City approves name of ‘Cathedral Square’ surrounding the seat of the diocese

Laura Keener
Editor

Covington Mayor Joe Meyer and city commissioners unanimously approved the naming of the area surrounding the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption “Cathedral Square.” The order was read and approved Tuesday, Dec. 1 during the City Council meeting.

“It was unanimous and it’s a recognition that’s long overdue,” said Mayor Meyer.

Cathedral Square encompasses the two-block square from 11th Street on the north, 12th Street on the south, Scott Street on the east and the railroad tracks on the west. Within those two blocks is the historic Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption and its parish rectory and office, the Covington Latin School, the former St. Mary Lyceum, which was expanded and transformed into the diocesan Curia, and St. Mary Park. Mark Guilfoyle, partner, DBL Law and one of the lead organizers of the St. Mary Park project, had approached Mayor Meyer about the possibility of designating the area Cathedral Square. The order recognizes the history and significance these buildings and the people of the Diocese have made to the city of Covington.

“In this way we are recognizing the incredible contribution that the diocese and the Cathedral has made historically to the city, and its current contribution and its future contribution because of the density of the diocesan investment in the area,” said Mayor Meyer. “That’s a really remarkable part of Covington and having its own name will give it an identity that sets it apart.”

Bishop Camillus Maes, Covington’s third bishop, whose vision and vigor brought Covington’s Cathedral into reality, built the Cathedral as “a token of my love for the city by erecting in it a monument which will speak for centuries to come of the love of Christ and the Catholic Church, that is coached by the Holy Spirit, is precisely that of making his gifts visible and of witnessing to their presence. Today humanity yearns especially for the gifts of joy and peace. It is our mission as believers, with the eloquence of love expressed in deeds, to become every day the prophetic ferment of a world reconciled by love and animated by divine joy.” —Pope St. John Paul II, Angelus Address, December 16, 2001

WHEREAS, the interior of the Cathedral Basilica was designed by Leon Coquard under the direction of Bishop Camillus Maes; and
WHEREAS, construction of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, located at 1130 Madison Avenue, began in 1894; and
WHEREAS, Pope Pius IX established the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington (“Diocese”) on July 28, 1852; and
WHEREAS, the seat of the Diocese, the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, is an art and architectural gem that will be treasured for centuries;

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Covington, I hereby designate the area bounded by 12th Street on the north, 11th Street on the south, Scott Street on the east, and the railroad tracks on the west as “Cathedral Square.”

City approves name of ‘Cathedral Square’ surrounding the seat of the diocese

“I am grateful to His Honor Mayor Meyer and the City Commissioners for designating the two blocks around our Cathedral Basilica as Cathedral Square,” said Bishop Foys. “It is a tribute to the faithful of the Diocese of Covington as well as to my nine predecessors and especially to the third Bishop of Covington, Camillus Maes, who, along with the faithful of his time, took a leap of faith in building this beautiful house to the Lord. I am grateful also to Mark Guilfoyle for his invaluable assistance in this project. Bishop Maes loved the City of Covington and I join him in that sentiment. It is a wonderful place to live!”

Order designating “Cathedral Square”

WHEREAS, Pope Pius IX established the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington (“Diocese”) on July 28, 1852; and
WHEREAS, the seat of the Diocese, the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, is an art and architectural gem that will be treasured for centuries;
All-schools Mass and community Christmas tree to connect students spiritually

Laura Kreener
Editor

The safety protocols necessitated to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 are challenging families, schools and churches to find new and safe ways to carry on not just daily activities but also celebrate holidays this year. This Christmas will be no different. While abandoning established traditions can be disappointing, sometimes the challenge begins what is hoped will become a new tradition. Such is the case this Advent as Bishop Roger Foys contemplated how to connect with students in preparation for the celebration of Christmas.

This year, every student in the diocese will be invited to participate virtually as Bishop Foys celebrates Mass Monday, Dec. 14 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. This will be the first time during his episcopacy where every student will have the opportunity to participate at a single Mass. There is no facility in the Northern Kentucky that could accommodate the diocese’s 8,000 students along with the sacred space necessary for Mass. And while there is no replacing in-person celebration of the Mass and receiving of Communion, a virtual Mass with spiritual Communion does offer its own graces.

