Public celebration of the Mass resumes, Alleluia

Laura Keener

Editor

After 62 days (since March 20), public celebration of the Mass resumed, May 20, in the Diocese of Covington. It was a day long anticipated by Bishop Roger Foys, the priests of the diocese and the lay faithful.

“I’ve heard from the priests that there is anywhere from 10 percent to 60 percent of their normal congregations,” said Bishop Foys, May 27, in an interview about the first weekday and weekend Masses. “The people who are here are very happy that the Mass is available. There are still some people who are nervous and I certainly understand that, especially people who are at high risk.”

For anyone who has underlying health conditions or falls into the high risk categories of developing complications from the coronavirus or anyone who feels nervous about venturing out in public, Bishop Foys has extended the dispensation from the Sunday obligation of attending Mass. Many parishes, including the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, are still live streaming Mass so that those at home can join spiritually with their parish.

Bishop Foys did caution, as did Pope Francis, that people not get into the misconception that the live stream somehow replaces the in-person, public celebration of the Mass, especially in the long term.

“The Mass is more than just a church service. We have the Eucharist and the Eucharist is what sustains us,” said Bishop Foys. “Part of the Eucharist is coming together as a community — our faith calls us to that. Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper with his apostles; he didn’t just do it on his own somewhere. The whole notion of a parish and parish life is bringing people together because, certainly, the Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ but the gathered community is also the body of Christ. It’s very important for us to come together and worship together — the Eucharist is what binds us together.”

Before public Masses resumed, a list of protocols developed by Bishop Foys and a task force of about ten Curia members was shared and discussed with diocesan consultants, deans and priests. After the discussions, adjustments to the protocols were made. On May 12, Bishop Foys promulgated the protocols, making them particular law for the Diocese of Covington. The complete list protocols are available on the diocesan website, www.covdio.org. As pastors opened the church doors, parishioners were asked to assist their priests in implementing the protocols.

Some highlights of the protocols are:

- Those that are sick should refrain from attending for 14 days from when symptoms began.
- Masses will be celebrated with a 33 percent capacity reduction.
- Social distancing is required; pews are marked so that parishioners maintain six feet spacing from each other.
- Face coverings are encouraged for all and required for ushers and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.
- Distribution of Holy Communion will be under one species, the host.
- Churches will be cleaned and sanitized after every Mass.

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When asked what celebrating Mass under the new protocols looks like from when symptoms began.

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DPAA appeal letter coming soon to parishioners mailboxes

Laura Keener  
Editor

Parishioners will soon be receiving in their mailboxes a letter from Bishop Roger Foys with a request to support this year’s Diocesan Parish Annual Appeal. The theme for this year’s appeal “Hope Does Not Disappoint … the Love of God Has Been Poured Out Into Our Hearts” has taken on new meaning as the COVID-19 pandemic has upended every aspect of daily life—which includes faith life.

“Especially in these hard times I think people are realizing the importance of being a part of their parish community because of the services offered and the support that is lent,” said Michael Murray, diocesan director, Stewardship and Mission Services. “Now that we had to suspend Mass and we are restarting, I think people have a renewed understanding of the importance of Mass and living a faith-filled life. I think people have a greater appreciation for the sacraments and what the Church offers.”

Mr. Murray said that before the Curia offices were closed and the public celebration of Mass suspended, the DPAA was off to a strong start. In February, Mary Paula Schuh, DPAA general chair, and Randy Kow, DPAA leadership chair, had recruited 46 solicitors that contacted the top 200 donors. Over 3,460 invitations went out for the two DPAA kick-off dinners that were held in early March. At the dinners, hundreds of attendees made their pledges. Those who were unable to attend the dinner received their pledge cards in the mail and many have mailed back their pledges.

That’s when everything was shut down. Announcement weekend (March 14 and 15)—when parishioners were to view the DPAA video at Mass—didn’t happen. Commitment weekend (March 28 and 29)—when parishioners are able to make their pledge at Mass—didn’t happen. Now, as things begin to open back up, the Stewardship and Mission Services Office will be contacting parishioners Kaye Mudd, coordinator of Religious Education, and Martha Lynn, music director, were there this time to help get everything out of the church.”

Everyone’s prayers were answered later in the day, May 20, when the water level crested quicker than expected with a flood level of only 31 feet—just one foot above flood stage at Falmouth and 15 feet under the stage that would have been put in before anyone was allowed into the church after the 1997 flood and many items were not salvageable after that period of time. This time the parish had more warning of an imminent flood and was better able to prepare for the worst.

“It was a very busy several hours trying to protect everything we could,” said Father Ludwig. “It is always better to err on the side of caution.” In about seven hours the parish was ready for whatever the Licking River might unleash.

Father Ludwig said he had contacted the usual parishioners who attend daily Mass to let them know there would be no Mass until the weekend.

Return to daily Mass delayed at Falmouth parish

Monica Yeomans  
Editorial assistant

Bishop Roger Foys announced May 13 to all the priests and parishioners that public Masses could resume beginning Wednesday, May 20. Then Mother Nature decided to stall a rain system over the Greater Cincinnati area, which resulted in flood warnings and, May 19, in many areas but especially along the Licking River in Northern Kentucky, particularly in Campbell, Kenton, Harrison and Pendleton Counties.

“It was kind of funny kind of sad,” said Father David Ludwig, pastor, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Falmouth. “We were here putting all the COVID-19 protocols into effect. We were putting up ropes to separate every other pew, tape markers in the pews and also on the floor to make sure everyone stays six feet apart. We were taking care of all of that just the other day and then yesterday [we were] back this time to help get everything out of the church.”

At Kincaid Lake State Park to fish and camp.

