

Maryland's new governor begins Inauguration Day in prayer

By George P. Matysek Jr.

gmatysek@CatholicReview.org

Twitter: @ReviewMatysek

ANNAPOLIS – Maryland's newly elected governor and lieutenant governor began Inauguration Day in prayer during an early morning Jan. 21 interfaith service marked by a call for tolerance and unity.

Hundreds of supporters and a variety of religious leaders stood when Gov.-elect Lawrence J. Hogan Jr. and Lt. Gov.-elect Boyd K. Rutherford entered St. Mary Catholic Church, located just steps from the State House. All eyes were focused on the new leaders as they processed up the aisle, shaking hands and offering hugs along the way.

"What a joy it is to gather together today in prayer, to pray for Gov. Hogan and Lt. Gov. Rutherford – for their wives and families," said Archbishop William E. Lori, the first of several faith leaders who offered prayers. "We do so in a show of unity – a show of unity among religions, a show of unity among religious leaders and a show of unity among the civic community."



Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori shares a laugh with student volunteers from St. Mary's High School in Annapolis following a prayer service in honor of Maryland's new governor and lieutenant governor.

(Karen Osborne | Special to the Review)

Deacon Leroy Moore of St. Mary noted that the parish campus was the site of the birth of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence. Archbishop Lori quoted from a prayer written by Baltimore Archbishop John Carroll, a cousin of Charles Carroll and the first Catholic bishop in the United States.

The Carroll prayer invoked God's "powerful protection," to help the governor and other leaders "discharge the duties of their respective stations with honesty and ability."

Rev. Henry Ferry reminded the assembly that Maryland passed the Act of Religious Toleration, which would later influence the passage of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing religious liberty.

"Central to this process was the recognition that all personal beliefs are partial

understandings of God,” Rev. Ferry said. “This required great humility on the part of the leaders.”

Rev. Ferry asserted that “what is true in the theological realm is equally valid in the political arena.”

“The need for mutual respect among those with differing opinions is vital if the democratic process of governments is to succeed,” he said.



Members of St. Mary's Church music ministry sing during the Inaugural Prayer Service Jan. 21.

(Karen Osborne | Special to the Review)

Pastor Harry Jackson of Hope Christian Church in Washington, D.C., jokingly likened Lt. Gov-elect Rutherford to Joseph, the Old Testament hero who faced persecution and encountered the divine through dreams.

“One might say that a black Republican in Maryland certainly is a dreamer and certainly has experienced persecution,” Pastor Jackson said, drawing laughter from the assembly.

The clergyman said he prays Hogan will “move with divine wisdom” and that he and Rutherford “will see the grace and favor of God.”

Alluding to the challenges that lie ahead in leading the state, Rev. Anthony Muse of Ark of Safety Christian Church in Upper Marlboro, told Hogan and Rutherford he was reminded of something his grandmother often said: “If you ever needed the Lord before, you sure do need him now.”

At the end of the one-hour service, Hogan approached the altar for photos with interfaith leaders and students from St. Mary's High School. Before taking his position, the parishioner of Holy Family in Davidsonville bowed his head and made the sign of the cross.

Hogan and Rutherford were to take their oaths of office at noon at the State House. Archbishop Lori will deliver a prayer at the ceremony.

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