

# Archbishop Lori joins young pilgrims in welcoming World Youth Day Cross, Marian icon

While George Washington and some of the nation's founders didn't always live up to the ideals of their country's founding documents, they created a great country which, in spite of its flaws, still strives to be a place of liberty and justice for all, Archbishop William E. Lori said.

Speaking in the shadow of the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., Aug. 25, the archbishop addressed a throng of young pilgrims that included representatives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore who gathered as part of a nine-day tour of the World Youth Cross and Marian Icon in cities across the U.S. Aug. 19-27.

On the Palm Sunday immediately following each World Youth Day, the cross is transferred from the youth of that year's host country to the youth of the country hosting the next celebration. Because Panama is such a small country, the current tour was expanded to include Central America, the Caribbean, and five U.S. cities: Chicago, Miami, Houston, Washington and Los Angeles.

Washington and other founders helped establish a nation where fundamental freedoms such as freedom of speech and assembly and freedom of religion are guaranteed, not only in laws, but in the Constitution and Bill of Rights, Archbishop Lori said.

"These are among the most basic human freedoms," Archbishop Lori said. "They are given to us not by any government, but by God."

Guaranteeing those freedoms is part of the nation's DNA, he added.

"Our country is far from perfect, but to many it is a beacon of hope and freedom," Archbishop Lori said. "That is one of the reasons why people from all over the world have come here and it is one of the reasons our country needs to have an immigration policy that is both just and compassionate."

He added that the nation “has to be welcoming to all life, especially the unborn, the vulnerable and the frail elderly.”

At the Washington gathering, a procession with the World Youth Day cross began at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, where Panama Archbishop Jose Domingo Ulloa Mendieta welcomed pilgrims to the country for January’s celebration.

Neida Morales, a 19-year-old who traveled to Washington from North Carolina, is planning to go to Panama. She said she is looking forward to “getting closer to God, trying to figure out what’s my purpose in life” while there.

Similarly, Helen Trimble, a member of St. Mary of the Mills Parish in Laurel, said she is “hoping to have a better idea of what I want to do with my life and what my calling is.”

As the throng prepared to process to several monuments along the National Mall, Archbishop Ulloa noted how the people remembered in the memorials helped build the United States.

“These people invite us to be different,” he said. “Christ, always young, is inviting us to leave our mark that makes history in the life of others. Let us be the protagonists of this history.”

As the young people processed down the National Mall, the pain of the sexual abuse crisis in the church was felt heavily. Members of the World Youth Day Cross Leadership Team said they planned to offer the procession “in prayer for the wounded state of Christ’s church, our city, and our world.”

In remarks to the young people, Auxiliary Bishop Roy Campbell Jr. of Washington said, “the cross that each of us bear has been made heavier by the recent terrible revelation of decades of sexual abuse of the people of God.”

He added that survivors of abuse “should not have to suffer by carrying the cross of suffering, humiliation or shame.” He encouraged participants to pray for those victims and to act as “instruments of God’s peace” to prevent future abuse.

Young adults from St. Dominic Parish in Washington were among those who carried

the cross during the procession. The prayer intentions for that part of the journey were for those with disabilities and for those affected by the abuse scandal.

Christiana Gellert, a young adult from the parish, said she was “grateful for the opportunity to do a tiny bit of reparation” for all of the sins committed in the church.

Once the group had processed to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, Bishop Barry Knestout of Richmond, Virginia, reflected on the civil rights leader’s “I Have a Dream” speech, in which he was “speaking of a dream for racial harmony ... a focus on the dignity of human persons and how that dignity should be reflected in all we say and all we do.”

The route also took participants to the Smithsonian Castle, where Auxiliary Bishop Mario Dorsonville of Washington reflected on the cross that immigrants have to bear.

“We can say, ‘I will help you,’” Bishop Dorsonville told the young people, encouraging them to listen to Pope Francis’ call to move from a culture of indifference to a culture of solidarity.

*Contributing to this report were George P. Matysek Jr. of the Catholic Review in Baltimore and Kelly Sankowski of the Catholic Standard in Washington.*

*Also see:*

Archbishop Lori’s remarks at the Pre-World Youth Day Pilgrimage

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