

# Pope will bestow palliums in Rome

**By Christopher Gunty**

Each year on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29, the pope bestows on new metropolitan archbishops from around the world a special vestment called a pallium. This year, Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori will be among those who receive the circular band of wool from Pope Benedict XVI.

Two lambs were selected Jan. 21, on the feast of St. Agnes, for the special duty to share their fleece for this cause. They were blessed at the Basilica of St. Agnes in Rome, and then sent to the Convent of St. Cecilia to be kept by the nuns there until they were shorn of their wool on Holy Thursday.

That wool has been woven into a special liturgical garment called a pallium, a circular band with two black stripes and six black crosses. Several have been made so that they may be presented by Pope Benedict XVI to archbishops around the world who have been appointed in the past year to head archdioceses.

The pope also wears a pallium, although the crosses on his are red. The pallium symbolizes the yoking of the archbishop to the ministry of Peter and the pope as his successor. It also symbolizes the archbishop's role of imitating Jesus, the good Shepherd, in tending the flock of faithful entrusted to him. "The pallium becomes a symbol of our love for the shepherd, Christ," Pope Benedict said in his homily at the Mass in 2008, when then-Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien of Baltimore received his pallium. The Lord asks if Simon/Peter loved him, and when Peter professes he does, Jesus tells Peter to "tend my sheep" and then "feed my sheep."

The pallium is worn around the neck and over the chasuble in liturgical celebrations within the archbishop's metropolitan archdiocese. The six crosses on the pallium are believed to symbolize the wounds of Christ at his crucifixion: his hands and feet, the crown of thorns and his pierced side. It also features three pins that symbolize the nails that held him to the cross.



By tradition, the palliums are placed on the tomb of St. Peter the night before the ceremony to connect the service of those who wear them to the first pope. This harkens back to the conversation Jesus had with Simon on the shore of the Sea of Tiberius, in which the Lord renamed him Peter and called him to lead the church. The pallium, along with the crozier that a bishop carries in procession and liturgies, symbolize at their heart that an archbishop is, first and foremost, a shepherd.

Archbishop Lori has already accepted the mantle of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, so the pallium ceremony does not mean a greater responsibility. However, it does acknowledge and reinforce in a deeper way his role as a shepherd for his new flock.

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*To read Gunty's blog from Rome as the archbishop prepares to receive the pallium, [click here](#).*

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