Mary Major—Rome

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinpire.com

Our Lady of the Snows

Rome

Feast Day - August 5



***Teach us, Mary, to embrace Christ fully,
to make Him our Way, our Truth, our Life.***

Protect your people.

Mary, protect your Church.

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS

*Devotion to Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Snows dates back to 352 A.D.

In that year a rectangle of snow was discovered on Mount Esquiline, one of the famous Seven Hills of Rome. According to tradition, on the night of August 4th, a childless aristocratic Roman couple dreamed that the Blessed Virgin Mary instructed them to go to the Esquiline Hill in the morning where they would find a plot of land covered with snow.

Mary told them that a church consecrated to her should be built on the snow-covered plot of land.

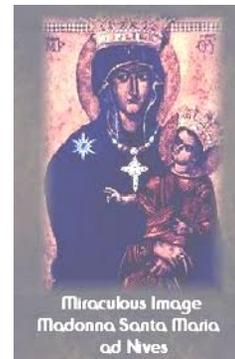
On this same night, she also appeared to Pope Liberius in a dream telling him of her desire. The next morning the couple went to Pope Liberius to tell him about their dream. The pope then led a procession to the spot indicated in the dream and discovered that snow had indeed fallen on the Esquiline Hill. Snowfall of any sort was unheard of in Rome at that time of year.

People crowded to see the patch of snow, which persisted despite the heat, amazed that it had fallen in only one place. All of Rome proclaimed the summer snow a miracle, and the couple accepted this as a sign that they were to use their wealth to help build the church. As soon as the plot for the building had been staked out the snow melted.

On that site, the pope built a shrine to the Holy Virgin. Originally the church was called Santa Maria ad Nives (St. Mary of the Snows).

Later known as Santa Maria Liberiana and then as Santa Maria ad Praesepe, because relics of the manger of Bethlehem had been brought to the church, the basilica eventually became known as Santa Maria Maggiore St. Mary Major because it is the largest of all the churches in Rome dedicated to the Blessed Mother.

Construction on the current church structure began in the 5th century. Pope Sixtus III wished to build a church to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary after the Council of Ephesus (AD 431) had solemnly declared her to be the Theotokos, MOTHER OF GOD.



The Basilica contains the Salus Populi Romani "Protectress of the Roman People" an ancient miraculous image of the Madonna and Infant Jesus composed in the Byzantine style. The image is also known as the Madonna Santa Maria ad Nives. Salus Populi Romana [Salvation of the Roman People] is the title of this famous painting and it is rightly named because for centuries the people of Rome have prayed before it in times of famine, war and national crisis.

The Protectress of the Roman People has saved Rome from numerous afflictions and dangers throughout the city's history. Many popes and saints have been profoundly devoted to Salus Populi Romani - Madonna Santa Maria ad Nives— Our Lady of the Snows.

Far from Rome, in Belleville, Illinois, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate built a shrine to Our Lady of the Snows. The Oblates have missions in Alaska and Canada.

THE BASILICA TODAY

The present-day church is one of the largest basilicas in the world and its Patronal Festival is held on August 5 in remembrance of the miracle of the snow. During this celebration hundreds of white rose petals are showered from the dome of the chapel.



Not to be missed are the thirteenth-century mosaics on biblical themes and the frescoes by Reni and Della Porta. There is an imposing Romanesque bell tower which was erected in 1377.

SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE HAS A FURTHER CLAIM TO FAME

In the seventh century a relic was brought from Bethlehem and traditionally venerated as the manger in which the Christ Child was laid at the first Christmas. And so another name for the great basilica is St. Mary of the Crib.

One of the most spectacular sights which meets today's pilgrim is the triumphal arch which extends to almost 66 feet. It is decorated in four horizontal sections.

In the middle at the top God's throne is set in a circle, with St. Peter and St. Paul on either side.

Above this mosaic are the symbols of the four Gospel writers.