

Homily for the Diocesan Health Care Convocation Mass

February 27, 2018

**Saint Viator Chapel
Catholic Pastoral Center
Springfield, Illinois**

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

Deacon Kessler, members of the Curia, esteemed guests, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is good for us to be here during this second week of Lent to celebrate our annual Diocesan Health Care Convocation Mass.

Five years ago today, Pope Benedict XVI delivered an extraordinarily emotional and personal address to nearly 150,000 pilgrims who had gathered in Saint Peter's Square for the final weekly general audience of his pontificate. During the course of this address, our Holy Father reflected on the beginning of his Petrine ministry, on that day on which after being elected Pope, he stepped out onto the balcony, and said that he was a "simple, humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord." Through these words, Benedict XVI directed our attention to what would be at the center of his ministry: the care and building up of the Church through living as a

disciple of our Lord. Then, in his final words to us, he pointed us back to the reality that Christ must be the central focus of our lives, since, without having a personal relationship with our Lord, our lives would lack direction and meaning.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, while we do not have the burden of exercising the papal ministry like Benedict XVI, we too are called to be simple, humble workers in the vineyard of the Lord. We are also called to build up the kingdom of God on earth through our living as Christ's disciples. In fact, our Gospel today calls us to humble service. Just a few moments ago, we heard our Lord speaking to the crowds and to His disciples, warning them of the dangers of seeking attention like the Pharisees who were hypocritically concerned with outward show, but did not put their preaching into practice. Our Lord calls us to a higher standard, telling us, *the greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

Jesus is the supreme example of this way of life. No one has had greater dignity than our Lord nor has anyone ever served others so diligently. This is still the case today: our Lord is always ready to serve us, to help us, and to lift us up from our falls. Given this reality, the question

that we must ask ourselves is: how well do we serve others? Regardless of whether it is in our family, at work, with those to whom we minister, or through anonymous actions for which we will most likely never be thanked, our Lord calls us to do for others as He has done for us.

As we enter more deeply into this Lenten season, it is a good time for us to consider how we are fulfilling our obligation to serve one another humbly, especially in our health care ministry. By conforming our lives to the example that Our Lord has given to us, may our hearts and our spirits be renewed so that we may see the saving power of God.

May God give us this grace. Amen.