Editorial assistant

Pro-life citizens are urged to show their support for life in alternate ways this June 7. Wear a Favorite Cross the Bridge T-shirt from past years, get out in the sun on a walk with the family, take a photo and post it to the event’s Facebook page. The pro-life cause is gaining momentum and will continue to unite people on both sides of the river. Organizers are looking forward to an even higher attendance in 2021.

Interior view of St. Francis Xavier Church, Falmouth, after parishioners moved the altars, candles, statues and numerous items to higher levels in preparation for potential flooding.
Sisters of diocese assemble care packages for Latino community

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

Religious communities in the Diocese of Covington are uniting to bring relief to local Latino communities through outreach. Sisters from five congregations are assembling care packages to give out to those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Divine Providence Sister Kay Kramer served as the bridge to unite the goals of the various congregations and St. Elizabeth Healthcare into this project. Sister Kay, a nurse midwife and family nurse practitioner at St. Elizabeth, reached out to her provincial superior, Divine Providence Sister Barbara Roe. Sister Barbara is in turn contact with the superiors of the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg Monastery, the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker and the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

At St. Elizabeth we have created a Latino COVID-19 Crisis Team to try to improve outreach to Latinos in our area who are disproportionately impacted by coronavirus," said Sister Kay. “So one of the things we thought might be helpful was these care packages.

The packages include supplies bought both by the sisters and provided by the hospital: Clorox wipes, hand sanitizer, bars of soap, masks, gloves, dish soap, an instruction sheet in Spanish and a prayer card in Spanish. The various religious orders are listed on the back of the prayer card to remind recipients that the sisters are praying for them.

“It’s a way to be in solidarity with them and remind them that we are united with them in prayer,” Sister Kay said.

Sharon Norby, a native of Indianapolis with a B.A. in human development and family studies from Butler University, graduated from the St. Mary-of-the-Woods College in 2007 and received a Master of Arts in pastoral studies in 2010. She currently serves the Archdiocese of Indianapolis as a pastoral associate at St. Monica Parish in Fishers, as well as the pastoral associate at the Brazilian Catholic Center in Indianapolis.

The Paschal candle, seen here at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington, is a sign of Christ’s light coming into the world. As Pentecost nears, Sunday, May 31, Benedictine Sister Eileen Bankemper reflects on the Paschal candle and the meaning of the Holy Spirit.

Yielding a symbol of hope, the Spirit of God will come and abide with us. The Pentecost reading in Acts (2:1-12) tells us of the promise of the Holy Spirit — the Paraclete — the one who advocates, comfort and assures us of continuing presence until the end of time, renewing hope. The Spirit of God will come and abide with us. The Spirit brings gifts that aid the world with wisdom, knowledge, understanding, fortitude, piety, counsel, and fear of the Lord. These gifts offer healing to our whole suffering world. Hopefully the wisdom and knowledge gifts will lead to a vaccine for COVID-19.

“Come Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with the fire of your love and the countenance of your peace.”

Benedictine Sister Aileen Bankemper is prioress of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills. Her reflection is available on the community’s blog “Reflections from the School for the Lord’s Service,” online at stwalburg.blogspot.com.

Sister Barbara Sheehan

May 29, 2020

Sister Barbara Sheehan,

Assistant Director for Urban CPE, member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence and member of the Catholic Theological Union, is the director of Urban CPE.

She said the response from the congregations was wonderful. “It was an issue of who was going to do this, and I thought, well that is definitely something the sisters can do... They all were right away willing to help in any way.” Any extra money raised in the process of making the care packages will be used toward helping to provide groceries to Latino families who are impacted by the virus.

Sister Kay said that the COVID-19 virus is impacting Guatemalan and Mexican families in the Covington, Newport and Florence communities especially harshly.

“We have such long standing social and health inequities for the immigrant community so the virus impacting them is not really a surprise,” she said. “This is just bringing it all to a head, these issues that we’ve been trying to work with for so long.”

St. Elizabeth is also reaching out to communities with large Latino populations, such as St. Anthony Parish, through actions. “For us as religious communities, it’s really a way of living out not just the missions of our religious orders but also living out Catholic social teaching in a very direct and concrete way,” she said. “Catholic social teaching is built on a foundation of respect and belief in the dignity of the human person, so by providing these care packages, it’s a very concrete way to express our commitment to that teaching.”

Benedictine Sister Aileen Bankemper, known for her work with Latino families in the greater Covington area, has been working with the Sisters of Providence for many years. She has also lived and worked as a missionary in Latin America.

She’s also grateful for the opportunity to give her fellow religious communities a chance to express their faith through actions.

“Catholic social teaching is really a very concrete way to express our commitment to that teaching.”

TheoholySpirit, fill our hearts with the fire of your love and the countenance of your peace.”

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Official assignment
Effective June 11, 2020
Deacon Carl A. Ledbetter
To: Pastoral associate, Holy Cross Parish, Latonia
From: St. Patrick Parish and Shrine, Taylor Mill


James N. Schneider
Chancellor

Deacon Carl A. Ledbetter

To: Pastoral associate, Holy Cross Parish, Latonia
From: St. Patrick Parish and Shrine, Taylor Mill


James N. Schneider
Chancellor
If Shakespeare’s Hamlet had been a 21st-century character living in a consumer society, the opening of his famous brooding soliloquy perhaps might declare—“To be or to have...? That’s the question.”

In his 1967 encyclical “Sollicitudo Rei Socialis” (“On Social Concern”) St. Pope John Paul II differentiated the states of “having” and “being.” “That distinction had originally been expressed in “Gaudium et Spes” (1965), the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. “Sollicitudo Rei Socialis” explained: “To have objects and goods does not of itself perfect the human subject, unless it contributes to the maturing and enriching of that subject’s being.” That is to say unless it contributes to the realization of the human vocation as such.” (SRS, n. 28)

The language of “having” and “being” is reminiscent of concepts found in the writings of Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), a French Catholic philosopher. Gabriel Marcel has been called a “Christian existentialist,” even though he himself resisted such a label.