Preliminary information of St. Mary’s Park, Covington, may have noticed the most recent addition of 20-foot Christmas tree. The tree was erected and lighted Saturday, Dec. 5 and now stands waiting for decorations. Bishop Foys is inviting every student in the diocese to create an ornament suitable for the outdoors to be placed on the St. Mary’s Park Christmas tree.

Bishop Foys will bless and dedicate the Christmas tree during a live-streamed event Wednesday, Dec. 16 at 11 a.m. Covington Mayor Joseph Meyer and Kendra McGue, superintendent of Schools, will join in the virtual community event.

“This are ways of bringing our Catholic School community together during these challenging times when our students are not able to be together in their respective schools,” said Bishop Foys.

VIRTUS: Open month in December

December is an open month in VIRTUS. The December bulletin posted Dec. 6 and will be due in Jan. 5, 2021. This is an opportunity for those that may be behind in bulletins to catch up.

You may be wondering why, with all parish and school events being canceled, it is important to stay up to date on VIRTUS bulletin? The answer is, it is as important now as ever before.

While it is true that employees and volunteers need to stay current on monthly VIRTUS bulletins in order to work and volunteer in parishes and schools, it’s not just about “checking a box.” VIRTUS is about learning information on how to keep children safe from those who would choose to harm them. Statistics tell us that a child predator is often someone that the child and the family of the child know and trust. Predators and abusers can often be someone the child lives with. These days, children are spending a lot more time at home and possibly with their abusers. These vulnerable children are also not able to have daily interactions with the adults outside their homes whom they know and trust. So it is important that adults are aware of the sign of child sexual abuse and know what to do if they suspect a child in their home or neighborhood is being abused.

Also, just because there are no events happening at schools doesn’t mean that volunteers are unneeded. Quite the opposite. When students do return to classrooms, it will be necessary to have a significant pool of qualified volunteers to help fill in—often at a moments notice—when teachers or cafeteria workers need to quarantine.

Even during a pandemic, creating a safe environment for children remains a priority. Go to www.virtus.org, enter your user ID and password. Your VIRTUS account will open at your Training Tab. If you receive a message that your VIRTUS account is inactive or suspended, contact your primary location where you volunteer or are employed for assistance. For more information, see page 9.

St. Vincent de Paul coat drive will continue, will be drop-off and pick up only

Dec. 5
COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.

Dec. 10
Third Sunday of Advent, Mass, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, 4:30 p.m.

Dec. 13
Fifth Sunday of Advent, Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.

Dec. 15
COVID-19 briefing, 9:30 a.m.

Dec. 16
Fourth Sunday of Advent, Mass, Cathedral Basilica, 10 a.m.

Carroll: This winter,

Bishop’s Schedule

Corrections

In the obituary for Father Raymond Hartman, Dec. 11 edition of the Messenger, Bishop William Hughes was misclassified; he is Covington’s eighth (not ninth) bishop.

The Catholic Charities Thanksgiving food giveaway took place at Catholic Charities, not the Parish Kitchen.

The Messenger apologizes for the errors.

Coronavirus Report

December 11, 2020

Note: Due to the mandate that all schools transition to non-traditional instruction the following report includes only positive COVID cases and not self-quarantines.

Positive Cases

Active positive cases: 28
Recovered positive cases: 250
Total ever positive cases: 278

Schools, Parishes, and Organizations with active COVID cases:

Covington Catholic High School, Park Hills
Covington Latin School, Covington
Covington, Covington
Covington
Curia, Covington
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Burlington
Immaculate Heart of Mary
Parish, Burlington
Mary, Queen of Heaven Parish, Erlanger
Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills
St. Henry District High School, Erlanger
St. Cecilia School, Independence
St. Henry School, Elsmere
St. Joseph School, Cold Spring
St. Joseph School, Crescent Springs
St. Joseph Parish Religious Education Program, Crescent Springs
St. Mary School, Alexandria
St. Patrick School, Mayville
St. Paul School, Florence
St. Pius X School, Edgewood
St. Theresa School, Southgate
St. Timothy School, Latonia
Villa Madonna Academy High/vr.
High, Villa Hills

[Schools without students, faculty or staff in quarantine do not need to report]

Metropolitan Messenger

Villa Madonna Academy High/vr.
High, Villa Hills

A family is all smiles after receiving coats, hats and gloves at the St. Vincent de Paul Store. Donated coats will be distributed through the Society’s network of stores through the end of February. To donate a coat, visit svdpky.org for a drop-off point.
The following is a schedule of Mass times at parishes in the Diocese of Covington for the feast of Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. Due to space concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, parishioners are encouraged to plan ahead to ensure a seat at a Christmas Mass. The capacity for each church is listed in parentheses following its first listing.

