

Best wishes to the entire Hospital Family of the Province and Delegations  
(Brothers, Sisters, Chaplains, Co-workers, the Sick, the Poor, and those in Need)

19<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Dear all,

In this radiant season of Christmas, our gaze rests upon the simple yet profound mystery of God becoming a Child. In Him, we recognize that every human life possesses an inestimable dignity—a greatness that no machine, no technology, no progress can ever replicate or replace. Humanity is called to transcendence, to something beyond, which constantly beckons us.

Pope Leo XIV, from his very first message to the holy people of God, has reminded us of the importance of Artificial Intelligence and its risks, emphasizing that it can never replace the human being who welcomes, accompanies, and lovingly cares for others and for themselves. The Holy Father calls everyone—especially those of us working in healthcare—to be “guardians and servants of human life.”

We are well aware of how Artificial Intelligence can be a valuable aid to medicine: it refines diagnoses, supports clinical discernment, and improves therapeutic outcomes. Yet along with these opportunities come risks that concern not only technology, but our humanity itself. The greatest danger is not that machines become too intelligent, but that human beings forget to be.

**The first risk is the dehumanization of care:** when we delegate to machines what belongs to the human heart, the relationship is diminished. Algorithms can calculate, but they cannot console. They process data, but they do not hear the tremble in a voice, they do not perceive the confusion in someone’s eyes, they cannot remain present in the silence of pain.

**The second risk is losing sight of the face of the other:** we may become so accustomed to interacting with systems and procedures that we forget that in front of us stands a person — with a story, a fragility, and an inviolable dignity. It is the temptation, strongly denounced by Pope Leo XIV, to treat machines as interlocutors and human beings as instruments.

**The third risk is reducing the person to data,** to a clinical parameter or a “case” to be optimized. But the human being is not a sum of indicators: the person is mystery, is relationship, is body and soul in search of meaning. It is a face that asks to be heard, a wound that asks for closeness, a fragility that calls for hands — not processors.

This is why technology must remain at the service of humanity, and not the other way around. **Artificial Intelligence can make our mission more human — or more inhuman.**

**The choice is ours.** It challenges our conscience, and the Church invites us to a way of thinking that weaves together science and humanism, precision and compassion.

In our hospital family of Saint John of God, this calling is especially alive, because every day we touch the fragile and precious flesh of the Child Jesus. Our Hospitality is a charism made of relationships, attention, and presence: no machine can replace the responsibility of the caregiver or replicate the quality of the care relationship that defines us.

Today, health is not just about medicine: it is communication, environment, social context, and an aging population. It is a complex ecosystem that calls for a cultural revolution — one capable of placing prevention and shared responsibility back at the center. The Declarations of the 70th General Chapter remind us of this as well.

Tenderness, listening, and the ability to draw near cannot be measured: they belong to our deepest nature and cannot be delegated to an algorithm. Jesus became incarnate to engage in dialogue with us: dialogue and communication remain the privileged path of encounter, especially in illness.

**Every person, especially when suffering, needs a gaze that reaches them, a hand that supports them, a presence that restores trust.** It is this human energy — spiritual, relational, and concrete — that opens the way to healing and restores dignity at every stage of life.

**Our Saint John of God family carries within its DNA a long journey of humanization.** The Founder, as he contemplated the mystery of the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, handed down what he himself had received: a heart capable of mercy for all. This is why we cannot reduce the care relationship to a technical process: “If we entrust machines with the task of caregiving, we will end up reducing ourselves to algorithms as well. The heart of medicine is the relationship — made of time, empathy, and reciprocity.” (John Lane)

This also applies to those who work in administrative roles: behind the numbers, budgets, and paperwork, there are people, stories, and faces that demand respect and dignity.

The patient, and anyone who comes to our doors — especially in our missions in the Philippines and Papua New Guinea — is not an object to optimize, but a face to care for with love and mercy. Our charism of Hospitality, to remain faithful to itself, must always be rooted in relationship. Jesus is born to encounter us — this is the heart of Christmas.

Our apostolic centers are rich in humanity, and we are called to safeguard and pass on the value of Hospitality through concrete gestures: attentive listening, kind words, sincere welcome, integrity of life, and a smile that brings comfort and peace. It is care that goes beyond technique.

Professionalism is essential, but humanity is what makes the difference. It is what opens us to the beauty of the gift of life, to the true joy of Christmas, a joy the world cannot give. Even the Minister of Health reminds us that Artificial Intelligence is both an opportunity and a responsibility. Our task is to combine innovation with ethics, technology with humanity. No algorithm will ever replace the centrality of the authentic relationship between doctor and patient, built on listening, empathy, and presence.

To you, patients: may the Child of Bethlehem bring peace to your hearts, courage in trials, and the assurance that you are never alone. Do not let hope be extinguished: Emmanuel — God with us — walks always by your side.

To you, doctors, nurses, healthcare workers, volunteers, directors, and administrative staff: my heartfelt thanks for the dedication, patience, and tenderness with which you care for our guests. Your service is a reflection of the light of Bethlehem.

Dear all, may this Christmas — in the Jubilee Year of Hope — renew in us the joy of belonging to the great pomegranate of Saint John of God, our hospital family.

May it give us the strength to value and support one another, recognizing in every face the Child who is born to tell us: “God is love, and He loves you.”

Merry Christmas to all of you, in the spirit of peace, hope, and humanity that Jesus comes to bring.

Best wishes,

Fra Luigi Gagliardotto

Provincial Superior