



Perhaps Matthias of all people has something to offer on this weekend of lifting up the mothers. Matthias who is often overlooked in the grand scheme of the disciples' ministry. Matthias who has to simply answer the call to action. Matthias who, quite literally, as his story is so told, has to roll with it. After all, the church recognizes that this holiday isn't always the most uplifting for some children of God for a variety of reasons: some whose mothers are no longer with them, some of whom never knew who she was, and other circumstances that the Hallmark cards in the grocery stores cannot quite hit today. Perhaps Matthias of all people has something to offer them, too: recognizing

the often overlooked women who more than managed to serve as motherly figures to others, who answered a call to action to fill voids of love and compassion, who rolled with always changing world circumstances, but never changed in their own steadfast embodiment of Jesus Christ himself.

Oddly enough, today also happens to be a rather special occasion in the history of a certain often overlooked woman, whose impact continues to be felt all over the world. It was on this day just over two hundred years ago that she was born to a rather wealthy family, who tried to push her into the spotlight amongst the most elite circles. Instead, she gravitated towards those in poverty and those suffering with disease. Much to the dismay of her parents, she craved to become a nurse, a profession that was not looked upon with much favor at the time.

Soon enough, war broke out. And it wasn't just because of the fighting that fatalities ensued, but the unsanitary conditions of the military hospital nearby. It was believed that nearly half of the patients were dying because of rampant infections. And as much as the higher up's did not want to hire women, let alone women nurses, the respective secretary of war had to cave in to reaching out to this leading force in the field, who was used to being overlooked, but, yet again, had to simply answer the call to action, rolling along with doctors who wouldn't treat her and many of her female colleagues with any respect whatsoever. However, for many of those soldiers who desperately feared that their mortality was drawing near, she became a hope-filled motherly figure to those who wondered if they would ever see their own mother again. It was said that even in the middle of the night, she would walk around with a lamp to check in on them.

She may not be the most famous woman in all of history, but Florence Nightengale's impact continues to be felt in a profession that so many of us could, quite simply, not survive without. It was her insistence on attention to sanitation and quality patient care that still shapes the work of nurses who boldly go into hospital and nursing home and rehab center and prison and residential rooms all over the world. They are often overlooked in the grand scheme of the behemoth of the medical enterprise. Nevertheless, they're simply expected to answer the call, and not just when the patient presses the button to get their attention. They're just expected to roll with all the changes in medical charting and rules and regulations and the patients and families who come and go, some of whom might be pleasant, some, not so much. Regardless, they're just supposed to roll with all of it, all the while many of them will have their own motherly duties to take care of when they get home.

Perhaps, Matthias of all people has something to offer to such often overlooked most precious children of God in our midst. This Matthias who, evidently, didn't mind responding to a call to living out the bold death-defying ministry of the Risen Christ. This Matthias who, as his story is so told, just had to roll with the ever-changing circumstances of his own life to show a bit more love and compassion and grace to a world filled with its fair share of unpleasantness, to be sure, but still so loved by the God of it all.

It just so happens that this Risen Lord was often overlooked in the grand scheme of kingly empire behemoths, because he wasn't intimidating or brutal enough. He was far too graceful, far too understanding, far too willing to serve instead of rule with might. This Risen Lord witnessed his fair share of unpleasant behavior, including by some of Matthias' colleagues, and yet responded to the call to show the world just how powerful love can be for us all, powerful enough to roll away a stone of death and guilt and fear and wondering if we're good enough as mothers and fathers and disciples and servants and nurses and teachers and all-around children of God. This Risen Lord insists on rolling all of that away, so that all may know the world-saving grace that cannot be overlooked. And from the very beginning, it has been the women who have played an absolutely pivotal role in revealing the ultimate power of that compassion and mercy and joy meant for us all to experience in this life: from Mary Magdalene to Florence Nightengale to nurses and mothers and countless others still in our midst today. So, for all the faithful women who will never let us forget the Greatest News of all, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed! Amen!