

Postojna, Slovenia: Meeting of Croatian and Slovenian Catholic Physicians

30 May 2026

On Saturday, 30 May 2026, members of the Croatian Catholic Medical Association (CroCMA) from Zagreb made a pilgrimage to Postojna, Slovenia, where they met with colleagues from the Slovenian Catholic Medical Association, strengthening professional and spiritual ties between the two organizations.

The gathering was organized by the “Branimir Richter” Branch of CroCMA from Zagreb as part of its regular spring pilgrimage series, named „So Close, Yet So Far Away“. The initiative aims to introduce members to neighboring regions and communities that, despite their geographical proximity to Zagreb, are often overlooked and rarely visited.

The Croatian delegation was led by **Prof. Rok Čivljak**, President of CroCMA and President of the European Federation of Catholic Medical Associations (FEAMC), together with **Dr. Ivan Barišić**, President of the Zagreb Branch of CroCMA. The group also included **Slavica Janković**, President of the Croatian Catholic Association of Nurses and Medical Technicians.

Upon their arrival in Postojna, the Croatian guests were warmly welcomed by **Dr. Marko Šimenc** and **Dr. Timotej Mikuljan Pollandt**, Slovenian representatives on the FEAMC Board.



The Croatian and Slovenian delegations after mass.

The gathering began with Holy Mass in the Parish Church of St. Stephen in Postojna, celebrated by **Rev. Anže Cunk**, Doctor of Theology, Clinical Pastoral Assistant at the University Clinical Centre in Ljubljana. In his homily, Rev. Cunk thanked healthcare professionals for their gift of closeness and care for the sick and the vulnerable. He pointed them to the example of Jesus Christ, the Physician of all physicians, and also encouraged them to follow the example of Saints Cosmas and Damian, the patron saints of physicians and pharmacists, who treated both the rich and the poor, free of charge. He further mentioned the example of the remarkable recovery of a ten-year-old boy for whom he had cared while the child was hospitalized in Ljubljana. Through his spiritual care for the boy and his mother, he helped them feel accepted and not abandoned. After the boy's recovery, Rev. Cunk received a moving letter of gratitude from the boy's mother. At the end of his homily, Rev. Cunk called upon Croatian and Slovenian Catholic physicians to remain grateful to God for the gift of participating in the ministry of healing and caring for those in need, and also to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, as Health of the Sick, grants us the graces we need.

During the Mass, passages from Sacred Scripture were read in Slovenian by **Prof. Marija Leskovec** from Ljubljana, and in Croatian by **Prof. Čivljak** and **s. Slavica Janković**.

After the liturgical celebration, the participants visited several of Slovenia's most renowned cultural and natural landmarks. The programme included a tour of Predjama Castle, the largest cave castle in the world, and the Postojna Cave system, famous for its magnificent underground formations and rich biodiversity.

The meeting concluded with an exchange of gifts. On behalf of the Croatian delegation, Dr. Ivan Barišić presented the hosts with a painting „Our Lady of the Stone Gate“, the patroness of Zagreb, whose feast is celebrated on 31 May.



The meeting provided an opportunity for participants to exchange experiences, discuss common challenges facing healthcare professionals, and reaffirm the importance of Christian values in medical practice and patient care. The encounter further strengthened the longstanding friendship and cooperation between Croatian and Slovenian Catholic healthcare professionals, while highlighting the role of international collaboration within the broader European community of Catholic medical associations.

Text: *Rok Čivljak*

Photos: *Stjepan Katić*