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Eucharistic Concelebration with the Cardinals present in Rome on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of the Holy Father

At 8.00 this morning, in the Pauline Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis presided at the Eucharistic Concelebration with the Cardinals present in Rome, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his episcopal ordination.

The following is the homily pronounced by the Pope during the Holy Mass:

Homily of the Holy Father

In the first Letter we have heard how the dialogue continues between God and Abraham, that dialogue that begins with that “Go from your country...” (*Gen 12: 1*). And in this continuation of the dialogue, we find three imperatives: “Arise!”, “Look!”, “Hope!”. Three imperatives that mark the road Abraham must travel, and also the way in which he must do so, the inner attitude: arise, look, hope.

“Arise!”. Get up, walk, do not stay still. You have a task, you have a mission and you must fulfil it on the move. Do not stay seated: get up, on your feet. And Abraham begins to walk. On the move, always. And the symbol of this is the tent. The Book of Genesis says that Abraham went forth with a tent, and when he stopped he pitched his tent. But Abraham had made a house for himself, while there was this imperative: “Arise!”. He built only an altar: the only thing. To adore Him, He Who ordered him to get up, to go on the road, with his tent. “Arise!”

“Look!”. The second imperative. “Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west” (*Gen, 13: 14*). Look. Look to the horizon, do not build walls. Always look. And go ahead. And the mysticism [the spirituality] of the horizon is that the more you go ahead, the farther away the horizon it. Look ahead, head forward, walking, but always towards the horizon.

The third imperative is, “Hope!”. There is that beautiful dialogue: “[Lord], you have given me no children, so a

servant in my household will be my heir” – “A son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir”. Hope! (cf. *Gen 15: 3-4*). And this, said to a man who could not have had offspring, due both to his age and to his wife’s barrenness. But he will be “your own flesh and blood”. And your offspring will be “like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted” (*Gen 13: 16*). And a little later: “Look up at the sky and count the stars – if indeed you can count them. ... So shall your offspring be”. And Abraham believed, and the Lord credited to him as righteousness (cf. *Gen 15: 5-6*). In the faith of Abraham there begins that righteousness that [the Apostle] Paul will carry on in his explanation of righteousness.

“Arise! Look! The horizon, no walls, the horizon – hope!” And hope is without walls, it is pure horizon.

But when Abraham was called, he had more or less our age: he was about to retire, to rest... He started at that age. An elderly man, with the burden of old age, that old age that brings pains, illnesses. ... But you, as if you were a youngster, get up, go, go! As if he were a scout: go! Look and hope. And this Word of God is also for us, who are about the same age as Abraham... more or less – there are some young ones here, but the majority are at that age – and to us today the Lord says the same thing: “Get up! Look! Hope!” He tells us that it is not the time to close up our lives, not to bring our history to a close, not to start compiling our history. The Lord tells us that our history is open, still: it is open right up to the end, it is open with a mission. And with these three imperatives He indicates the mission: “Arise! Look! Hope!”.

Some, who does not wish us well say that we are the gerontocracy of the Church. It is an insult. They do not understand what they are saying: we are not geriatrics, we are grandfathers, we are grandfathers. And if we do not feel this, we must ask for the grace to feel it. Grandparents whom our grandchildren look up to. Grandparents who must give a meaning to their life with our experience. Not grandparents wrapped up in the melancholy of our history, but open to give this. And for us, this “arise, look, hope” is called “dreaming”. We are grandfathers called upon to dream and to give our dream to the youth of today: they are in need of it. Because they will take from our dreams the strength to prophesy and to go ahead in their task.

There comes to my mind that passage from the Gospel of Luke (2: 21-38), Simeon and Anna: two grandparents, but how much capacity for dreaming they had, those two! And all this dream they told to St. Joseph, to Our Lady, to the people... And Anna went around chatting here and there, and said, “It is He! It is He!”, and she told the dream of His life. And this is what the Lord asks of us today: not to close ourselves up, but to give the best of ourselves: they expect this from our experience, from our positive dreams, to carry ahead the prophecy and the work.

I ask the Lord for all of us that He give us this grace. Also for those who have not yet become grandfathers: let us see the president [of bishops] of Brazil, he is a youngster... but he will get there! The grace of being grandfathers, the grace of dreaming, of giving that dream to our young people: they need it.

[At the end of the Mass, before the blessing]

I wish to thank all of you for the words addressed to me by Cardinal Sodano, the dean, with the new vice-dean who is next to him – best wishes! I thank you for this prayer together on this anniversary, asking for forgiveness for my sins, and for perseverance in faith, in hope, in charity. I thank you very much for this fraternal company and I ask the Lord to bless you and accompany you on the road of service to the Church. Many thanks!
