



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2017

CATHOLIC AND LUTHERAN BISHOPS JOIN IN HISTORIC SERVICE COMMEMORATING REFORMATION

On October 31, the Roman Catholic bishops of Wisconsin will join with the bishops of Wisconsin's Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at a service commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. The joint service will be one of reconciliation and witness, focusing on 50 years of sustained and fruitful Lutheran-Catholic dialogue.

Archbishop Jerome ListECKI of Milwaukee, Bishop Robert Morlino of Madison, Bishop David Ricken of Green Bay, Bishop William Callahan of La Crosse, Auxiliary Bishop Jeffrey Haines, Auxiliary Bishop James Schuerman, and Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus Richard Sklba, all of Milwaukee, and the Very Reverend James Tobloski, representing Bishop James Powers of Superior, will lead the service. Joining them will be ELCA leaders Bishop Paul D. Erickson of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, Bishop Mary Stumme Froiland of the South Central Synod of Wisconsin, Bishop Jim Arends of the La Crosse Area Synod, Bishop Rick Hoyme of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and Bishop Gerald Mansholt of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin.

The common prayer will be held one year from the day on which Pope Francis, Lutheran World Federation (LWF) President Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan, and LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Martin Junge presided at a similar service commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. As with that service, Wisconsin's Catholic and Lutheran leaders will sign a statement that acknowledges past conflicts, shared principles of faith, and renewed pledges of commitment.

The upcoming Wisconsin observance, entitled "From Conflict to Communion," will be held at Ascension Lutheran Church, located at 1236 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee. All are invited to attend and there is no fee for admittance. The evening begins with a prelude provided by Catholic and Lutheran choirs at 6:30pm, followed by a prayer service at 7pm. The service will focus on three worldwide themes: thanksgiving, repentance, and common commitment.

Those who cannot attend the October 31 services are encouraged to seek out local opportunities for prayer, thanksgiving, and witness in observance of this occasion. For example, Catholics of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee have coupled with local Lutherans in a joint tree planting project to commemorate the Reformation. The LWF challenged Lutheran synods throughout the world to plant 500 trees for 500 years and encouraged synods to reach out to their ecumenical partners in service. The plantings highlight care for creation as one of the many common bonds that unite Catholics and Lutherans.

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To learn more about the commemoration service on October 31, visit
<https://www.archmil.org/offices/ecumenical/Commemorating-the-Reformation.htm>.

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For more information, contact Kim Wadas at 608-257-0004.