

RENEWING THE COVENANT

B E T W E E N

*The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Metropolitan Chicago Synod*

A N D

*The Roman Catholic Church
Archdiocese of Chicago*

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We have come together on this day to remember together the moment when, five hundred years ago, Martin Luther's passion to promote the renewal of the Church tragically sparked the process that led to its fracture. Prejudice and ignorance distorted theological claims. Religious disagreements were exploited for political purposes. We acknowledge and confess the responsibility of Catholics and Lutherans alike in sundering the Body of Christ. We long for the restoration of unity because unity is the Lord's desire for his Church and because our continuing divisions severely damage the credibility of the proclamation of God's saving love to the world.

We know that more unites us than divides us and that through our baptism we are bound together in the love of God in Christ (Romans 8). We also remember with gratitude the Covenant between the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, which our beloved predecessors, Joseph Cardinal Bernardin and Bishop Sherman G. Hicks, solemnly declared and signed on May 13, 1989.

Today we want to renew that Covenant and then to build upon it in light of the new challenges now facing us, but also in light of the new opportunities provided by the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed on October 31, 1999; the Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of the Reformation in Lund, Sweden, on October 31, 2016; and the fruitful Lutheran-Catholic dialogue in the United States.

Salient among our new challenges is the violence in the Chicagoland area that extinguishes the lives of so many of our young people and leaves families and communities devastated by grief and despair. We recognize that for us this violence is the "sign of the times" to which we must respond as followers of the Lord Jesus.

Therefore, as we reaffirm the shared beliefs and commitments of the 1989 Covenant made by our predecessors, we now commit ourselves and our Lutheran and Catholic people to vigorous, unrelenting effort to make our region and city a place of peace and hope for all. We do so with trust in our God, "whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever." (Ephesians 3.20-21)

Signed the thirty-first day of October, two thousand and seventeen.

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago

The Reverend Wayne N. Miller
Bishop, Metropolitan Chicago Synod