



EUROPE/FRANCE - "Catholic doctors are able to represent the authentic image of how to offer care and hope": 23rd World Congress of the International Federation of Associations of Catholic Doctors

Lourdes (Agenzia Fides) - The town of Lourdes is hosting the 23rd World Congress and General Assembly of the International Federation of Associations of Catholic Doctors (FIAMC or Fédération Internationale des Associations Médicales Catholiques"), on the theme "Medicine and Faith". Sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, the Congress-pilgrimage is reflecting on the theme "Our Faith as Doctors". For the first time this event has brought thousands of doctors from all over the world to Lourdes. In the opening address, Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, President Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Health Workers, recalled that the Charter of Health Workers, states "pastoral care of the sick consists of spiritual and religious assistance and this is a fundamental right of every sick person and a duty of the Church". Again quoting the Charter, issued in 1995 by the Pontifical Council, Archbishop Zimowski said because of the "necessary interaction between physical, psychic and spiritual dimension of the person and because of the duty to bear witness to one's faith, the health-care worker is bound to create the conditions to ensure that religious assistance is given to anyone who explicitly or implicitly demands it". The President also mentioned the figure and thought of certain doctors who, worked to protect life and rejecting speculative and/or superficial behaviour, walked the path of holiness or in any case of witness to what it means to be 'authentic' Catholic doctors. These persons include Saint Giuseppe Moscati and Saint Riccardo Pampuri, O.H, Saint Gianna Beretta Molla and Prof. Jérôme Lejeune. Because "Catholic doctors - the Archbishop concluded - are able to represent the authentic image of care and hope". The "mission" of FIAMC is to safeguard, protect and promote human life in all the different cultures. In this context, individual action is not sufficient. The Federation comprises circa 60 national associations of Catholic doctors from all over the world, subdivided in 6 regions: Africa, Asia (AFCMA), Australia and New Zealand, Europe (FEAMC), North America, Latin America (FAMCLAM). (AP) (7/5/2010 Agenzia Fides)