It is important to note that the capacities are reduced due to protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. During this year, parishioners are encouraged to be flexible in remembering that, like with so many other things this year, they may not be able to celebrate "like normal." Parishioners and staff are working hard to ensure the safety of all parishioners while accommodating as many in-person worshippers as possible.

The Messenger has learned some tips from pastors that can help parishioners with their planning. For example, pastors tell us that Christmas Eve Masses tend to be more crowded. If you usually attend Christmas Eve Mass, consider a Christmas Day Mass instead this year. If all Christmas Masses at your suburban parish are usually crowded, consider attending Mass at one of the urban parishes, where congregations are smaller and churches are larger.

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass is still in effect due to continuing illness and health risks from the virus. Parishioners who are at higher risk of having an adverse outcome if they contract the illness are encouraged to join Mass online or TV.

Bishop Roger Foys will celebrate Christmas Mass at midnight and 10 a.m. Christmas Day at the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. The midnight Mass will be televised live on WEVE and livestreamed from the website of the diocese. No matter how you choose to celebrate Christmas Mass, everyone is encouraged to continue to make the birth of Christ the center of family celebrations by attending Mass in person or online.

For a full schedule of Mass times around the diocese for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day please see below.

### Christmas Eve

4 p.m.
St. Agnes (270); St. Anthony (130); All Saints (100); St. Barbara (320); Blessed Sacrament (300); St. Bernard (100); St. Cecilia (50); St. Francis Xavier (60); St. Henry (200); Holy Cross (200); Holy Spirit (315); Immaculate Heart of Mary (150); St. James Mission (35); St. John, Carrollton (100); St. John the Baptist (50); St. Joseph, Camp Springs (75); St. Joseph, Cold Spring (200); St. Joseph, Crescent Springs (420); St. John, Mayport (136); Mary Queen of Heaven (75); St. Patrick, Maryville (146); St. Patrick, Taylor Mill (200); St. Peter and Paul (60); St. Philip (140); St. Pius X (470); St. Thomas (200)*; St. Timothy (305)

4:15 p.m.
St. Pius X

4:30 p.m.
St. Benedict (125); St. Catherine (200); St. James, Brooksville (50); St. William (120)

5 p.m.
St. Augustine, Covington (200)*; St. Boniface and James (150); St. Edward Mission (40); St. John, Covington (325); Mother of God (160); St. Paul (146); St. Rose of Lima (85); St. Therese (200)

5:30 p.m.
Cathedral Basilica (200); Divine Mercy (100); St. Edward, Cincinnati (400)

6 p.m.
St. Agnes; St. Barbara; Blessed Sacrament; St. Henry, Holy Cross; Holy Spirit; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. John Mission; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Cold Spring; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary; Mary Queen of Heaven; St. Matthew (190); Our Savior (50); St. Patrick, Taylor Mill; St. Peter and Paul; St. Philip, St. Pius X; St. Thomas, St. Pius X; Transfiguration Mission (40)

6:30 p.m.
St. Agnes; St. Augustine, Augusta (90); St. Benedict; St. Francis Xavier; St. Timothy

7 p.m.
All Saints; St. Patrick, Mayville; St. Paul; St. Thomas

8 p.m.
St. John, Carrollton***

8:30 p.m.
St. Catherine, Augusta

9 p.m.
St. Patrick, Mayville; St. Patrick, Taylor Mill; St. Therese; St. William

9:30 p.m.
Cathedral Basilica; Divine Mercy, St. Edward, Cincinnati (400)

10 p.m.
All Saints; Blessed Sacrament; St. Cecilia, St. Henry, Holy Cross; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary; Mary Queen of Heaven; St. Matthew; St. Pius X; St. Timothy

10:30 p.m.
St. Thomas

11 p.m.
St. Agnes; St. Charles Borromeo (35); St. John, Carrollton; St. Joseph, Cold Spring; St. Peter and Paul