In his phenomenology of human consciousness, Marcel’s distinction between “being” and “having” stressed a major theme in his investigation of participation and communion among persons.

In an early journal “Being and Having” (1935), Marcel articulated a number of his original philosophical positions. Among those foundational premises, as the title indicates, Marcel had forged a set of key insights in the concepts “being” and “having.” From Marcel’s perspective, “being” named authentic personal experiences wherein “having as possession” described the world of “objects” or “things.”

The Anglican priest John Macquarri (d. 2007), a Scotsman born theologian and philosopher, presented a succinct summary of this crucial distinction in Marcel’s thought: “Having is an external ecceentric relationship; it gives power over objects, whether these be material possessions or our own ideas. Yet the very things that we have or desire to have tend to tyrannize us.” Hence, in Marcel’s existential approach “having” must be transformed by “being.” That transformation effects new sorts of relationships “in which the sharp distinction between the self and its objects gives way to reciprocity, and existence transcends any narrow ecceentricity.” (“Twentieth-Century Religious Thought.” 2001.)

By contrast, “being” engenders an “I-thou” encounter with the Other. It utters a personal announcement: “I am referring to the fact even the decision to invest in one place rather than another, in one productive sector rather than another, is always a moral and cultural choice...” —John Paul II, “Centesimus Annus” (1981).

From example to example, Marcel showed that “being” and “having” are “in a manner to have without having. That is why there is a kind of suffering or burning which is an essential part of desire.” Threat emerges from the world of objects — “I bug to myself this thing which may be torn from me, and I desperately try to incorporate it in myself, to form myself and it into a single and inoffusible complex...” A desperate, hopeless struggle “An insatiable hunger to self” obviates “self-giving.”

The wider historical and cultural context of Marcel’s work was situated in the ominous era of the rise of totalitarianism — of Nazism and Communism. At the same time, Marcel’s ongoing philosophical undertaking attempted to counteract the destructive aspects of the modern mass society, especially the dehumanizing manipulation and often inhuman scale of vision allows self-interest to dominate friendship and to effect disunity. (PP, n. 19) Manipulation and often aggression become the order of the day. (PP, nn. 14-21) He defended “a transcendent humanity” and rejected a false scale of values. (PP, n. 19)

If increased material possessions become the focal point of the lives of men and women, such growth can harden hearts and close minds. As a result, that narrowing of vision allows the consumer to define his relationship and to effect dissunity (PP, n. 19) Manipulation and often aggression become the order of the day. St. Pope John Paul II uttered a prophetic judgment on the ambivalence of economic growth apart from human values: “But for nations and for individual men, economic growth is superior to an ‘I-it’ relationship treats men and women as things or objects. For Marcel, therefore, the phenomenon of “having” must open up to a condition of “being.” A state of authentic personal existence, which transcends “having-as-possession.” If human experience remains closed and ego-centered, possessions ironically become the possessor.” In “Being and Having” Marcel wrote: “Having as such seems to have a tendency to destroy and lose itself in the very thing it began by possessing, but which now absorbs the master who thought he controlled it.” A booming effect is created: the master becomes the slave.

Again, Marcel associated “having” with “desire” or “covetousness.” In this regard, he reflected: “To desire is not to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards ‘having’ rather than ‘being,’ and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself. It is therefore necessary to create lifestyles in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings, and investments. In this regard, it is not a matter of charity alone, that is, the duty to give from one’s ‘abundance,’ and sometimes even out of one’s needs, in order to provide what is essential for the life of a poor person. I am referring to the fact that even the decision to invest in one place rather than another, in one productive sector rather than another, is always a moral and cultural choice...” —John Paul II, “Centesimus Annus” (1981).
These gifts must be shared


Pentecost reminds me of Christmas. Both are celebrations that involve much discussion about gifts. Perhaps our experience of giving gift and receiving at Christmas can help to clarify to what today’s Pentecost liturgy proclaims about the gifts of the Spirit.

If all goes well, the recipient of our gift finds it to be just perfect. But invariably someone else finds it to be equally desirable. The result is that while the gift causes joy for the one to whom we gave it, it causes jealousy and desire in others. We will often admire a gift someone else received. I want it too.

From today’s second reading it is clear that the gifts of the Spirit, given by God, must have caused a similar type of jealousy in the Corinthian community. The community had received many spiritual gifts: preaching, teaching, faith, ability to heal, prophecy, discernment of spirit, tongues, interpretation of tongues. But apparently many were not satisfied with the gifts they had individually received. They liked someone else’s gift better.

Thus Paul tells them the obvious when he says, “There are different spiritual gifts but the same Spirit... there are different ministries but the same Lord... there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone.” In other words, we each receive the same gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit. The one difference is that it is manifested differently in each one.

Paul reminds us that the gift of God, his Holy Spirit, is not for individual use and enjoyment. “To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is for the common good.” That is why the reading from Acts points out to us that the disciples made their company, our Church or our beliefs. That is why the reading from Acts points out to us that the disciples made their company, our Church or our beliefs. That is why the gift of the Spirit is for the common good. In other words, we each receive the same gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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Now, the gift of the Holy Spirit springs from the Father’s sending of the Spirit through the Son. In the Nicene Creed, we confess that the Father has sent me, so I send you.” The Lord came to the Father’s command and sent the Spirit. That is why the gift of the Holy Spirit springs from the Father’s sending of the Spirit through the Son. In the Nicene Creed, we confess that the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

It was March 2000 and I was in Jerusalem with NBC to cover the papal pilgrimage to the Holy Land. For weeks, a global controversy about the Holy Land was raging. It was Yad Vashem, Jerusalem’s Holocaust memorial, that raged. What would he say? What should he say? What could he say?

