

**Hospital Sisters of St. Francis Jubilee  
Franciscan Motherhouse**

**June 4, 2011  
Springfield, Illinois**

**+Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki  
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

Reverend Fathers, [Deacons,] Sisters, brothers and sisters in Christ, it is a great joy for me to be here with today to celebrate the Jubilees of seven of your Sisters. Together we have come before the Lord with joyful songs and have worshipped him with cries of gladness (cf. Psalm 100:2).

As the Bishop of this Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, I am grateful for your presence here today and for the love and support you have given to these Sisters who today celebrate a great milestone on their pilgrim journey.

Dear Sister Jubilarians, for these many years you have sought to remain close to Jesus Christ, knowing that without him “you can do nothing” (John 15:5). You have clung to him because he first loves you and calls you to himself. To this call of love you have responded so generously and the Lord has blessed you for your fidelity to him.

I thank you, dear Sisters, for the great witness of faith, hope and love you have given us in seeking to remain true to the words of Saint Francis of Assisi that you made your own when you first entered the Hospital

Sisters of St. Francis: “This is what I want, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart.”

Reflecting on the passage you have chosen for us from the First Letter of Saint John, the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical letter *Deus caritas est*, reminded us that “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice of a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (1). Your encounter with Jesus Christ led you here; let us pray that the Lord’s encounter with many young women today will bring them here, as well, to join with you the Second Order of Saint Francis.

As we celebrate today this momentous occasion in your own lives and in the lives of your Community, I congratulate you warmly and upon you I gladly bestow my blessing. I leave you with these words from your Holy Founder as I ask you to continually make them your own: “Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord our God, for up to now we have hardly progressed.”<sup>1</sup>

May God give us this grace. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> In Saint Bonaventure, *The Major Legend*, 14.1. In *Classics of Western Spirituality: Bonaventure: The Soul’s Journey into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis*, Ewert Cousins, trans. (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1978), 315.