

# Catholics, Lutherans unite in prayer at St. Mary's Seminary and University

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore and Bishop William J. Gohl Jr., bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), were joint presiders at a March 11 service at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore marking the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

"Holy Communion: Looking Back and Called Forward" continued the local observance of the anniversary of Martin Luther's publicly challenging doctrines of the Catholic Church Oct. 31, 1517, in Wittenberg, in what is now Germany.

In a joint sermon, Archbishop Lori referenced a recent similar service at St. Ann in Hagerstown; the pilgrimage to Rome of Baltimore faith leaders he led in 2016, which included Bishop Gohl's predecessor, Bishop Wolfgang Hertz Lane; and the 15th annual National Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue, which will be held at St. Mary's Seminary and University April 11-15.

"What gives life and meaning to all dialogues," the archbishop said, "is the genuine friendships that ensue from these meetings. And it is perhaps most especially when we pray together, as we are this evening. This is how hearts and minds are changed, by the grace of God."

Archbishop Lori talked of the Oct. 31, 2016 gathering in Lund, Sweden, that began the commemoration of the 500th anniversary. It included a joint statement from Pope Francis and Bishop Munib Younan, president of the ELCA, which called for prayers "that we may stand together in service, upholding human dignity and rights, especially for the poor, working for justice, and rejecting all forms of violence."

"I am so happy that here in Baltimore, that Lutherans and Catholics continue to do just that," Archbishop Lori said, "standing together and trying as best we can, together, to support all, especially the poor who so yearn to be treated with dignity."

Readings were proclaimed by Bishop Denis J. Madden and the Rev. Eric T. Campbell, assistant to Bishop Gohl and pastor of People's Community Lutheran Church in Baltimore.