

**Remarks by Bishop Felipe J. Estévez  
for the Common Prayer Service marking the  
500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation  
The Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe  
June 6, 2017**

This June 6 is part of the Catholic liturgical calendar, but this year for Lutherans and Catholics in Florida it is a Kairos, an unforgettable night, a holy night, a night of peace and reconciliation, a night of hope in God's rich mercy.

As Pope Francis said in Sweden on October 30, 2016:

“As Catholics and Lutherans, we have undertaken a common journey of reconciliation. Now, in the context of the commemoration of the Reformation of 1517, we have a new opportunity to accept a common path, one that has taken shape over the past fifty years in the ecumenical dialogue between the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church. Nor can we be resigned to the division and distance that our separation has created between us. We have the opportunity to mend a critical moment of our history by moving beyond the controversies and disagreements that have often prevented us from understanding one another.”

The Lord Jesus assures us that “Behold, I make all things new.” (Rev 21: 5) It is the renewal of the Holy Spirit that makes possible an understanding, a togetherness among us tonight preparing the way to many other daring and bold moves of reconciliation and peace that only God's grace can enable to happen for “nothing is impossible to God” indeed God is the master of the impossible.

We acknowledge the primacy of the Word of God so that both of our families can strongly state with St. Jerome, that “Christ is sawn in the Scriptures.” Can we anticipate in hope, that in the mystery of the Word made flesh, that we may also one day soon share the Eucharistic table together as one family and one faith? There is a need for a deeper conversion among Catholics and Lutherans... a change from the distant past where we have gotten used to being separated {a change to} desiring unity... making truly our own Jesus' prayer: “I pray ...also for those who will believe in me...so that they may all be one as you Father are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. (Jo. 17:20-23).