

# Archbishop Lori offers Mass for Baltimore City police at St. Casimir

Sharing the first and second readings on the Third Sunday of Lent carried added significance for two parishioners of St. Casimir in Canton March 4.

It was the parish's feast day, and Archbishop William E. Lori presided. He did so not just to acknowledge the 15th-century noble from Poland who is equally revered in Lithuania, but to show his appreciation and support of the Baltimore City Police Department.

Their ranks include the aforementioned lectors, Det. Ashley Acord on Exodus 20:1-17 and then Lt. Robert Quick Jr. on 1 Corinthians 1:22-25.

Both are lifelong Baltimoreans who attended Catholic elementary schools on the east side. She went to The Catholic High School of Baltimore; he went to Calvert Hall College High School in Towson.

Of the "Blue Mass," Acord said, "It's heartening. It's nice to see the support."

"Signs of unity are particularly important now," Quick added.

The challenge inherent in their jobs compounded in 2017, when the city recorded a record number of homicides and a corruption scandal in the Gun Trace Task Force was uncovered.

Archbishop Lori was asked about that landscape before Mass.

"It's a very challenging climate," the archbishop said. "It's a great time to get together and pray, and show appreciation for a most demanding calling."

What, the two officers who read were asked, gives them additional hope?

"No matter what," Acord said, "there is always that one person who needs you; you

can make a difference in their life. No matter how many bad encounters we have, there is always that one good encounter.”

“This is the greatest job in the world,” Quick said. “Despite what people say, there is so much good in the world. To be able to help people is very rewarding.”

Their fellow parishioners were out in force in one of the largest churches in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The faithful included many young parents with children, wide-eyed at the regalia displayed by uniformed officers, the Knights of Columbus, the Boy Scouts of America and the Maryland Catholic War Veterans, who helped sponsor the Mass.

“Every day you put your lives on the line to keep the citizens of our city safe, and build bonds of trust,” Archbishop Lori said in his **homily**. “Every day you strive to strengthen your efforts on behalf of us all as you implement necessary reforms and see to it that your ranks are filled with men and women who are worthy of this high calling.

“The fact that we’ve gathered together as a community of faith to pray with you and for you is meant to be a source of comfort and encouragement to you and your colleagues.”

The first reading, in which God delivers the Ten Commandments, fell on particularly open ears.

“As a rule, just laws enacted by civil authority relate in some way to one or more of the Ten Commandments,” the archbishop said. “If every citizen observed most of the Ten Commandments most of the time, our society would be more just and peaceful than it is. Those of you in law enforcement can attest to that.”

Mayor Catherine Pugh and Darryl De Sousa, the new city police commissioner, joined the Mass. It included the distribution of “Ranger Rosaries,” which were blessed by Archbishop Lori.

Gil Barker of the Catholic War Veterans offered the organization’s gratitude, led the reading of “A Police Officer’s Prayer,” and noted that it was “his (Archbishop Lori’s) initiative to have the Mass for police officers.”

“The archbishop told me that he had been wanting to do this for a while,” said Conventual Franciscan Father Dennis Grumsey, pastor of St. Casimir, who added that Archbishop Lori will return to St. Casimir for a similar Mass Sept. 30.

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