

# Archbishop Lori makes historic visit to Morgan State University

Feb. 26 was a memorable day for a historically black university in northeast Baltimore.

When Archbishop William E. Lori presided over the liturgy in Morgan State University's Memorial Chapel, it marked the first time in the institution's 150-year history that an archbishop of Baltimore had celebrated Mass on campus.

Approximately 70-80 worshippers were in attendance, for the first of what Archbishop Lori hopes will be many more liturgies services held at the historically black college. It was followed by a reception, where attendees met and spoke with the archbishop.

The visit occurred during Black History Month, a point underscored by the archbishop, whose homily noted the history the archdiocese shares with Morgan State University and other communities throughout the city.

"This history contains many stories of courageous and faithful leadership exercised against nearly incalculable odds," Archbishop Lori said. "They are stories of leadership and service that cross denominational lines. They are stories of leadership and service than can help bring us together in these times marked by division and rancor."

Archbishop Lori praised trailblazing leaders, such as Father Charles Uncles, an East Baltimore native who became one of the first black priests ordained in the United States, and Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange, an immigrant who founded both the Oblate Sisters of Providence and St. Frances Academy.

He also mentioned that one of his predecessors, the late Cardinal Lawrence Shehan, received an honorary doctorate from Morgan State in 1963, the same year he attended the March on Washington, a seminal event in the struggle for civil rights.

"He led the fight for open housing in Baltimore, without regard for his own life - and he was threatened on more than occasion because of his stance. ... he labored to make the Catholic Church more relevant and active to a troubled city in a troubled nation."

The archbishop mentioned Cardinal Shehan creating the Archdiocesan Urban Commission in 1966, and making Charles Tildon not just its first chairman, "but the first layman to head a major archdiocesan post."

The archbishop stressed the unifying quality that made those leaders great: the faith they placed in Jesus' words, to "Seek first, the Kingdom of God," knowing that he would resolve the things that worried them.

“God’s will, God’s justice, God’s mission was their top priority,” he said. “From the heart of our loving Savior and in the power of the Holy Spirit, they received wisdom, the insight, the courage, that unlocked their God-given abilities and marshalled them for a noble mission.”

“When they heard Jesus say ‘Do not worry,’ they did not take that to mean that they should not care about what was going on all around them,” Archbishop Lori continued. “It meant that they should believe in God with all their hearts and trust in the Lord and in his word with every fiber of their being.”

Afterward, Archbishop Lori said he was appreciative of the warm welcome he received from the university.

“I felt honored and humbled to offer Mass,” he said. “It was great to share our faith with the community. There is a wonderful and vibrant faith community here. It is important to see the faith that lives on the campus and do anything we can to strengthen it.”

Jada Brown, an MSU sophomore from Prince George’s County who describes herself as non-denominational, usually attends services at the chapel. It was her first time attending a Catholic Mass, and Brown said she enjoyed the message in the archbishop’s homily.

“Him stressing that we have to bring God back to the center of everything really connected with me,” she said. “If we seek him in all that we do, then we can get what we want accomplished.”

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