POPE INAUGURATES MARIAN YEAR

Pius 12th made one of his rare appearances in the centre of Rome when, with his entourage, he drove to the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. On the way His Holiness paused at the Piazza di Spagna. Cardinal Micara, Vicar of Rome, conducted him to the statue of the Immaculate Conception, where the Pope knelt in prayer. On this day the Pontiff inaugurated the first Marian Year, marking the centenary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, originally proclaimed by Pius 9th. At the Basilica itself thousands gathered for a papal blessing after the ceremony. It was a memorable day for Roman Catholicism throughout the world.