11:30 p.m.
St. Philip

### Midnight

All Saints***; St. Anthony, Augusta; St. Augustine, Covington; Cathedral Basilica; St. Catherine; Divine Mercy, St. Edward, Cincinnati; St. Francis Xavier; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Warson (70); Mary, Queen of Heaven; Our Lady of Lourdes (120)**; St. Patrick, Mayville; St. Paul

** Christmas Day**

7:30 a.m.
Cathedral Basilica

8 a.m.
St. Henry; St. James, Brooksville; St. Joseph, Cold Spring; Mary Queen of Heaven; Our Lady of Lourdes; Our Lady of the Rosary (300)*; St. Patrick, Taylor Mill

10:30 a.m.
St. Thomas

11 a.m.
St. Agnes; St. Charles Borromeo (35); St. John, Carrollton; St. Joseph, Cold Spring; St. Joseph, Taylor Mill; St. Pius X; St. Therese

8:45 a.m.
Holy Redeemer (25)

9 a.m.
St. Barbara; Blessed Sacrament; St. Edward, Cincinnati; Holy Cross; Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. John Mission (28); St. John the Baptist; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary; St. Matthew; Our Lady of Lourdes***; St. Patrick, Mayville; St. Paul; St. Paul, St. Peter and Paul; St. Philip, St. Rose of Lima; St. Thomas

9:15 a.m.
St. Bernard

9:30 a.m.
All Saints***; St. Boniface and James; Mother of God, St. Timonry

10 a.m.
St. Anthony, St. Augustine, Augusta; St. Augustine, Covington; St. Benedict; Cathedral Basilica; St. Catherine; St. Cecilia; St. Henry, Holy Spirit; St. John, Carrollton; St. John, Covington; St. Joseph, Cold Spring; St. Joseph, Warsaw, Mary Queen of Heaven; St. Patrick, Taylor Mill; St. Pius X

10:15 a.m.
St. Theresa

10:30 a.m.
St. Agnes; St. Patrick, Mayville; St. Thomas

11 a.m.
St. Barbara; Blessed Sacrament; St. Charles Borromeo; Divine Mercy, Immaculate Heart of Mary; St. Joseph, Camp Springs; St. Joseph, Crescent Springs; St. Mary; St. Peter and Paul; St. Paul, St. Peter and Paul; St. William

11:30 a.m.
All Saints; St. Francis Xavier; Mother of God; Our Lady of Lourdes***; St. Timothy

12 noon
Overflow Mass — 510 minutes later

**Extraordinary Form

***Spanish

( ) Parentheses indicate capacity of parish.
Our wounds, our gifts, and our power to heal others

Nearly 50 years ago Henri Nouwen wrote a book entitled, “The Wounded Healer.” Its reception established his reputation as a unique spiritual mentor, and he went on to become one of the most influential spiritual writers of the past half-century. What made his writings so powerful? His brilliance! His gift for expression? He was gifted, yes, but so are many others. What set him apart was that he was a deeply wounded man and from that disquieted place inside him issued forth words that were a healing balm to millions. 

How does this work? How do our wounds help heal others? They don’t. It’s not our wounds that help heal others. Rather our wounds can color our gifts and talents in a way so that they no longer educe resistance and envy in others but instead become what God meant them to be — gifts to grace others.

Sadly the opposite is often true. Our gifts and talents often become the reason we’re disliked and perhaps even hated. There’s a curious dynamic here. We don’t automat-

ically, nor easily, let the gifts of others grace us. More often, we’re reluctant to admit our beauty and power and we resist and envy those who possess them and some-

times even hate them for their gifts. That’s one of the rea-

sons we find it hard to simply to accept love. His brilliance always touched us in a healing way.

Instead, his brilliance always touched us in a healing way. Instead, his brilliance always touched us in a healing way.

For many of us, however, this could be our best Christmas ever. We have every reason to skip the frantic shopping and awkward gatherings that cause us stress during the Christmas season. As we hunker down at home, we are experiencing an unprecedented opportuni-

Host the focal point of our celebration of Christ’s birth.

Christmas is going to be different this year. It will be a somber and perhaps mournful season, for those suffering from the multi-

folded and separated ourselves from others, to stand out and to stand above, rather than as a gift to help others. Our talents can be used simply to point to how bright, talented, good-looking and successful we are. Then they simply become a strength meant to dwarf others and set ourselves apart.

