

Go and make of all disciples: Hundreds gather at Lay Ecclesial Ministers convocation

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TIMONIUM - At the first Lay Ecclesial Ministers convocation at Church of the Nativity Oct. 2, Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori instructed the few hundred lay ministers gathered to be and help form "intentional" disciples.

"We need more coworkers called intentional disciples," the archbishop said. "To form intentional disciples means walking with those we serve ... exactly what Pope Francis is urging us to do."

Lay ecclesial ministers - those who serve at schools and in parish ministry - from across the Archdiocese of Baltimore filled Nativity's sanctuary for the morning portion of the convocation, which included Liturgy of the Hours, reflections from the archbishop and a question-and-answer session.

To view a slideshow from the event, navigate the arrows below. If interested in purchasing a photo, please click here.

In his reflection, Archbishop Lori said once the faithful fall in love with God - the overarching priority - then everything in life changes.

He spoke of Pope Francis' "concerted effort" to spread the Gospel with believers and non-believers and how lay ministers must share it in the community.

To proclaim the Gospel, "we need all hands on deck," the archbishop said. "We need to understand how all ministers are necessary. We need to be about the work of forming intentional disciples. Respond to that grace by which we can foster and renew the church's mission of evangelization by forming intentional disciples."

From there, the archbishop said, come vocations to the priesthood and diaconate.

The convocation also included four workshops on topics including "Witnessing to the Gospel in a secularized society" and "Parishes and schools: Instruments of Christian life."

Deacon Curtis Turner, principal of St. Frances Academy in Baltimore, and Victor Pellechia, principal of Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Ellicott City, were

among the presenters.

"I'm excited about the idea of being an intentional disciple," said Jordan Tippet, director of religious education at St. John in Westminster. "The reason that's exciting is because working in a parish you get so involved with the logistics. We want to re-propose the Gospel to the faithful. We want to transform hearts and minds to fall in love with the Lord. You want to allow the Holy Spirit to work through you."

Deacon Lawrence Teixeira, pastoral life director at St. Francis of Assisi in Brunswick and St. Mary's in Petersville, attended the convocation to learn new strategies and ideas to share with his parish.

"I want to see what they're talking about, what they're teaching," Deacon Teixeira said.

"It's nice to network," said Chris Deaver, director of adult faith formation at St. John the Evangelist in Hydes, who called those gathered his peers, "like-minded people in my role in another parish. These people are intentional disciples."

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