



October 27, 2016

Dear Pastor,

On October 31 in Lund, Sweden, the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. As part of this daylong event, Pope Francis will join the Lutheran World Federation's President Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan and General Secretary Rev. Dr. Martin Junge in a joint ecumenical prayer service to highlight the 50 years of continuous dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans throughout the world. Some parishes and congregations in Chicagoland have already made plans to watch this livestreamed event together and we encourage all Lutherans and Catholics to do likewise. Catholics and Lutherans in Chicago have a history of working together in covenant for nearly three decades. The Archdiocese of Chicago and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod have agreed to renew this covenant between our two church bodies, originally signed by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin and Bishop Sherman Hicks in 1989. We are pleased to announce together that this covenant renewal will take place at Holy Name Cathedral on October 31, 2017.

Leading up to this covenant renewal, we are asking Lutheran congregations and Catholic parishes to work toward establishing local covenants through participating in joint activities and events, praying, studying and serving together. The Lutheran-Catholic Covenant Renewal Committee has created a website, www.renewingcovenant.com, to assist in this process. We encourage you to visit it often to learn about local events taking place during this commemorative year, read stories of local Catholic/Lutheran partnerships, submit your news and stories, and become familiar with resources for further learning.

We pray that the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation will be a time to renew our common baptism and witness to our shared faith in Jesus Christ and to the joy of the Gospel. Together, we commit our churches to addressing the troubling issues of violence, poverty and racial injustice in the communities where Lutherans and Catholics live. We urge you to reach out to your Lutheran and Catholic neighbors and engage in cooperative witness locally which Pope Francis and the leadership of the Lutheran World Federation are modeling for us globally in Lund on October 31.

In Christ,

Reverend Wayne N. Miller
Bishop, Metropolitan Chicago Synod

Most Reverend Blaise J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago