



# The Holy See

---

**LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO CARDINAL ANGELO SODANO  
ON THE 25th ANNIVERSARY  
OF HIS EPISCOPAL ORDINATION**

*To our Venerable Brother Cardinal Angelo Sodano  
Secretary of State*

Because of our almost daily familiarity and our long-standing relationship with you, it seemed appropriate to us to express our heartfelt congratulations for the 25th year since you began your Episcopate. Furthermore, in addition to this pleasant duty, so that our sentiments in your regard may have a clear expression, we want to manifest our thoughts in a more explicit way in writing.

All that you have done so far testifies to that devotion and wisdom which you have always shown since you became a member of the College of Apostles and were designated as Apostolic Nuncio in Chile. Later on we desired to have you closer to serve us with your work when we appointed you Secretary of the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church, enabling you to share in our deliberations and activities. With greater enthusiasm, you entered into all that could be planned and realized for the good of the universal Church, when we named you Pro-Secretary and, then, Secretary of State, welcoming you into the College of Cardinals. Enrolling you in the Order of Cardinal Bishops, we joyfully offered you the title of the suburbicarian diocese of Albano, to which as we know, you are particularly close with your pastoral concern. As time passed, you proceeded to direct your activity and dedication to even more important tasks, justifying the esteem in which we hold you as a most trustworthy sharer and collaborator in manifold offices.

With zeal and competence you have supported our pastoral commitments to the universal Church and our initiatives across the world and we are right to claim that this has been beneficial for the entire Catholic family and for all men of good will. Therefore, not without reason, we recently confirmed you in this office, certain that you would devote yourself to carrying out those tasks, even in the future, with equal coherence and dedication.

We do not think it necessary to express to you with more words our pleasure and our gratitude, that we especially desired to confirm on the observance of the auspicious episcopal commemoration of 15 January. We are also delighted to learn that in this Year of the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, you are proposing to celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving for the Jubilee of your episcopal ministry in the Basilica of St Mary Major, entrusting your episcopal ministry to the Mother of Christ and of the Church. For this reason, with affection, We impart our Apostolic Blessing to you, Venerable Brother, and extend it abundantly to all who are connected with you, by family ties or by common endeavour.

*From the Vatican, on the sixth day of January, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the year 2003, the 25th of our Pontificate.*

JOHN PAUL II