

Archbishop Lori's Homily: MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital 50th Anniversary

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Sept. 18, 2018

I am delighted to be here today at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital to celebrate Mass with you as you celebrate your 50th anniversary. I warmly greet Bradley Chambers, your President, the Board of Directors, Bishop Madden, Auxiliary Bishop and a member of the Board, and my brother priests who are here in good number. My warm greetings also to the administrators, the medical staff, donors and benefactors, volunteers, advisors, and all who engage in the mission of MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital. Truly, we gather as a family of faith.

50 Years of a Faith-Driven History

The presence of MedStar Good Samaritan hospital is indeed a real blessing to the Archdiocese of Baltimore and to the wider community. I am sure most of you know how this hospital came into being. MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital was established through a generous gift from Catholic and prominent business owner, Thomas J. O'Neill. Upon his death in 1919, Mr. O'Neill's will provided financing for the construction of a private, non-profit hospital. However, it stipulated that the hospital not be named for him. Given Mr. O'Neill's compassion and concern for the sick and the poor, the name "Good Samaritan" was chosen. Even though the hospital was not dedicated until 1968, Thomas O'Neill laid the foundation for this place of compassionate healing. He was a man of great generosity who trusted in God's compassion and mercy and who became his instrument in bringing about a great good for the people of Baltimore.

For five decades now the people of Baltimore remain indebted to Thomas O'Neill as they look to MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital to provide compassionate healthcare

that respects the dignity of every human life. They look to this hospital for its warm and welcoming nature, for its unwavering commitment to its mission and values, for its unconditional love in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, for its commitment to excellence and technological advancement, and for its ability to see the face of God in everyone who enters its doors. These are the reasons why so many have chosen this hospital for fifty years.

Healing and Compassion in Our Midst

In today's Gospel reading from Luke, (the only Gospel in which this particular story appears), Jesus' healing powers were on full display as he brought back to life someone who had died and was already prepared for burial. Certainly, MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital is an accomplished hospital, but I am not sure it can claim to have that same ability to heal! However, we can compare some of what we heard Jesus do to the good work that is done right here. In this passage, Jesus is demonstrating his love and compassion for the suffering, his power to heal the sick, and his respect for the life of all, especially the poor and lowly. Indeed, these are all things that characterize MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital. Allow me to explain.

The scene is particularly moving - a woman, who has already lost her husband, has now lost her only son and the only means of her support. She is on her way to bury him. Jesus Himself is deeply moved at her plight, so he raises this son from the dead and gives him back to his grieving mother, whose joy must have been overwhelming. Our Lord's love and compassion bring to mind how we are called to look around to see whom we can lift up out of the darkness of suffering. The many people who cross the threshold of this hospital are offered a similar love and compassion that Jesus extended to the grieving widow. Your patients are treated with respect and with dignity and with the love of our Savior's heart.

We also heard in the passage that Jesus' mighty deed was met with astonishment as he demonstrated his power to heal and to raise up. Indeed, how grateful so many are for the care and services provided here. They know that they are in the hands of competent medical professionals who have the ability to treat them using the most advanced means available. The awards and accolades heaped upon this hospital and its employees are too many in number to mention. Your facilities are state of the

art, you have some of the best and brightest physicians in the region, and you are on top of the latest advancements in medicine. Indeed, those who choose MedStar Good Samaritan soon realize the quality and excellence of the treatment they receive here.

Finally, in showing compassion on a poor widow and in raising her son from the dead, Jesus demonstrated his respect for all life and for the dignity of the human person. We know that, because we are made in God's image and likeness, every person has an inherent and immeasurable worth and dignity, and that each human life is considered sacred. Espousing these truths, your mission of healing, as a Catholic institution, focuses on the entire person: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. And modeling yourselves on Thomas O'Neill's love for the sick and the poor, you have shown throughout these past 50 years your respect and love for your neighbors as you reach out to the surrounding community. You are dedicated to providing easily accessible, quality health care to the residents of northeast Baltimore, no matter what their social status or economic background might be. You rightly believe that quality care for the individual affects the quality of the entire community.

Conclusion

So let me thank you once again for MedStar Good Samaritan's rich Catholic tradition over these past 50 years. I am most grateful for this institution's commitment to serving the greater community with loving, faith-filled, and compassionate care. May Mary, Help of the Sick, intercede for all of you and obtain for you many blessings and graces from on high so that you may continue to be a healing presence for many, many more years to come.

May God bless you and keep you always in His love.