

## On the theme of the 25<sup>th</sup> Congress of FIAMC in Zagreb, Croatia, in 2018

Dear Members of FIAMC ExCo

As you may know, I was assigned by Dr. Lee to head up the committee to finalize the theme of the 2018 Congress in Zagreb. After consultation with other members and with the Croatian delegation, we have agreed on the following title:

"Sanctity of Life and the Medical Profession: From *Humanae Vitae* to *Laudato Si*"

I believe this is broad enough to cover almost any topic relevant to the practice of medicine in modern times by Catholic physicians. This is especially important since some Federations do not have the funds to sponsor speakers, yet have some excellent speakers on specific subjects who are willing to travel at their own expense. For those speakers, it is difficult to assign a specific title to their talk, but rather they will present the topic from their own area of expertise. This theme will allow a broad range of topics.

There was significant interest among the representatives of ExCo to explore the human life issues discussed in the encyclical *Laudato Si*, even though most people associate it with its environmental theme.

However, 2018 is the 50th Anniversary of "*Humanae Vitae*", which is the most important encyclical relating to the sanctity of human life, and includes Pope Paul VI's prophetic vision of the "slippery slope" resulting from the loss of respect for human life, especially for life at its earliest and terminal stages (see the attached link to an excellent article about physician assisted suicide)

Thus, it would be inappropriate to limit the topics to *Laudato Si* without including *Humanae Vitae* at its 50th anniversary, especially since the predictions of Pope Pius VI have materialized in front of our eyes: Besides PAS, we have the degradation of marriage, the wanton destruction of embryonic life, and the disastrous misuse of the notion of "autonomy" to corrupt the true meaning of the "sanctity of life" and the role of the medical profession as a guardian of this sanctity -- thus, "choice" has replaced "sanctity", and the term "human dignity" has been completely perverted by slogans such as "death with dignity".

Emphasizing "sanctity of life" instead of simply using the term "human dignity" allows better clarity of the Catholic teaching about life in all of its stages of development, even from pre-conception (the true meaning and indissolubility of marriage, natural family planning, infertility, etc), through early stages -- abortion -- chemical and surgical, freezing of embryos and cloning -- to life's natural end -- including euthanasia, medically assisted suicide, and the "end of life" heresies infiltrating into Catholic health care which deny the possibility of suffering after death and thus justify withholding even "ordinary" care in terminal cases, and by mis-applying the principle of "double effect" through protocols which involve overdosing of morphine in order to hasten death -- a practice which Pope

Francis has called "stealth euthanasia")

Broadening the theme by providing a range "... from *Humanae Vitae* to *Laudato Si*" allows the reference to other encyclicals in between, such as "Gospel of Life" by Saint Pope John Paul II" -- who certainly should not be left out of this kind of discussion (*Theology of the Body*, etc.)

Also, the "tension" between the sanctity of life and the extent of patient autonomy raises the issued of physician's conscience rights and the relationship of medical ethics to centralized, government controlled health care with it's dangers of selective rationing and effect on the patient-physicia relationship through mandates I believe this theme will be acceptable to all. I would appreciate any comments or suggestions from the members of the FIAMC Executive Committee.

Yours in Christ,  
George Isajiw, M.D., K.M.

P.S. Please note following link the Wall Street Journal editorial about PAS:

"The expansion of euthanasia is a grave peril to the disabled and vulnerable"