I found out two days before the event, when, on a drizzly Tuesday evening, I walked past the Old City’s New Gate to the Notre Dame Center, where the papal party was staying. There, a friendly curial official slipped me a diskette with the texts of the Holocaust memorial readings during his visit. Back in my hotel room, I went immediately to the remarks prepared for Yad Vashem. As I read them, I felt a chill run down my spine. At Yad Vashem itself, on March 21, the sight of the trees gave me a chill, but the Holocaust was something else.

One silver lining for me during this weird coronavirus shutdown has been the opportunity to return to some writing projects that I had left on the back-burner. One of these is a book on the Nicene Creed, which I had commenced many months ago and on which I was making only slow progress, given my various pastoral and administrative responsibilities. The last several weeks, I have been working in a rather concentrated manner on the Creed book. I find myself currently in the midst of the section on the Church: “I believe in one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.” I will confess that the peculiar way that we have been forced to express the life of the Church during this quarantined period has influenced my ecclesiological reflection.

One first insight is this: we are an intensely, inescapably Eucharistic church. One of the most difficult moments that I’ve had as a bishop was participating in the decision to close our churches and to shut down the celebration of Mass with a community Ministration. It was the right decision. I emphatically disagree with those who argue that the bishops cared in to the pressure of the secular state in making this determination. There are some very real tensions between Church and state and sometimes we have to make a stand — a good example being our vigorous opposition here in California to the legislature’s attempt to violate the seal of confession. But this is not one of those cases. Instead, our bishops are working with the secular authorities that the churches should be closed, precisely for the well-being of our people. Having saved the church from the threat of closure, our bishops have worked hard to be present for our people in these difficult days. We have continued to offer Mass online and in other ways, in particular through the daily Mass on St. Patrick’s Day and we’ve continued to the present, acquiring in the process well over five million views from over two hundred countries. Some priests have, furthermore, processed through the quiet streets with the Blessed Sacrament, while Catholics look on from their homes; others have placed the monstrance with the consecrated host in the windows of their residences androntiers so that people can venerate the Blessed Sacrament as they walk or drive by. And wasn’t the whole Catholic world fascinated by Pope Francis, standing in the rain and facing an angry crowd? As he blessed us, via television and social media, with the Eucharist.

To be sure, none of these mitigated encounters with the Eucharistic Lord is a substitute for the real thing — and that’s the point. But the fact is that the Eucharist is present in the form of life and person of Jesus in the Church.

On John Paul II’s centenary

As the world and the Church mark the centenary of the birth of Pope St. John Paul II on May 18, it is a kaleidoscope of memories that shape my prayer and reflection of that day. John Paul II at his din- ner table, insatiably curi- ous and full of humor; John Paul II pronouncing in prayer before the altar in the chapel of the papal apartment. John Paul II laughing at me from the Popemobile as I trudged along a dusty road outside Camagüey, Cuba, looking for the friends who had left me behind a papal Mass in January 1986; John Paul II, his face frozen by Parkinson’s Disease, speaking silently through his eyes in October 2000; “See what’s become of me...”; John Paul II, back in good form two months later, asking about my daughter’s recent wedding and chaffing me about whether I was ready to be a nonno (grandfather); John Paul II lying in state in the Sala Clementina of the Apostolic Palace, his features natural and in repose, wearing the bejeweled cardinal’s jewels that used to grace the traditional managers of popes’ crazy. Each of these images haunts me, and in my memoir of the same name, “Lessons in Hope,” has a particular person- al resonance. Two, I suggest, capture the essence of the man for everyone on this centenary.

The second emblematic memory from that papal pilgrimage came on March 31 when John Paul walked slowly down the great esplanade before the Western Wall of Herod’s Temple, stopped at the Wall, bowed his head in prayer, and then — like millions of pilgrims before him — left a petition in one of the Wall’s crevices: God of our fathers and mothers, a life made to be lived. God of our God, must have caused a fire to burn in the heart of one of these children of yours to suffer , and asking your prayer , and then — like millions of pilgrims before him — left a petition in one of the Wall’s crevices: God of our fathers and mothers, a life made to be lived. God of our fathers and mothers, a life made to be lived. God of our fathers and mothers, a life made to be lived.

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Search for Christian unity is making progress, pope says

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Marking the 25th anniversary of St. John Paul II’s encyclical on Christian unity, Pope Francis said he shares “the healthy impatience” of those who think more can and should be done, but he also insisted that Christians must be grateful for the progress made.

“The steps have been taken in these decades to heal the wounds of centuries and millennia,” Pope Francis said in a letter to Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The letter was released by the Vatican May 25, the anniversary of St. John Paul’s 1995 encyclical, “Ut Unum Sint,” Latin for “that they may be one.”

In the encyclical, St. John Paul reaffirmed the Catholic Church’s “irrevocable” commitment to working and praying for Christian unity; highlighted how Christians of all denominations already are united in the experience of martyrdom; called for efforts to promote a “healing of historical memories” and mutual forgiveness; asked other Christians to join a dialogue on the ministry of the bishop of Rome — the pope — in a united Christianity; and insisted that dialogue is not a negotiation, but a sharing of the gifts God has given each community.

Over the past 25 years, Pope Francis said, “mutual knowledge and esteem have grown and helped to overcome deeply rooted prejudices” and “theological dialogue and the dialogue of charity have developed, as well as various forms of cooperation in the dialogue of life, at both the pastoral and cultural level.”