How can we make our talents a gift for others? How can we be loved for our talents rather than hated for them? Here’s the difference: we will be loved and admired for our gifts when our gifts are colored by our wounds so that others do not see them as a threat or as something that sets us apart but rather as something that gifts them in their own shortcomings. When shared in a certain way our gifts can become gifts for everyone else.

Here’s how that algebra works. Our gifts are given us not for ourselves but for others. But, to be that, they need to be colored by compassion. We come to compassion by letting our wounds befriend our gifts. Here are two exam-

ples.

When Princess Diana died in 1997 there was a massive outpouring of love for her. Both by temperament and as a Catholic priest, I’m normally not given to grieving over some-thing as basic as coloring — provide important mental health benefits. These include a sense of relaxation, reduced anxiety, improved mood and concentra-
tion, enhanced self-confidence, a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Even something as basic as coloring may evoke memories of childhood and Christ-centered Christmas.

Sister Constance Veit, L.S.P.

DIY this Christmas!

The key to making this Christmas a positive experi-
ence is to see value in little gestures, rather than the end result of our efforts.

During the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in 2015, Pope Francis said that happiness and holiness are always tied to little things. “These little gestures are those places we learn at home, in the family; they get lost amid all the other things we do, yet they do make each day different. They are the quiet things done by mothers and grandmothers, by fathers and grandfathers, by children, by brothers and sisters. They are signs of tenderness, affection and compassion … Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home.”

I suggest that DIY efforts this Christmas focus on a
culture of grace and nativity.

Pope Francis penned a pastoral letter last December on the meaning of the nativity scene, in which he encourage this “beautiful family tradition. Great imagination and creativity are shown in employing the most diverse materials to create small masterpieces of beauty.”

The pope wrote, “As children, we learn from our par-

ents and from the schools how to share and love, how to encourage others, which encases a wealth of popu-

lar piety. It is my hope that this custom will never be lost and that, wherever it has fallen into disuse, it can be rediscovered and un-

revive. Setting up the Christmas creche in our homes helps us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem.

Pope Francis tells us, “Naturally, the Gospels remain our source for understanding and reflecting on that event. At the same time, its portrayal in the creche helps us to imagine the scene. It touches our hearts and makes even in the darkest of times, when so many of us might not even make it to Mass on December 25, so let’s make our homes like little churches with our DIY nativity scenes the focal point of our celebration of Christ’s birth.

Sister Constance Veit is director of communications for the Little Sisters of the Poor.
The Messiah is here! The readings for the third Sunday of Advent are: Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 and John 1:1-18.

It was just before Christmas. A music teacher borrowed the first of these that was eccentric preacher in the the Brooklyn Public Library. For some reason, through a clerical error; the transaction was not recorded.

A challenging call to unity

The English-language weekly edition of the Holy See’s newspaper, L’Osservatore Romano, recently published an article about “Unity a challenge after U.S. election.” That headline reflects the world around us, for the Messiah is here. We have overcome.

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The world around us, for the Messiah is here. We have overcome.
Travel bans and leaky walls: Retiring amid an unexpected crisis

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

If you’re like most people, you have post-retirement plans to travel, volunteer and finally escape from the same routines you’ve never had time for. Divine Providence Sister Fidelis Tracy was no different, only the timing and times changed some of those plans: she retired in 2020 amid a pandemic.

After 60 years of professional life as a sister and equally as long teaching, Sister Fidelis decided in May that it was time to say farewell to Thomas More University and her professional life. She currently lives in Covington with some fellow sisters from the Congregation of Divine Providence. One is still working, and the other two are also retired.

Sister Fidelis explained that for priests and religious who retire, “I think there’s an expectation that they continue to be involved in some kind of ministry in some kind of service. Most everybody does that kind of thing.”

However, it’s been difficult to get involved in anything new because of the pandemic. “It’s a weird time to begin retire- ment in terms of involvement,” she laughed. Sister Fidelis had plans to travel and visit long-time friends from out of state, and also hoped to volunteer for some new social services here in Covington, like the Parish Kitchen, that would be an interest of mine,” she said. “There are a lot of opportunities now to do part-time things and trying to prevent human trafficking, and doing something like that… I’ve never really had much time to do much but professional reading.”

