

**Homily on the Occasion of National Hospital Week
Monday of the Fourth Week of Easter
Memorial of Our Lady of Fatima**

May 13, 2019

**Saint John's Hospital
Springfield Illinois**

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

Reverend Fathers, deacons, consecrated religious, doctors, nurses, administrators, distinguished guests, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is a pleasure to join with you today as we continue to rejoice in the Lord's Resurrection during this Easter season. Today we also celebrate the Memorial of Our Lady of Fatima, recalling the appearance of Our Blessed Mother at Fatima in Portugal in 1917. Moreover, during this National Hospital Week, it is fitting that we should gather 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 here at HSHS Saint John's Hospital.

The theme of this year's National Hospital Week, "Celebrating Hope and Healing," seems particularly appropriate for us to reflect on in the context of this Mass.

In order to assist us with this, I would like to pose a question to you:

Why is it that your patients choose a Catholic hospital for their medical care?

It is surely not simply because you are here; it is surely not simply because of the quality care you provide for them; and it is surely not simply a flip of their coin. Rather, your patients choose this Catholic hospital because you truly embrace the theme of this Hospital Week: you celebrate hope and healing in all that you do. This is because the care that you provide does not simply stop at treating the physical person but also extends to the spiritual life as well.

My dear doctors and nurses, while each of your patients comes to you seeking hope as well as physical healing and restoration, many, perhaps without recognizing it, also come seeking the Lord. Therefore, you who work in this hospital and, indeed, everyone who works and volunteers in any Catholic hospital must have as your primary motivation a desire to help lead souls to Christ, the Divine Physician who indeed gives hope and healing to those who cry out to Him.

So, in your work as you seek to heal the bodies of your patients, you can and should help lead your patients to salvation, to a greater knowledge of the love that has been poured out for us and is given to us at the altar of

the Lord. Therefore, I urge you not to be afraid to express your love for Jesus to your patients! For, it is his love that brings true hope and lasting healing.

To you, dear patients, present with us by closed-circuit television and in spirit at the altar of the Lord, I offer a special greeting. Know that in your illness and pain, the Lord Jesus has not abandoned you. When he humbled himself to take on our humanity, he took on also our weakness and on the Cross, he suffered with us and for us. Now he invites you to join your suffering to his for the redemption of the world. He accompanies you even now. Take comfort in his presence; pour out your soul to him and he will give you peace.

May God give us this grace. Amen.