
Jakarta. The upcoming visit of Pope Francis in Cliff's words: "We are learning the Salve Regina"

About 800 volunteers (all between 18 and 30 years old from different parishes in the diocese of Jakarta and the surrounding areas) are involved in the preparations for the visit of the Holy Father, who has just arrived in Indonesia. It seems that the whole city has been mobilised to welcome Francis, alongside the resources mobilized by the Catholic Church. The Pope travelled to the Apostolic Nunciature from Jakarta's "Soekarno-Hatta" International Airport on Tuesday morning.



(in the photo), 26, a volunteer at the St Lawrence parish in

Tangerang, said: "The people who greeted him as he passed by were ecstatic! A large crowd spilled out into the streets to greet and thank the Pope, even though it was office hours (and people rarely leave their workplaces here!)," said Cliff. The main street, Jalan Sudirman, "was packed with people who flocked in on foot, on scooters and by car, celebrating like it was one big party. The Vatican and Indonesian national flags lined the streets, but beyond the formal decorations, the welcome and joy of ordinary people shone through." The young man, a recent graduate in clinical psychology, a practising Catholic and, like many of his peers, a big supporter of Pope Francis, is one of the volunteers who will accompany the Pope on his travels tomorrow and the day after, especially to the Gelora Bung Karno stadium for Holy Mass. "There are about 800 of us," he said, "and our job, together with the other organisers, is to welcome nearly 90,000 Catholics expected to arrive at the stadium, and to take care of the reception and organisational aspects there and elsewhere. The aim is to contribute to the enjoyment of the long-awaited apostolic visit," he remarked.



In addition to the flags and photos displayed along the main streets, banners and large pictures of the Pope have been affixed both inside and outside the grounds of the Catholic University of Jakarta. In the afternoon of 4 September, following institutional meetings with public authorities, the Pope will meet the young people of Scholas Occurrentes at the “Grha Pemuda” Youth House. This international youth movement is a networking organisation that aims to empower young people to become agents of change in their local communities. For several weeks now, parishioners throughout Jakarta have been learning to sing the Salve Regina (Hail, Holy Queen prayer), which will be recited and set to music during the celebration of the "Great Mass" on 5 September. “Everyone here has been learning it by heart, which is very important for us; we are also learning some words of welcome in Italian for Francis”, says Tedyanto. “We expect the Pope's address to the Christian community to inspire greater brotherhood and unity. We are all sisters and brothers, all of us,” says Cliff. “Indonesia is a huge multi-religious country, 87 per cent of the population is Muslim. But the one thing we lack is the realisation that we need greater tolerance and greater integration.” **editorial staff, Popoli e Missione*

Ilaria De Bonis*