Sister Fidelis started out her professional life as a high school math and science teacher, then transitioned into teaching theology and serving as a campus minister at Thomas More University.

The unstructured nature of her time, she said, has been both excellent and a challenge in terms of pushing herself to make a list and do those things. “I think the lack of pressure has been really good for me. … One of the things about retirement is you’re used to having to do stuff. As a teacher, every day you know you have to do preparation, you have to correct papers, it’s all scheduled. But once you get unscheduled time, it’s kind of hard to make yourself do the things you need to do. Because you don’t have to! So it’s been a little bit to kind of adjust.”

She’s taken up writing, a long-time goal of hers, to work on some essays she wants to make into a collection. She also has collected materials in hopes of leading workshops in parishes on theology and Scripture, though all such events are currently cancelled. Weekend retreats and reflection days are on the bucket list as well, and she has hopes for such things post-pandemic.

One activity she has been able to pursue with active results is working on reflections and recordings for virtual meetings with her community. She and a fellow sister are working on a virtual “Come and See” retreat, so she enjoys being involved in the planning. “A lot of it involves virtual meetings, and I’m not really keen on those, but at least I get the opportunity to continue some of the ministries,” she said.

Sister Fidelis greatly misses the Thomas More community, where she taught for 18 years, and has come to appreciate it all the more, now that she’s not on campus. She imagined going to plays, gallery openings, poetry readings and athletic events to stay in touch with faculty and students. Unfortunately, none of that is happening in 2020.

“Now that I’m not teaching, I really am more aware of how much I crave the relationship with both faculty and students, the presence of the people, the interactions, the social aspect … they were very rewarding. I think an appreciation for what ministry involves in terms of relationship is something I’ve been aware of,” she said.

She’s savoring the community at home, however, like most people this year. “It’s wonderful to be in community. To share the things that are going on … It’s a big house so there’s a lot of upkeep … and trying to help each other with different things, cooking for each other.”

Overall, Sister Fidelis knows her experience “is rather untypical of what retirement means,” but is grateful for the changes this has brought, while looking forward to a time when she can pursue more of her goals for service to the local community.

The Retirement for Religious Fund Collection supports retired priests and religious like Sister Fidelis Tracy who have served the Church with their whole lives. The collection will take place Dec. 12-13 during Mass at parishes in the Diocese of Covington.

Like parents, God loves his children even at their worst

Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — While sin may distort and disguise the image of Christ, God never lets it completely erase it, nor does it remove people from God’s abundant love, he has blessed us forever. And he will never stop blessing them in his peace and comfort, the pope said Dec. 2.

At his weekly general audience Dec. 2, the pope said that even when a sinner remains “in error for a long time,” God waits patiently, “hoping that the sinner’s heart will eventually open and change.”

“He does not stop loving their children, and they know that they have to do preparation, you have to correct papers, it’s all scheduled. But once you get unscheduled time, it’s kind of hard to make yourself do the things you need to do. Because you don’t have to! So it’s taken me a while to kind of adjust.”

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Sister Fidelis greatly misses the Thomas More community, where she taught for 18 years, and has come to appreciate it all the more, now that she’s not on campus. She imagined going to plays, gallery openings, poetry readings and athletic events to stay in touch with faculty and students. Unfortunately, none of that is happening in 2020.

“Now that I’m not teaching, I really am more aware of how much I crave the relationship with both faculty and students, the presence of the people, the interactions, the social aspect … they were very rewarding. I think an appreciation for what ministry involves in terms of relationship is something I’ve been aware of,” she said.

She’s savoring the community at home, however, like most people this year. “It’s wonderful to be in community. To share the things that are going on … It’s a big house so there’s a lot of upkeep … and trying to help each other with different things, cooking for each other.”

Overall, Sister Fidelis knows her experience “is rather untypical of what retirement means,” but is grateful for the changes this has brought, while looking forward to a time when she can pursue more of her goals for service to the local community.

The Retirement for Religious Fund Collection supports retired priests and religious like Sister Fidelis Tracy who have served the Church with their whole lives. The collection will take place Dec. 12-13 during Mass at parishes in the Diocese of Covington.
Pope proclaims year dedicated to St. Joseph

Allegra Thatcher

Through virtual Seminary Ball, Bishop Foys and seminarians express gratitude for support

The priesthood, as you know, is essential. It is the life of the Church, the life of our diocese. … I ask you to continue your prayers for them as they discern God’s will in their vocation. As you know, with the priests, the Church is need of good priests, holy priests. The generosity of the people in our diocese enables us to provide priests who are indeed good and holy, well-educated and well-formed.

