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Eucharistic Concelebration for the 90th birthday of His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals

At 8.00 this morning, in the Pauline Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis presided at a Eucharistic concelebration on the occasion of the ninetieth birthday of His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals.

The following are the words the Holy Father addressed to those present at the end of the Holy Mass:

Words of the Holy Father

Every day we give thanks to the Lord for what He does in our life; but when there are important anniversaries – 25th, 50th, also each decade – this giving of thanks to God is stronger. And in these recurrences the memory of the past journey becomes stronger, and this memory leads us to offer a gift. Memory that is a dimension of life. It is a misfortune to lose the memory of all that God has done for us: “Remember, Israel, remember...”, that deuteronomic dimension of life.

Cardinal Sodano has remembered these years, and every time we remember we find ourselves before a new grace. Memory also of our smallness, our mistakes, even our sins. Saint Paul prided himself on them, because only glory goes to God; we are weak, all of us. And this memory gives us the strength to go on towards another decade. It is a grace of memory. And what the Cardinal did to prepare for this anniversary is offered to us as a gift: the gift of a witness of life that is good for everyone.

Every life is different. Each one of us has his own experience and the Lord takes him on a different path, but there is always the Lord who holds us by the hand, it is He. This is a gift we have received, and we give the gift of the testimony of a life. The Lord knows what the true witness is, the one that is hidden and has done good without appearing. We see in the Cardinal the testimony of a man who has done so much for the Church, in different situations, with joy and with tears. But the testimony that today seems to me perhaps the greatest that he gives us is that of an *ecclesially disciplined* man, and this is a grace for which I thank you, Mr. Cardinal. And I ask that this witness of the ecclesial dimension, in the ecclesial discipline, help us to move forward in our life. Thank you so much, Mr. Cardinal.