The pope also used his letter to Cardinal Koch to greet the heads of the Christian churches and “all our brothers and sisters of every Christian tradition who are our companions on this journey.”

“Like the disciples of Emmaus, may we experience the presence of the risen Christ who walks at our side and explains the Scriptures to us,” the pope wrote. “May we recognize him in the breaking of the bread, as we await the day when we shall share the Eucharistic table together.”

Pope Francis thanked the staff of the pontifical council for their work on behalf of the Church and thanked the council for preparing an “Ecumenical Valememcum for Bishops,” which will offer practical advice and encouragement to bishops in fulfilling their obligation to promote Christian unity on a local level. The document is expected to be published in the fall.

“On the path that leads to full communion, it is important to keep in mind the progress already made, but it is equally important to scan the horizon and ask,” as St. John Paul did, “Quanta est nobis vitae?” (How much further must we travel?), Pope Francis said.

He did not answer the question, but Pope Francis insisted “unity is not chiefly the result of our activity, but a gift of the Holy Spirit,” which is why Christians must pray for the gift of unity.

“With confidence, then, let us ask the Holy Spirit to guide our steps and to enable everyone to hear the call to work for the cause of ecumenism with renewed vigor,” he wrote. “May the Spirit inspire new projects and initiatives and strengthen fraternal charity among all Christ’s disciples that the world may believe to the greater praise of our Father in heaven.”

He also called for efforts to promote a “healing of historical memories” and mutual forgiveness; asked other Christians to join a dialogue on the ministry of the bishop of Rome — the pope — in a united Christianity; and insisted that dialogue is not a negotiation, but a sharing of the gifts God has given each community.

“Ut Unum Sint” is Latin for “that they may be one.”

Bishop Bambera said: “We rejoice that Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have continued to advance this singular mission between the Catholic Church and other Christian communities. We celebrate numerous theological convergences that have been discovered in ecumenical dialogues over the course of the past 25 years as we seek to grow closer together.”

He noted that St. John Paul concluded his encyclical with “a profound insight from St. Cyprian’s commentary on the Lord’s Prayer: ‘God can be appeased only by prayers that make peace. For God, the greater offering is peace, brotherly concord and a people made one by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.’

“People seek refuge and unity in their faith community” during a pandemic, like what the world is currently experiencing, Bishop Bambera said.

May this anniversary of Pope St. John Paul II’s call for Christian unity serve as a unique pastoral opportunity to build bridges by continuing to reach out with love to all of our brothers and sisters in Christ,” the bishop added. “May He heal our wounds of division and help us grow closer in unity, especially in this moment, by witnessing together to the peace of Christ that our world needs so very much.”

Encyclical calls all Catholics to work toward Christian unity

WASHINGTON — The 25th anniversary of St. John Paul II’s encyclical “Ut Unum Sint” should remind Catholics “the way of ecumenism is the way of the church” and they are “called to espouse a strong commitment to building Christian unity,” Bishop Joseph C. Bambera of Scranton, Pennsylvania, said May 25.

“Pope St. John Paul II, who worked tirelessly to build ecumenical relationships, described the impulsion of working for unity between Christians as a ‘duty of Christian conscience enlightened by faith and guided by love,’” said the bishop, who is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

In the encyclical, issued May 25, 1995, St. John Paul reaffirmed the Catholic Church’s “irrevocable” commitment to working and praying for Christian unity and highlighted how Christians of all denominations already are united in the experience of martyrdom.

The pope noted that St. John Paul’s encyclical on the Lord’s Prayer: ‘ Qui summum bonum? (What is the greatest good?)’

The pope said, “Quanta est nobis vitae?” (How much further must we travel?), Pope Francis asked.

“Pope St. John Paul II’s encyclical on the Lord’s Prayer: ‘Qui summum bonum? (What is the greatest good?)’

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Bishop Foys honors graduates at baccalaureate

As the 2019-2020 school year comes to a close, it is safe to say that the Class of 2020 will have experienced the end of their senior year and graduation in ways that no one could have predicted. The COVID-19 pandemic had leaders around the world enacting sweeping regulations in desperate attempts to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus and to save lives. With each passing day churches, schools, businesses were told to close their doors to in-person interaction and to find new ways — virtual or contactless ways — to conduct business, to learn and to worship.

As the seniors packed their school bags March 13, for what was anticipated to be two weeks of Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI), they undoubtedly could not have known or even imagined that this was going to be their “last time” — their last time in their school, their last time with their teachers, their last time with each other. But it was also a time for some firsts. Students and teachers, together, with little time to prepare, for the first time moved in-classroom instruction to a variety of digital platforms. In the Diocese of Covington, teachers reported that students remained engaged and completed their assignments, indicative of the teachers, students and parents determination and dedication to their education.

The Class of 2020 is the first to have caps and gowns distributed and diplomas picked up in a parade-like caravan or delivered directly to their door with their teachers cheering from sidewalks. They are the first class to experience a virtual graduation, with each school imagining what that would look like. Then realizing what was imagined through the cooperation of administrators, parents and students, all working together, sharing photos and videos and, most of all, heartfelt sentiments that were parsed together and shared online.

And, in many ways, the virus that threatened to keep people apart has brought the seniors together. The Class of 2020 is the first class in the diocese to begin its graduation together with one Baccalaureate Mass celebrated by the bishop.

Your graduation this year is not what you imagined and not what I imagined for you but that doesn’t diminish you and it doesn’t diminish your accomplishments,” said Bishop Roger Foys in his homily, May 18, at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.

