



The Holy See

***LETTER OF POPE FRANCIS
TO CARDINAL AGOSTINO VALLINI, VICAR IN ROME
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF PRIESTHOOD
AND OF THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF EPISCOPATE****

*To Our Venerable Brother Cardinal of Holy Roman Church
Agostino Vallini Our Vicar in Rome*

Among the privileges and gifts which the Lord, in his great beneficence, has bestowed upon you, this year we add a twofold reason for rejoicing, since on 13 May you solemnly commemorate the 25th anniversary of your Episcopate, and on 19 July, the 50th anniversary of your ordination to the priesthood. Therefore, your long and faithful service is, for me and for our Church, a clear reason to offer you heartfelt congratulations on the whole of your apostolic career, which has been successfully directed to the good of the Church, and carried out in an excellent manner for such a long time.

Perhaps you cannot turn your thoughts away from those calamitous times when, during childhood, your father was taken from the family and deported to Germany; and at the end of World War II, your mother departed this life. And yet, when the situation seemed to worsen, the Lord gave you a much greater cause for joy and called you to serve him more closely: "Come, Follow me!". In fact you entered the seminary in Naples, where you received an appropriate, integral formative training at the Theological Faculty of Naples. In this City of Rome you then studied and graduated in legal disciplines, which knowledge you subsequently transmitted with care through teaching, without ever neglecting to engage in pastoral work for the benefit of the faithful and to hand on the Gospel to them.

Blessed John Paul II, my Predecessor, appointed you as Auxiliary Bishop of Naples, assigning you the title of the Church of Tortiboli. Then, for five years, the Suburbicarian Church of Albano benefited from your ministry as Shepherd, as well as from your apostolic labours. Then the same Supreme Pontiff appointed you Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura and

Benedict XVI, with opportune decision, enrolled you in the College of Cardinals and, with well founded reason, chose you as Vicar General of the Diocese of Rome.

If then my Predecessors, who have always regarded you as a faithful minister of the Church and numbered you among the members of many Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, are witnesses of your great value and your hard work, I myself, by this Letter, wish publicly to attest to your merits, as I did when I confirmed you as my Vicar General for the Dioceses of Rome and the district.

Furthermore, it is my special desire to thank you for the fact that you were amiably close to me when I began the Petrine Ministry. Your fraternal affection and cordiality were very important to me and have been to me a great help and support. Though having in mind other considerations of great value in your regard, I do not think that there is any need for many words, nor the need to enumerate individually the services you have rendered, to show you my esteem and gratitude, which I desire to confirm especially on the occasion of the jubilee of your priesthood and the silver jubilee of the Episcopate. From the heart, therefore, and to you personally, Venerable Brother, I impart my Apostolic Blessing, which I extend to the Auxiliary Bishops and to our beloved ecclesial Community, while I also ask you to pray for me, that I may effectively fulfil the Petrine ministry.

From the Vatican, 13 April 2014, the second of my Pontificate.

FRANCIS