



The Holy See

**LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 75th BIRTHDAY
OF CARDINAL ANGELO SODANO**

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

The observance of your impending birthday, Your Eminence, gives me the welcome opportunity of expressing my congratulations and my cordial best wishes to you. I gladly join you in your gratitude to the Lord for the many gifts he has given you, enabling you, in a variety of responsibilities, to perform valuable service to the Church and, in a special way, to this Apostolic See. I am also happy to express my personal gratitude to you as my closest collaborator for the great help that for years you have given me daily in the exacting mission of Secretary of State.

Although on 23 November you will celebrate your 75th birthday, I wish to ask you to continue in the office you hold, putting your extraordinary gifts at the service of the Pope.

Knowing of your love for the Church and the spirit of obedience which have always inspired your conduct, I trust, venerable Brother, that I will be able to continue to rely on your enlightened collaboration as my Secretary of State, and in this regard I assure you that I will not fail to ask the Lord in prayer to give you all the necessary assistance and support.

As I invoke upon you and your work the protection of the Blessed Virgin, "Gate of Paradise", to whom I know you are deeply devoted, I impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you with fraternal affection, which I willingly extend to your collaborators in the Secretariate of State and to all your loved ones.

From the Vatican, 20 November 2002.

JOHN PAUL II

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