For the Baccalaureate Mass the cathedral church was empty except for Bishop Foys, Father Daniel Schomaker, vicar general, Father Joseph Sherleen, administrative assistant to the Bishop and the seven high school pastoral administrators concelebrating. The seniors, their teachers, parents, families and friends participated by watching the live stream on the Cathedral’s website.

“You have been in a Catholic school and you have heard me say many, many times that there are alternatives to Catholic schools but there are no substitutes. A Catholic school is about developing a way of life. If we are going to develop a way of life that is going to be meaningful, although challenging, then we have to hear, receive and act upon the word of God.”

Reflecting on the second reading, Bishop Foys encouraged the graduates to be agents of change.

“Paul says to the early Christians, ‘Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.’ It’s easy to conform yourselves to any age of the world, it’s easy to go along with the flow, there is absolutely no challenge in that,” Bishop Foys said. “Our faith challenges us and it calls us to challenge others. You can transform the world, you can make a difference. You can be that agent of transformation in a world that has lost its way.”

Bishop Foys acknowledged that life isn’t always easy; the end of their senior year has surely taught them that. But he encouraged the graduates to heed the words of St. Paul.

“Paul says, rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. I could not give you seniors any better advice than that,” he said.
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2020
OVER $330,000 AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIPS PER STUDENT
AND EARNING ADMISSION TO THE FOLLOWING SCHOOLS:

BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
BROWN UNIVERSITY
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
CENTRE COLLEGE
CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
DEPAUL UNIVERSITY
EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
HILLSDALE COLLEGE
HUNTER COLLEGE
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
KINGS COLLEGE LONDON
MIAMI UNIVERSITY
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY
MARIAN COLLEGE
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
OHIO UNIVERSITY
PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM
PURDUE UNIVERSITY
ROSE-HULMAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
SANT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
THOMAS MORE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SB
UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE
UNIVERSITY OF MAIN
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
XAVIER UNIVERSITY

Congratulations to the CLASS OF 2020!

THOMAS MORE UNIVERSITY
THE CATHOLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY OF THE DIOCESE OF COVINGTON

485 distinct students
awarded 516 total degrees
112 graduate degrees | 404 undergraduate degrees

81 undergraduate students
graduated with honors
42% of undergraduates are first-generation college students
27 active military/veterans
9 countries and 12 states represented

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Be Witnesses

“Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living!”
— Pope Francis

Karen Kuhlman
Messenger Correspondent

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we struggle to gracefully accept the restrictions and the isolation that are consequences of the highly contagious virus and look back with sorrow at the loss of many things we had previously taken for granted. But, more people are looking out for one another now. By offering support through spiritual and corporal works of mercy, they provide us with many reasons to look forward with hope.

The religious in the Diocese of Covington, like the laity, find these challenging times full of opportunities to lend assistance — and the humility to accept a helping hand.

Mother Mary Christina Murray, of the Sisters of St. Joseph the Worker in Walton, said, “It has been a joy to be able to attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass again, something we all missed. And as things begin to slowly open up, I find I am much more reflective: Do I really need to make a trip to the store? Or is it just an excuse to go out, possibly exposing myself to the virus? We’ve added an extra Holy Hour to our day, and really enjoy this special time for the community to come to prayer together.”

Sister Mary Ethel Parrott, superior of the Sisters of Notre Dame, Covington Province, said that one of the things the community misses is coming together with members of their associate community. She regrets the postponement of the annual covenant ceremony that welcomes new associates to the community. That is something with which associate candidate Char Fieger heartyedly agrees. She is one of three candidates who were within just a few weeks of completing their formation period. Ms. Fieger accepts in-person visitors, everyone remains in their prayers.

A sign created by Benedictine Sister Emmanuel Pieper greets people at the gates to St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, reminding them that even though the sisters are unable to accept in-person visitors, everyone remains in their prayers.

Sister Fran Moore, CDP

June

2 Sister Mary Bonita Schuck, SND
4 Sister Mary Dolores Giblin, SND
5 Sister Mary Janet Stamm, SND
6 Sister Madonna Marie Kling, CDP
8 Sister Mary Elaine Krebs, SND
9 Sister Mary Heleen Hehman, SND
10 Sister Dolores Gohn, CDP
12 Sister Ruth Flynn, CDP (formerly Sister Mary Faith)
13 Sister Mary Luann Bendic, SND
14 Sister Mary Rose Moser, SND
16 Sister Juanita Nadickbier, CDP (formerly Sister Lovetta Joseph)
17 Sister Sharon Portwood, OSB
18 Sister Mary Margaret Droge, SND
21 Sister Judith Riese, CDP
22 Sister Mary Delrita Glaser, CDP
25 Sister Catherine Veronica Arzorzaen Carlson, fdm
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For more information about consecrated life in the Diocese of Covington, contact Sister Fran Moore at (859) 382-1300.

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Marriage and the annulment process, part III

Sister Margaret Stallmeyer, C.D.P.
Director of the Tribunal

This is the third and final in a series of short articles by the diocesan tribunal. The intent of these articles is to share information regarding both the purpose of seeking an annulment and the particulars of the annulment process itself.

In the two previous articles we explained that a declaration of nullity is a statement by the Church that a permanent, indissoluble bond of marriage was not formed at the time the couple exchanged consent. In the last article we discussed three factors that would be examined to determine if something essential was missing at the time of the wedding: freedom to marry, valid consent and a Church wedding for Catholics. Two questions were posed: What must an individual do if they wish to seek such a decree of nullity? How does the Church go about investigating the marriage to determine if it was ever a valid union? If a marriage has ended in divorce and there is no hope of reconciliation a person may inquire about the possibility of a declaration of nullity. However, it is required that a civil divorce is granted before a case can be considered. The first step for a person (known as the petitioner in the process) is to contact his/her parish priest, or deacon providing them with a summary of the principal facts concerning the courtship, marriage and breakup. This person may ask additional questions to assess the grounds for a possible declaration of nullity. The petitioner may want to ask this person if they are willing to assist as an advocate. If that is not possible, one may call the tribunal for assistance. The advocate will help identify the proper form and the documents needed for a petition for nullity to be submitted to the diocesan tribunal. The petitioner will be asked to provide the name and contact information for your former spouse (the respondent) as well as the names and addresses of three witnesses who can verify your information. (Individuals who knew the parties during their courtship are the best witnesses.) This initial form may also contain information regarding both the purpose of seeking an annulment and the particulars of the annulment process (a summary of the principal facts concerning the courtship and marriage.

