



(ZENIT, Rome, September 30, 2016).- This morning, Pope Francis traveled to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore to pray for the success of his 16th Apostolic Visit abroad to the nations of Georgia and Azerbaijan, Sept. 30-Oct.2. The Holy Father almost always visits Rome's Marian Basilica to pray for Mary's protection and intercession before and after his papal trips.

According to the Holy See Press Office, the Pope prayed before the ancient image of Mary, Salus Populi Romani, and invoked the Virgin Mary's protection on his travels and upon the people he will visit in the two countries this weekend.

After the visit, Pope Francis, his papal entourage, and journalists boarded the Alitalia plane at Rome's Fiumicino Airport, and the Pontiff has already kicked off his first day in Georgia.