



# The Holy See

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**LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO CARDINAL FIORENZO ANGELINI  
ON THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF HIS EPISCOPAL ORDINATION**

*To my Venerable Brother  
Cardinal Fiorenzo Angelini*

On 29 July this year, Your Eminence, you will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of your episcopal Ordination, which took place in the Church of Sant'Ignazio in the city of Rome, where you were born on 1 August 1916. This means that three days later, you will also be celebrating your 90th birthday.

On this happy occasion I am very pleased to express my most cordial congratulations to you and to offer you my best wishes, with the assurance of a special remembrance in prayer, as I join in your thanksgiving to the Lord for the many gifts with which he has been pleased to enrich your life and ministry for the edification of the Church in Rome, in Italy and throughout the world.

In this context of grateful praise, I would like to recall, at least briefly, what Divine Providence has granted you to achieve in these 50 years.

When the Holy Father Pius XII of venerable memory appointed you titular Bishop of Messene, you had already been serving for more than 10 years as General Chaplain of the Men's Branch of Catholic Action, and for just a few months, as Delegate for hospitals and medical centres in the Diocese of Rome.

The episcopal dignity further invigorated the zeal that already distinguished you, attested in particular by the construction of the Church of San Leone Magno al Prenestino and the Pius XII "Centro per un Mondo Migliore" on the Via dei Laghi.

Subsequent to your episcopal ordination, you dedicated yourself without respite to health pastoral

care, enabling it to be organized and furthering its organization at the diocesan level, with positive results in Italy and abroad.

Bl. John XXIII appointed you National Chaplain to the Italian Catholic Doctors' Association, which you had founded and which became such a flourishing association that it was able to promote the International Federation of the Catholic Doctors' Association.

In addition to this formative action in the medical sphere was your action in support of the pastoral care of hospital chaplains, and then, your commitment to encouraging scientific research in the field of medicine, whose constant aim was to promote and safeguard the human person.

Your intentions were always perfectly in tune with those of beloved Pope John Paul II, and you were involved in a collaboration that gave birth to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Assistance to Health-Care Workers [today known as the "Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care"], whose presidency the Holy Father entrusted to you.

Under your guidance, this Dicastery was able to foster in the particular Churches scattered throughout the world that privileged attention to the sick in which, in the light of the Gospel teachings, Christians cannot but share.

In this context, you also promoted a series of annual International Conferences at the Vatican on topics of great importance in the health-care sector; and you saw to the publication of the first census of Catholic Health Care Institutions in the World, as well as compiling and publishing the first "Charter of Health-Care Workers".

It was while you were President that the World Day of the Sick was established and plans were made for the Pontifical Academy for Life.

The firm conviction that the defence of life and pastoral attention to human suffering overcome ideological barriers likewise prompted you, Venerable Brother, to pay visits to and to participate in conventions in various nations, in the most varied and difficult political situations, in order to take everywhere the proclamation of the fundamental human and Christian values and to invite everyone to join forces in service to the suffering.

Recognizing this most generous commitment in a sector of fundamental importance, Pope John Paul II created you Cardinal at the Consistory of 28 June 1991.

In more recent years, comforted by this new sign of papal benevolence and in spiritual continuity with a life spent serving human beings, especially those who are suffering, you founded the International Institute for Research on the Face of Christ in collaboration with the Benedictine Congregation of the Sisters Reparatrix of the Holy Face of Our Lord Jesus Christ, thereby

promoting the annual celebration of International Congresses, the 10th of which was celebrated this year.

Thanks to the above-mentioned Religious Congregation, in accordance with the desire formally expressed by its founder, Servant of God Abbot Ildebrando Gregori, your pastoral concern is still expressed through new initiatives, rewarded by precious vocations to the consecrated life and by health-care and educational institutions in Poland, Romania, India and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Recounting God's works means praising him. That is why, Your Eminence, I have wished to recall the intense work you have done and are still doing in the Lord's vineyard in order to give thanks to the Lord and at the same time to recognize the merit of a man who has been able to make himself a docile, wise and zealous instrument of the Lord's divine plan.

I know that I am faithfully interpreting your most heartfelt intentions, Venerable Brother, in addressing every expression of gratitude to the Virgin Most Holy, whom you have always recognized as the inspiration and support of your ministry since your Roman Seminary years, when you learned to call on her with the beautiful invocation, "*Mater mea, fiducia mea*".

May the Virgin's intercession continue to obtain an abundance of heavenly gifts for you, as a pledge of which I impart to you with affection a special Apostolic Blessing that I willingly extend to the Sisters Reparatrix of the Holy Face of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to all your loved ones.

*From the Vatican, 6 July 2006*

**BENEDICTUS PP. XVI**

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