

**Homily for the Diocesan Healthcare Convocation Mass  
Feast of Saint Matthias, Apostle**

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

**May 14, 2019**

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

Reverend Fathers, distinguished guests, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is a pleasure to join with you today as we gather for this Diocesan Healthcare Convocation Mass on this Feast of the Apostle, Saint Matthias. Moreover, during this National Hospital Week, it is fitting that that we should come together to give thanks and praise to the Lord for the many blessings that he has bestowed upon us and to pray for those whom you serve in your roles as healthcare professionals here in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

Just a few moments ago we heard in our first reading that, during the days after the Ascension, Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers, about 120 of Jesus' followers. Since Judas had betrayed our Lord, it was necessary, Peter said, to fulfill the scriptural recommendation that another should take his office.

So they nominated two men, one of whom was Matthias. We might ask, though: what qualified Matthias to his place among the twelve? Obviously, he was suited for apostleship by the experience of being with Jesus from His baptism to His ascension. Additionally, he must also have been suited personally, or he would not have been nominated for such a great responsibility.

Saint John Chrysostom wrote in a homily he gave on the Acts of the Apostles, that “one of these must be made a witness along with us of his resurrection. He did not say “a witness of the rest of his actions” but only a witness of the resurrection! That witness would be more believable who could declare that he who ate and drank and was crucified also rose from the dead. He needed to be a witness not of the times before or after that event, and not of the signs and wonders, but only of the resurrection itself.”<sup>1</sup>

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we must not lose sight of the fact that the primary qualification of Matthias was that he was a witness of our Risen Lord. Even though we have not personally seen Our Lord emerge from the tomb, we too are called to be witnesses of His Resurrection, in that Our Lord’s rising from the dead is the primary reason that we follow Jesus as His disciples.

As members of the healthcare community you are afforded many opportunities to serve the people throughout the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois by your work. I know that on a day-to-day basis it is easy to get caught up in all that we have going on and the work that we need to accomplish, but it is important that in the very important work that you do, that you, like Saint Matthias, strive to give witness to the love of our Risen Lord in all that you do. While the majority of your time is spent tending to their physical needs, never lose sight of the fact that each and every person that you care for also has emotional and spiritual needs that may need healing as well. In fact, your caring presence may be just as important to that person as the medical care that you provide.

As we prepare to receive our Lord in Holy Communion, it is my hope that the Lord will give you the grace that you need in your lives to carry out your work in a way that builds up the kingdom of God. May all of those whom you encounter not only see you but through you see the reflection of the love of Our Risen Lord.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> From a homily on the Acts of the Apostles by Saint John Chrysostom, bishop (Hom. 3, 1, 2, 3,: PG 60, 33-36, 38), reproduced in the Office of Readings for the Feast of Saint Matthias.