

Four years presidency Vincenzo Defilippis

25 September 2021

Report for the FEAMC General Assembly

25 September 2021, Rome

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

Welcome to Rome! We have all had a very difficult year with the pandemic. It was not easy to continue the religious and associative activity. We as doctors, everywhere in Europe and around the world, have been on the frontline in assisting Covid19 patients. We have helped to heal and we have accompanied the incurably sick toward a peaceful death, as much as we were able to.

Despite the difficulties, we managed to keep our Bureaus in videochat, to meet in order to comfort each other and to listen to the wise thoughts of Msgr. Suaudeau and Msgr. Paglia. We lived with concern, the illness of our friend Marko Simec, who is now recovering. We supported Dermott Kearney throughout his fascinating and courageous testimony in England. We got our website up and running again due to the great help of our friend Frans van Ittersum: thank you. We wrote emails, exchanged phone calls with many of you: our friendship has never stopped.

I would like to briefly recall the Bureaus held before the pandemic and thank the friends who organized them: first of all I thank the Portuguese friends for the splendid Porto Congress that took place from September 28th to October 1st 2016 (a reminder of gratitude to the Lord for having gifted us with the Bishop of Porto, who died prematurely on September 17th, 2017, H.E. Msgr. António Francisco dos Santos, who welcomed us and accompanied us with joy and affection); I would like to remember those who participated from July 7th to 9th 2017 in the Rome Bureau and in the General Assembly of October 27th and 29th 2017, with the intervention of Cardinal Edoardo Menichelli; I thank the Croatian friends for the extraordinary FIAMC and FEAMC Congress in Zagreb from May 31st to June 3rd, 2018 (special thanks to Archbishop Card. Josip Bozanic); my mind wanders with gratitude to our friends of the Ukraine for their great organization of their Bureau, which was set within both an academic and ecumenical dimension in Lviv from October 18th to 21st 2018 (a big thank you to Metropolitan Archbishop H.E. Msgr. Mieczysław Mokrzycki for the extraordinary and warm welcome); I have to thank with particular remembrance, my friend Marko Simec and the friends of Slovenia for their accurate and timely organization of the Ljubljana Bureau from March 14th to the 16th 2019- full of cultural meetings of great interest; a big thank you to Bernard Ars and to FIAMC for the consecration event of the Sacred Heart of doctors, who met from all parts of the world at the Vatican from June 21st to 23rd 2019- and for the beautiful and profound meeting with Pope Francis; thanks also to Francois Blin and his French friends for the organization of the Paris Bureau (at the Sanctuary of the Sacred Heart) on migration and poverty in Europe from October 7th to 10th 2019, which saw the participation of a delegation from Albanian doctors accompanied by HE Mons. Simon Kulli, for the first time.

I still remember our online meetings to recite the Holy Rosary of Loreto on May 30th, 2020 (I thank my friend Oliviero Gorrieri for the organization and HE Mons. Fabio Dal Cin), the Bureau of December 19th, 2020 with the exchange of greetings, the video connection with Lourdes of February 13th, 2021, The Bureau of March 26th, 2021 with the intervention of HE Monsignor Vincenzo Paglia and the last Bureau of June 30th, 2021.

I may have forgotten something and I beg you to forgive me, but it is my wish to relay my gratitude to all of you for what we have been able to do in these recent years in the service of the Church and of our Catholic medical associations.

Now, however, we have to face new challenges. We must resume the dialogue with the institutions of the European Union. Strengthen our collaboration with the institutions of the Holy See (Pontifical Academy for Life; the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development; the Conference of European Churches). We must awaken the German association and the Maltese association. We must give a fresh definitive start to the Albanian association and try to create new Catholic medical associations in European countries where there are none. We need to study the crisis of historical medical associations in some European countries: this in order to understand what needs to be done to make our associations vital, attractive, strong and credible again. We have a long path to follow under the guidance of the Lord. We, together and in harmony, in the service of the Church and of the Pope and with the assistance of the Lord, can contribute greatly in making the Gospel become part of daily life in our beloved Europe, among doctors and at the service of the sick.

The role of Catholic doctors is to promote and defend human life always and everywhere, from conception to

death, to combat any offense to human dignity, to ensure care for the sick and closeness to the poor, to be a witness of fidelity to the Gospel every day, through determination and within any means.

I know of no other roles for Catholic doctors: we are not women and men of power, but of service; we are not women and men of ambiguity, but of truth; we are not women and men who deny science, but trained and wise scientists; we are not women and men of fear, but of courage; we are not women and men closed to the world, but promoters of dialogue and confrontation with everyone.

This is what the Church wants, what the Pope invites us to be, and what the Gospel teaches us.

In closing, a special thanks goes to Msgr Jacques Suaudeau: he has always been close to me and has always known how to advise me well. Knowing him in poor health saddens me greatly. I hope that Msgr Suaudeau will recover soon and will be able to resume the path of service to the FEAMC and the FIAMC with us.

A heartfelt thanks to Alexandre Lauretano Santos for having ensured the secretarial activities, to Niklaus Waldis for taking care of the FEAMC budget and to the vice presidents for their precious collaboration. Finally, I thank Francois Blin, Maria Josè Simon Castelvi, Ermanno Pavesi and Jozef Glasa for their precious advice and you delegates for your friendship and trust.

Some of you and the national presidency of the AMCI have asked me to continue in my service as President of the FEAMC. If you believe in my ability to continue doing this service well, I am willing, aided by your help and that of the Lord.

Whatever you may decide, I thank you for the gift of your friendship, cooperation and patience. God bless you, your families and your associations. Thanks!

Vincenzo Defilippis