

Pope Francis, thank you for your presence at our General Assembly on Public Health in Global Perspective.

We are still in the midst of the pandemic, albeit in different ways in different countries. You urged everyone to learn lessons from it. I must tell you that the Academy has tried to do so, and we have learned two lessons in particular. The first is about the interconnectedness of all peoples. Who would have thought before the pandemic that there could be a link between Wuhan, the big Chinese city, and Codogno, a small town in Lombardy? An invisible virus has brought us all to our knees. Hence the second lesson: we are all fragile, no one excluded, the human family and creation itself.

So, health can only be public and for all: either it is global or it is not. No one can save themselves on their own. It would be sad, indeed very serious, not to understand this. I am pleased and also proud to present to you today a small group of scientists who have lived intensely this time of struggle against the pandemic, each in their own discipline. Together, as the Pontifical Academy, we have tried to draw attention to those most affected by the pandemic: the elderly, the disabled, the refugees, the children. We are aware that health will be global only if it starts with them. Public health does not tolerate separations and particularities: it is a matter of closeness, of global fraternity.

Sometimes we believers have forgotten that Jesus Himself presented Himself as a doctor and that He gave us his own power to heal *every kind of sickness and infirmity among the people* (Mt 4:25). You, indeed, from the very beginning of your pontificate have presented the Church as a field hospital. Today, that field has expanded to the whole world, indeed to creation itself. Hence the urgency for believers to broaden their listening in order to hear the groans of the Spirit and to hasten to care for the most fragile, with the awareness that no one is to be abandoned.

We already have your two encyclicals, *Laudato si*, on creation, and *Fratelli tutti*, on the human. They are two great windows that offer to everybody - believers and non-believers - a vision of the world to come. Today too we await your word that spurs us on in our work and your blessing that sustains us in creativity.

On behalf of those present and others who follow us from afar, we want to express you, Pope Francis, our sympathy and assure you of our prayers. Thank you.

(Official Text: Italian; translation by Leonardo Stefanucci, revised by Fabrizio Mastrofini)