



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE SYMPOSIUM PROMOTED BY THE  
"SOMOS COMMUNITY CARE" ORGANIZATION**

*Paul VI Audience Hall  
Friday, 20 September 2019*

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**[Multimedia]**

*Dear brothers and sisters:*

I welcome all of you who are participating in the Symposium on the theme: “The Immigrant Family and its healthcare needs” organized by Somos Community Care. It is a theme that is dear to my heart and which challenges our conscience.

For several years now, in New York City, you have dedicated yourselves to the assistance and healthcare of those who live on the margins of society, in situations of poverty and hunger. In this way you spread the culture of encounter, “where no one is discarded or pigeonholed, but all are sought out, because all are needed to reveal the Lord’s face” ([Homily, Bucarest, 31 May 2019](#)). Your organization is distinguished by the relationship of empathy and trust that it succeeds in establishing with the sick and their families, sharing their lives and becoming closer to their culture and language, in order to foster human relations.

The personal engagement you have with those you care for is praiseworthy. It is an attitude that must be encouraged in a society that tends to develop within itself an “extreme individualism which, combined with a utilitarian mentality [produces] a ‘globalization of indifference’”. In this scenario ... anyone who does not fall within the accepted norms of physical, mental and social well-being is at risk of marginalization and exclusion” ([Message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2019](#)). Your daily commitment is aimed at contrasting that throwaway culture that dominates many social settings. In doing so, you are the protagonists of an overall care of the person, making available with generosity and altruism a holistic service of doctors and social-sanitary agents, who offer the benefits of preventive medicine, therapies and rehabilitation. This

solidarity with the sick is a real treasure, and is a distinctive sign of a care and authentic health assistance that place the person and their needs at the centre.

Today, healthcare is recognized as a universal human right and as an essential dimension of integral human development. However, at global level, it still remains a right guaranteed to the few and unavailable to many. And it should also be noted that often, where assistance to the sick is guaranteed, it is dominated by technicality which ends up prevailing over the person, distorting the ultimate meaning of care itself. But this – we must not forget – is “the expression of a profoundly human commitment, assumed and carried out not only as a technical activity, but out of devotion and love for neighbour” (*New Charter for Health Care Workers*, 2016, 4).

Even though not all medical interventions lead to physical healing, healthcare offered with a human heart will always have the capacity to do good to life, in body and spirit. Therefore, the commitment of every healthcare worker to the sick finds its fullest expression, and is also most effective, when it is animated by love. And, through daily gestures, this style makes the culture of care flourish as an essential element of the common good.

Dear brothers and sisters, I exhort you to continue with your important mission at the service of human frailty, and I entrust you to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Consoler of the Afflicted. I assure you of my prayer and blessing, and please do not forget to pray also for me.

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*\*Bulletin of the Holy See Press Office, 20 September 2019*

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