Once the petition and necessary documents have been reviewed by the tribunal they will be reviewed and if the information supports grounds for a declaration of nullity the petition will be accepted. The petitioner will be asked to provide more detailed information. The former spouse (respondent) as well as the witnesses will also be sent questionnaires. Once all the testimony has been received it is reviewed to see if it is sufficient to move forward with the case. If it is not sufficient, additional information will be requested.

After reviewing the testimony and following certain protocols required by canon law the diocesan court (tribunal) will proceed to render a decision. The case file is first reviewed by the defender of the bond. This individual presents an argument in favor of the bond of marriage. The defender is also responsible for ensuring that the rights of both parties in the marriage were protected and that the requirements of canon law were followed. The entire file with all the testimony as well as the defender’s brief will be sent to a sole judge or a panel of judges who are charged with rendering a decision. The decision will either uphold the validity of the marriage or it will declare the marriage null. Either party to the marriage may appeal the decision if they are unsatisfied with the outcome and believe that there was a flaw in the investigation or that procedures were not followed as specified by Church law.

Once a declaration of nullity has been issued and there is no appeal pending, the parties are free to marry again in the Catholic Church. The declaration of nullity (an annulment) does not erase the civil marriage contract, it does not render the children of the marriage illegitimate nor does it alter any child support obligations. In this three-part series, we have tried to present an overview of the Church’s teaching and requirements for a valid marriage as well as an overview of the process following a declaration of nullity.

For information, contact: Tribunal of the Diocese of Covington at (859) 392-1050.

(Continued on page 14)
Lessons about the Church

which began, fitfully enough, during Lent — has awak-
ened a profound hunger for what Vatican II called “the
source and summit of the Christian life.” Perhaps too
many Catholics had grown indifferent to the Blessed
Sacrament, even, as a recent Pew Forum study indicated,
ignorant of its deepest significance; and perhaps this
forced starvation will have a salutary effect.

A second ecclesiological insight is this: priests are in
an intensely symbiotic relationship with their people.
Everyone knows that priests have been passing through a
difficult period, practically without precedent in the his-
tory of the Church. The scandals of the past 25 years,
culminating in the McCarrick outrage, have soured many
against priests and have made priests extremely vulnera-
ble to the charge of clericalism. Without denying for a
moment that these reactions and impressions are, to a
degree, legitimate, I want to insist once again that the
temperature of the Church becomes concretely expressed. And

this is what has made the last six weeks so particularly
difficult for Catholics. Our faith is not primarily an inter-


...and the invisible Lord. Rather, it shows up physically
and publicly, through bodies. Once again, I would hope
that our fasting from togetherness will heighten our
appreciation for this incarnational density of our faith.

So Catholics, don’t get discouraged. Rather, use this
time of deprivation and abstention to awaken a deeper
appreciation for this incarnational density of our faith.
A third and final insight is that the Church is stub-
bornly incarnational. At the heart of the Catholic sensi-
tivity is the conviction that God became flesh in Jesus
Christ. And Catholicism teaches that the presence of the
raren Jesus is made known through words to be sure, but
also through physical signs — water, oil, bread, wine, etc.
delivered by human hands and accompanied by bodily
gestures. At the liturgies we are meant to come together in
close proximity so that we can pray in unison, sing in
unison, process together, embrace one another, gesture in
harmony with each other. In all of this, the incarnational
quality of the Church becomes concretely expressed. And
through physical and publicly, through bodies. Once again, I would hope
that our fasting from togetherness will heighten our
appreciation for this incarnational density of our faith.

Sister Mary Rosanne went home to God peacefully on
May 19, 2020. She is preceded in death by her parents and
her sister Rosalind McCafferty. She is survived by her
brothers John, Richard, and Norbert Bob; and her sisters
Martha Kirby, Dolores Ryan, Mary Brady and Rita
Christy. Sister also leaves behind many beloved nieces
and nephews.

Due to the current restrictions on gatherings, a cele-
bration of Sister Mary Rosanne’s life will be held for fam-
illy and friends at a later date. A private Catholic blessing
and burial took place at the provincial center and convent
cemetery on Saturday, May 23, 2020.

May Sister Mary Rosanne delight in the embrace of
our good and loving God.
Pope to lead world shrines in rosary prayer for pandemic May 30

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis will lead the major shrines around the world in praying the rosary to implore Mary’s intercession and protect against the coronavirus pandemic.

The pope will pray at the regalia of the Lourdes Grotto in the Vatican Gardens May 30, the eve of Pentecost, and will also be joined by several “men and women representing various categories of people particularly affected by the virus,” the Vatican said May 28. The service will be at 3:30 p.m. in Rome (9:30 a.m. EDT).

“At the foot of Mary the Holy Father will place the many troubles and sorrows of humanity further worsened by the spread of COVID-19,” said a statement released by the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization.

According to the statement, the prayer, which coincides with the end of the Marian month of May, “is another sign of closeness and consolation for those who, in different ways, have been struck by the coronavirus, in the certainty that the Heavenly Mother will not disregard the requests for protection.”

