

- [About us](#)
- [Member churches](#)
- [What we do](#)
- [Get involved](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Press centre](#)

- **English**
- [Deutsch](#)
- [Français](#)
- [Español](#)
- [Português](#)
- [한국어](#)
- ...

A worldwide fellowship of churches seeking unity, a common witness and Christian service

Post-Reformation unity commended in Vatican City

08 November 2016

As Christians around the globe begin to commemorate 500 years of Reformation, a ceremony has been held in Vatican City in honor of Lutheran World Federation (LWF) president Bishop Munib Younan, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Jordan and the Holy Land.

On 31 October, Younan represented the Lutheran Church at a ceremony in Lund, Sweden, where he and Pope Francis, as representative of the Catholic Church, signed a unity declaration. Highlighting the achievements and steps toward unity taken in Lund, the Vatican City ceremony drew attendance from the Catholic and Lutheran churches, diplomats to the Vatican, and members of the Palestinian Higher Presidential Higher Committee for Church Affairs. It was hosted by the Palestinian representative office in Vatican City.

World Council of Churches general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit said the meeting in Lund will have a positive impact on world ecumenical unity, and congratulated Pope Francis and Younan for the historic achievement.

Issa Kassissieh, Palestine's ambassador to the Vatican, lauded the historic leadership role of Pope Francis toward Christian unity, and expressed the Palestinian leadership's pride in Bishop Younan's efforts toward the historic act of reconciliation and unity between the Lutheran and Catholic churches. "Strengthening unity and partnership will significantly contribute to anchoring Christian presence in the Holy Land and the Middle East," said Kassissieh, who also called on all Christian churches to hold ecumenical prayers for peace and justice in Jerusalem.

Patriarch Michel Sabbah, former Catholic archbishop of Jerusalem, referred to the ceremony in Lund as an historic event defining a kind of church unity that has universal human dimensions. "These days," he said, "mankind is in dire need for security, peace and human dignity more than any other time. In this historic meeting in Lund, the city of Jerusalem is featured in full force as the head of the Catholic Church represented by His Holiness Pope Francis and the head of the Lutheran church represented by the Bishop Munib Younan, have come together to recognize a joint agreement. The meeting sends a message to the whole world that the Holy City is in great need for civil peace and the love of God. Peace in Jerusalem will bring about peace in the world."

"We will continue to pray in Jerusalem with His Holiness the Pope and other churches, and we will continue to spread love and work for the defeat of the culture of death," Sabbah concluded.

Younan, in turn, commended the historic reconciliation reached between the Catholic and Lutheran churches, as the commemoration in Lund also saw LWF World Service and the Catholic agency Caritas Internationalis sign an agreement to strengthen their collaboration.

"As a Palestinian refugee who has been embraced by the church," Younan said, "I feel with every single refugee in the world. I would like to ask world governments and churches to shelter refugees and help resolve their problems justly and righteously. In addition, the city of Jerusalem has to be an open city for the followers of the three monotheistic religions. There can be no peace in the world without Jerusalem."

Reformation commemoration "day of great joy," says WCC leader (WCC press release of 3 November 2016)

Reformation anniversary opportunity for reflection on past and critical look at present, says WCC general secretary (WCC press release of 3 November 2016)

Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of the Reformation



© Yusef Daher/WCC



Sign up to receive WCC news by email!

- [Events](#)
- [News](#)
 - [Post-Reformation unity commended in Vatican City](#)
- [News in other languages](#)
- [Sign up for WCC press list](#)
- [Request for an interview](#)

© 2016 [World Council of Churches](#)

- [Site Map](#)
- [Conditions for Use and Privacy Policy](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Contact](#)