

**Homily for the Mass for the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists Conference
Main Chapel, Mundelein Seminary
Mundelein, Illinois**

**The Feast of Saint James
July 25, 2018**

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

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ; it is good for us to be here as we celebrate this Mass for the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists Conference. As your Episcopal Moderator, it is a privilege to celebrate this Mass in the Archdiocese of Chicago, where I began my involvement with the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists Conference when I was Vice-Chancellor of the Archdiocese over thirty years ago. It is also especially memorable for me to return to this Main Chapel of Mundelein Seminary, where I was ordained a deacon as well as a priest.

As we celebrate this Mass in conjunction with the Conference of the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists Conference, it is fitting to tell a story about the world-renowned physicist, Albert Einstein, who was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of every passenger. When he came to Einstein and asked for his ticket, Einstein reached in his vest pocket. He couldn't

find his ticket, so he reached in his trouser pockets. It wasn't there. He looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat beside him. He still could not find it.

The conductor said, "Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it." Einstein nodded appreciatively. The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket.

The conductor rushed back and said, "Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry, I know who you are; no problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one." Einstein looked at him and said, "Young man, I too, know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going."¹

Perhaps you can relate to Einstein metaphorically, in that you cannot find your ticket and you have no idea where you are going in life. Or perhaps you could take this story one step further: perhaps you are not even sure who you are in relation to others and to the world.

Knowing who we are and where we are going is integrally linked to one of our deepest needs: the need to belong. We need to know where we belong, that is, we need somewhere where we feel accepted, included,

wanted; somewhere where we fit in; somewhere where we know we are not alone. The need to belong is so much more than just a part of Abraham Maslow's well-known *Hierarchy of Needs*, it is at the core of who we are as human beings.

In fact, people often go to great lengths in order to belong: joining various organizations, participating in team sports, being involved in book clubs and other groups that focus on common interests. While all of these are good things, at times we seem to forget that it is not so much about where we belong; the most important thing is to whom we belong, and that is our Lord. If we take this to heart and allow it to shape who we are as Christian disciples, when we realize that we belong to Christ and He loves us more than we can even begin to comprehend, we must inevitably share that conviction with others whom we encounter in our lives.

The saints, people who knew what it meant to share the love of Christ with those around them, give us an example of how we must live so as to one day be saints as well. Today we celebrate the feast day of one of our Lord's twelve apostles, Saint James the Greater. We can be grateful that we know something about Saint James thanks to the evangelists who wrote about him, his brother John and the other disciples.

My dear brother and sisters in Christ: I encourage you to see your work as diocesan archivists to be in keeping with the mission of those first evangelists, namely, to record events not just to preserve a record of historical facts, but to inspire people to be saints. This does not mean writing only hagiographic accounts of people and events as seen through rose-colored glasses. Indeed, Saint Matthew the Evangelist tells us quite frankly of the ambitions for greatness and places of honor sought by the sons of Zebedee through their mother. The other apostles responded with jealousy. Despite these weaknesses and human shortcomings, these men became saints through the gift of God's grace.

You, too, can record truthfully the shortcomings as well as the achievements of the people and events in our dioceses with the hope that the example of failures repented and lives converted with the help of God's grace may give us all hope for our salvation and the gift of eternal life in the loving presence of God.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

¹ http://www.stltoday.com/suburban-journals/illinois/patti-amsden-rev-billy-graham-s-new-suit/article_0ee93adf-8ecb-5d7b-9997-3eaca972c842.html