Faith leaders: Protecting human life is priority in reopening churches

STATE OF WASHINGTON — The bishops of the state of Washington said suspension of the public celebration of Mass because of the coronavirus pandemic was undertaken “not out of fear, but out of our deepest respect for human life and health.” “As disciples of Jesus, we are called to be instruments of God’s protection for the vulnerable and the common good,” the five bishops said in a May 22 statement released by the Washington State Catholic Conference.

“Our love of God and neighbor is always personal and not partisan. While we share the desire to bring people back to Mass as quickly as possible, we will wait to schedule our public worship when it is safe and we are prepared to do so.”

Washington state was the site of the first widespread outbreak of the COVID-19, the illness caused by the new coronavirus. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and public health officials quickly enacted a mandate to stay at home.

“While we are prepared to do so,” the statement said. Washington state asked the bishops’ Subcommittee on Certification for Ecclesiastical Ministry and Service. Dudley, who has since retired, got the ministry board up and working. The board gathered once a month to discuss the reports that were coming in from the diocesan offices and the Vatican sent a questionnaire to the papal nunciature in the United States, according to Harry Dudley, then staff to the U.S. bishops’ Subcommittee for Certification for Ecclesiastical Ministry and Service.

“Bishops had to figure out the way to get the system running,” Dudley said. “We had a large amount of information that we had to compile and follow up.”

Food for those in need includes cookies baked by award-winning Capuchin

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington provided 800 prepared meals and 800 boxes of groceries to needy families May 19 during a massive distribution at the parking lot of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

Unlike previous food giveaways, the May 19 food giveaway included cookies baked by award-winning Capuchin Franciscan Brother Andrew Corronte baked about 1,600 peanut butter, chocolate chip and snickerdoodle cookies to be distributed with the meals and groceries. Brother Andrew, a fourth-year master of divinity student at The Catholic University of America and resident of Capuchin College, was crowned last January as the champion on ABC’s “The Great American Baking Show: Holiday Edition.” He beat out 12 other bakers for the title during the nationally televised challenge.

The service will be at 5:30 p.m. in Rome (11:30 a.m. EDT) on Vatican Gardens May 30, the eve of Pentecost, and will also be broadcast around the world in praying the rosary to implore Mary’s intercession for the common good,” the five bishops said in a May 22 statement released by the Washington State Catholic Conference. “Our love of God and neighbor is always personal and not partisan. While we share the desire to bring people back to Mass as quickly as possible, we will wait to schedule our public worship when it is safe and we are prepared to do so,” the statement said.

The pope “reminds us of the importance of the stories we tell, especially in the midst of the din of the media that leave us feeling dislocated,” Osman said. “The narratives that we live by must reflect the vision of the interconnectedness of all human life.”

Pope: Church’s preferential option for the poor is nonnegotiable

VATICAN CITY — A missionary or church reality that is truly inspired by the Holy Spirit “manifests predilection for the poor and vulnerable as a sign and reflection of the Lord’s own preference for them,” Pope Francis told the papal nunciature and local bishops everywhere “to really tell them from their perspective what is going on. And all of those reports were sent to my desk, and I was asked to compile them and follow up,” he said.

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Wonder at gift of creation opens human hearts to prayer, pope says

Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The mystery and wonder of God’s creation can open the hearts of men and women to express their gratitude through prayer, Pope Francis said.

During a live broadcast of his weekly general audience from the library of the Apostolic Palace May 20, the pope said that human beings are “the only creature aware of such a profusion of beauty” and cannot help but “wonder what design of love must be behind such a powerful work.”

“The prayer of man and woman is closely linked to the feeling of wonder,” he said. “Human greatness is miniscule when compared to the dimensions of the universe. The greatest human achievements seem to be few and far between,” when compared to God’s creations.

The pope’s reflection coincided with the observance of “Laudato Si’ Week” May 16-24. The weeklong event was promoted as an occasion for Catholics to look at steps they have taken to protect the environment and assist the world’s poor people.

Before concluding his talk, the pope said that in contemplating God’s creation, Christians can be inspired to give thanks to God through prayer.

“We are children of the great King, the Creator, capable of reading his signature in all of creation, that creation which we don’t care for today. But in that creation, there is the signature of God who made it out of love,” he said.

Continuing his series of talks on prayer, the pope said that while one may feel insignificant in the grand scale of the universe, “in prayer, a feeling of mercy is overwhelmingly affirmed” and leads to gratitude to God.

“The relationship with God is the human being’s greatness,” he said. “By nature, we are almost nothing, but by vocation, we are the sons and daughters of the great King!”

“It’s an experience many of us have had. If the story of life, with all its bitterness, sometimes risks stifling the gift of prayer in us, it is enough to contemplate a starry sky, a sunset, a flower; to rekindle the spark of thanksgiving,” the pope said.

The pope explained that the biblical account of creation was written when the people of Israel were under occupation, and many were deported or forced into slavery in Mesopotamia.

Nevertheless, “just starting from the great story of creation, someone began to find reasons to give thanks, to praise God for existence,” he said.

“I would say that prayer opens the door to hope,” the pope said. “Because men and women of prayer safeguard basic truths; they are the ones who say — first to themselves and then to others — that this life, despite all its labors and trials, despite its difficult days, is filled with a grace for which to marvel.”

Pope Francis said that prayer illuminates one’s life, “even in the darkest times, even in painful times” and that through it, Christians are called to become “bearers of joy.”

“This life is the gift that God has given us, and it is too short to be consumed in sadness, in bitterness,” the pope said. “Let us praise God, simply content that we exist. Let us look at the universe, look at its beauty and even look at our own cross and say ‘You exist. You made us this way for you.’”