

1st message of the new president of FIAMC, John Lee

1 June 2014

"Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I would like to thank all of you for it is indeed a great honor to be elected as the President of FIAMC. Thank you for your trust in me but I feel totally inadequate for the task in hand. However I am comforted by the thought that Jesus chose an ignorant fisherman rather than a learned rabbi to lead the Church. The phrase "Be not afraid" which Pope John Paul uttered at his election to the papacy echo in my mind alleviating some of my apprehension. The role of FIAMC in today increasingly secular society is becoming more and more important. We, the Catholic doctors are probably one of the last line of defence against the strident anti-family and antilife forces, or what St Pope John Paul II called the "Culture of Death" which he prophesied would afflict society.

Perhaps it is providential that I should bring my term of office with a pilgrimage to Turkey in the footsteps of St. Paul the indefatigable missionary. I promise to pray for each and every one of you and in return I hope that you will pray for me and all the officials of FIAMC.

I am grateful to Dr Jose Simon, the immediate Past President and the Secretary General Dr Ermanno Pavesi for agreeing to assume most of the ceremonial functions especially in Rome which I would find difficulty attending because of the geographical distance and language barriers.

This would free me to concentrate on what I consider to be the most important task facing FIAMC which is to continue developing FIAMC into a truly international family and to help individual especially the younger members and medical students grow spiritually and be formed as Catholic doctors. I have established a committee to be lead by one of the pillars of FIAMC Dr Kevin Murrell comprising of young doctors from every continent. The committee has already met and have thrown up several interesting suggestions. The Asian Federation at its EXCO meeting at the 24th FIAMC Congress has also enthusiastically embraced the formation of the younger doctors and is considering organizing a parallel Congress for younger members and medical students. I have also discussed with Dr Robert Walley the institutionalization of Matercare International as the obstetric and gynaecological wing of FIAMC and tasked him to set up a committee to crystallize how FIAMC as an organization can promote motherhood and protect life from the very beginning. Together with Dr Elvis Seman and Dr Chazan he has promised to submit his recommendations soon. In the meantime to demonstrated your support for the dignity of human life I urged every one of you to sign the Declaration of Faith which can be found on the Matercare website (www.matercare.org).

This important document declares our belief that life begins from the moment of conception. At a meeting of the Presidency with Dr Jose Simon, we have also agreed to set up a Bioethics Committee which will invite experts on various issues like contraception, lesbian gay rights, abortion to set up task for to develop position papers and gather supporting studies so that any member organisations facing these issues to use as resource material. We will also be setting up a Missions Committee to support the development of mission work as an expression of our Faith in Action

The Presidency will also work to expand the membership of FIAMC from its present membership of 78 countries. At present some EXCO members are tasked with developing Catholic Medical Guilds in countries like Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. All these projects will necessitate upgrading of communications between member organisations and FIAMC through the social media like internet, face book, blog sites etc.

The task of developing FIAMC as an effective international voice for the Church cannot be the responsibility of the FIAMC EXCO alone and is the duty of every Catholic doctor. No contribution is too small or meaningless. As blessed Mother Teresa said, "we may feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean but the ocean will be less because of that missing drop". If you wish to contribute in any role or have any ideas or suggestions please write in to the FIAMC secretariat. I promise you that we will take your offer of help and suggestions seriously. I implore each one of you to be the salt of the earth and not to just file away the resolutions of the Manila Congress until we meet again in 4 years time. I would like to thank the previous EXCO especially Dr Jose for their services to FIAMC and their continued guidance. A special note of thanks to Cardinal Oswald Gracias for making the tremendous effort inspite of his busy schedule to spend time with us and for his support of FIAMC. We are inspired by the encouragement from our beloved Pope Francis in his message to us on the occasion of the 24th FIAMC Congress. I would also like to thank the organizers of the Manila Congress for fantastic job which they have done at short notice and their warm hospitality. I don't think that any of the participants will forget this Congress. Most importantly I would like to thank God our almighty Father for all His providence and pray for His continuous blessing upon all of you. May our blessed Mother Mary protect you and the Holy Spirit guide you

in your effort to be a true Catholic Physician.

Thank you and God bless.

John Lee”