



The Holy See

***VIDEO MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
TO THE PATIENTS AND STAFF
OF THE AGOSTINO GEMELLI HOSPITAL IN ROME***

We have begun the summer period: many leave for a bit of relaxation; vacation is a moment in which we are also able to be in Jesus' company for a longer time, or to reread a few pages of the Gospel, to relax. But summer also becomes an especially difficult time for the elderly and the sick who more often remain alone and for whom the limited services available are difficult to find, most of all in the big cities. In this way, the time for rest is also a time in which the difficulties of life seem to become even worse. Let me extend my thought to all the sick of course but, in particular, to the patients at Gemelli who, on 27 June, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, were expecting me. I know that everything had also been prepared with enthusiasm and passion to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of Rome's University Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic annexed to the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery. Everything was ready; in fact as you could see, my closest colleagues were already at Gemelli, but a few minutes before leaving, a bad headache, which I had had all morning and which I had hoped would pass, worsened and was accompanied by nausea, and so on.... I was not able to go.

I understand the disappointment not only of those in charge but also of all those who had worked with so much effort and enthusiasm. I understand most of all the disappointment of the patients already set to pray together during Holy Mass, whom I would have liked to greet personally.

I really think of you sick people, tended with love and professionalism by Gemelli's medical and paramedical staff: in prayer, cultivate a taste for the matters of God, be witnesses that your strength lies in God alone. You sick persons, who experience the fragility of the body, can witness with strength to people who are nearby, how life's precious resource is the Gospel and the Father's merciful love, not money or power. Indeed, even when a person is, according to worldly logic, important, he cannot add a single day to his own life.

From my heart I also thank all the administrative staff and the thousands of people who came to

Gemelli from the Italian branches of the Catholic University: Milan, Brescia, Piacenza-Cremona. To all of these people I express my personal thanks, and be assured that I know how much dedication and how much passion you put into your work. A cordial greeting to the President of the Toniolo, Cardinal Scola and to the Assistant General of the Catholic University, Bishop Claudio Giuliadori.

Be assured that I was very much looking forward to meeting with you but, as you well know, we are not the masters of our lives and we cannot arrange it at will. We must accept fragility. Cultivate with me the trust that our strength lies in God alone. I entrust you to Mary. Continue to pray for me, as I need it.