

An archbishop's anniversary: Catholics share personal stories of Baltimore's leader



Archbishop Lori can be seen in his spare time walking around Baltimore with his golden retriever Noble. He is pictured at the 2013 Baltimore St. Patrick's Day Parade. (Tom McCarthy Jr. | CR Staff)

Compiled by Catholic Review Staff

Archbishop William E. Lori was installed as the 16th archbishop of Baltimore on May 16, 2012 at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Homeland. The archbishop, who hails from Louisville, Ky., is the former head of the Diocese of Bridgeport, Conn. He is familiar with the Archdiocese of Baltimore, having earned a master's degree from Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg in 1977. Archbishop Lori has gained renown as the grand chaplain of the Knights of Columbus and as the chairman of the U.S. bishops' Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty.

Here is a chance to get to know Archbishop Lori on a more personal level. Read stories submitted by local Catholics about their encounters with the leader of the archdiocese:

I work at a BWI area hotel. Whenever I worked Saturday evenings I would attend 5 p.m. Mass at St. Philip Neri before reporting to work.

About a week or two after he was named Archbishop, he started to visit parishes and St. Philip was the first on his list. I got to Mass about 10 minutes before it started and just as the archbishop was pulling up. I knew he would be busy being that near to the start of Mass but wanted to greet him. I was going to let a simple hello suffice but he stopped and had a conversation with me.

Here I was worried about his schedule but he took the time to talk with me.

Tony Hall, St. Jane Frances

On Sunday, March 16 I was privileged to attend mass at the Basilica in Baltimore prior to the St. Patrick's Day Shamrock 5k Charm City run. Privileged, as a Baltimore Catholic to not only have my former pastor Monsignor Art Valenzano, of St. John, Westminster, but also the Most Rev. Archbishop Lori.

After Mass, the archbishop not only remained to greet everyone leaving the Basilica,

but also took the time to have a photo taken with those who requested one. I felt so fortunate to have his blessing, have a picture taken with the Most Rev. Archbishop Lori of Baltimore, but then while waiting for the run to begin, saw both Monsignor Art and Archbishop Lori in the crowd. They then stood on the steps of the Basilica, participated in the playing of the Star Spangled Banner and watched the runners take off for the race... how wonderful! How awesome they both took the time for us runners! Speaks volumes for both the archbishop and monsignor as priests of the people and to me, as a Catholic.

Patricia M. Wolfe, St. John, Westminster



Patricia M. Wolfe poses with Archbishop Lori after the St. Patrick's Day Charm City 5K (Patricia M. Wolfe)

No need for a big story. I like him. Met him at St. Rita's Parish. He is personable, nice and, a real, in touch person.

Sandra Kay Harris, St. Rita, Dundalk

Have you ever met an archbishop beyond your confirmation celebration? Privilege and luck would escape many of us. From my youth, I had always been in awe of the amaranth red robes and crosier—imposing is the word I would offer. My encounter with the Most Reverend William E. Lori changed all that.

I met a priest at the Rome airport recently on my way to the Vatican to attend the canonization of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II. From our casual conversation, I learned he was from Baltimore. I knew Baltimore only from having attended finance industry conferences at the Marriott and Oriole games being acquainted with Eddie Murray. So the exchange was informal—small talk. On the canonization, I remember saying that he would have front row seats while I have to grapple for a good view; he laughed. I felt a sense of quietude as we spoke (which should have been a clue—silly me!!!) A few minutes later, a nun approached, kissed his ring and addressed him as bishop. Internalizing the moment, I thought 'could this be him'? I have read about Archbishop Lori and his work with my archbishop, Cardinal Dolan, on the issue of religious liberty and the HHS mandate. I shrunk as I felt like I did not afford him due respect. I was humbled and inspired by his humility. I was honored to cross his path yet saddened at having faltered at matching the face with the name. He waved as we went in different directions. From that outstretched hand I took the blessing of this remarkable man of God.

Angela Esquivel, St. Agnes Parish, Manhattan



Archbishop Lori visits with Baltimore pilgrims at the Santa Maria in Trastevere April 25. Both the archbishop and the pilgrims were in Rome for the canonizations of Sts. John XXIII and John Paul II. (Paul McMullen | CR Staff)

Several months ago our Parish, St. Philip Neri had the blessing to meet Archbishop William Lori as he presided over mass on a Saturday afternoon. We were told that when our Priest, Father Dale Piccarelli, asked the new Archbishop if he would preside over Mass he accepted graciously without any hesitancy.

My wife and I had the opportunity to meet him as he patiently waited outside on the bottom of the steps to greet everyone who wanted to meet him and exchange a few words. He was so pleasant and down to earth. I felt so comfortable speaking with him that I commented to him that Father Dale scored a 4 pointer having him come to our Church. He responded that oh yes, Father Dale is paying me the big bucks. I found him to be a pleasant-natured person.

Within a few minutes when we looked over to see him from our car we saw that he walked over to a Mother and her 2 children to offer assistance. They were holding a sign that stated she had recently lost her job and was seeking donations. Later on we heard that he gave them \$20 and instructions on where and how to get assistance.

Jim O, St. Philip Neri, Linthicum Heights

(This submission has been edited in length but not content)

See also:

Baltimore Catholics with ties to Nigeria outraged by kidnapping of 276 girls
God makes no one struggle with life's challenges alone, pope says