Viewers also saw personal messages from each of the seminarians about their experience receiving the call and preparing for the priesthood, and a heart-felt thank you for the monetary and spiritual support.

Deacon Joseph Rielage, in his final year at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, expressed a special message as well. “Thank you so much to the people of the Diocese of Covington for their love and support. … St. Joseph practiced the virtue of justice in ‘full adherence and well-formed.’”

At all times.”

In the week before the ball, members of the Office of Stewardship and Mission hand-delivered gift boxes to registrants. Mike Murray, director, said this was important so that guests could obtain the wine glasses to participate in a toast led by Father Daniel Schomaker, vicar general and assistant director of seminarians, ending the Ball.

“Considering the pandemic,” the document continued, “all funds go to the Seminarian Education Fund, which provides the support necessary for the formation of the Diocese of Covington’s eleven seminarians.”

The video featured a message from Bishop Roger Foys, accompanied by footage of the Rite of Ordination. Bishop Foys said, “I am here to thank all of you for your support …

January 6, 2021

About the virtual event, Bishop Foys said, “I am so grateful to everyone who made the Virtual Seminary Ball such a positive experience. During these difficult days of COVID-19 we need uplifting events and experiences to remind us that all is not lost and that this pandemic will indeed pass. In the meantime, we do what is necessary on our part to stay healthy and safe and to ensure the same for all those around us. We’ve had to learn to do things differently but this does not dampen our enthusiasm for those things in life that are really important and that really matter.”

The virtual Gala, which was attended by over 360 people, usually takes place at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center. This year, due to concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Gala was held virtually with access granted to those who purchased advance tickets. Though the total number of registrants was lower than in past years, the total gross amount raised was $81,585 — significantly more than in the past. All funds go to the Seminarian Education Fund, which provides the support necessary for the formation of the Diocese of Covington’s eleven seminarians.

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The challenge of Our Lady of Guadalupe: Patroness of the unborn

Father Conor Kunath

It was Dec. 9, 1531, and Juan Diego, a native of Mexico who had only recently become a Catholic, was on his way to Mass. As he made the long journey from his home to the church, Juan Diego heard a woman call out to him, “Dear little Juan! He stopped dead in his tracks at the sound of the voice until he saw this beautiful native woman inviting him closer.

As the woman grew closer, he realized the woman was calling him, Juan Diego. He went closer and closer to this luminous woman until he could clearly see her face. Then she spoke again, telling Juan that she was truly Mary, the Mother of God, and that she desired that a church be built in her honor near Tepeyac Hill. This church would be a place of refuge for all her children, where she could hear their sorrows, cries and prayers. A place where she could alleviate every sorrow, supply every necessity and mend every misfortune.

Juan Diego accepted this charge and the very next day went to see the local bishop. He explained to the bishop how Mary, the Mother of God, had appeared to him, how she was dressed as a pregnant native woman, with a beautiful cloak full of stars around her, and how she had asked that a church be built in her honor at Tepeyac Hill.

The bishop was naturally skeptical and was hesitant to build a church until he had received some sign that this was truly Our Blessed Lady. Juan returned to the place of the apparition and explained that the bishop would need a sign before he would consider building the church she desired. Mary was completely undisturbed by this request and told Juan to return the next day. When he did finally return to that place, Mary had him gather special roses from a nearby hill in her tilma. These roses would be the sign.

Juan made haste to the bishop with these roses in his tilma, and when he was finally in the presence of the bishop, he opened his tilma and the roses poured out in a torrent. Juan and the bishop were shocked at what they found. Stamped on Juan’s tilma was a beautiful image of Mary. It was the exact image that Juan had described to the bishop when he first visited several days ago. The bishop was stunned, but was now fully convinced to do the task that he had been given by the Blessed Virgin through Juan. Plans were made and the church was built in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

This image would become the wellspring of tremendous graces for the entire Aztec people. The Aztecs were a people deeply devoted to their pagan religious practices. They honored a multitude of gods and practiced many ancient rituals including human sacrifice. There are estimates that during the high holy days of their religion more than 50,000 human sacrifices would be offered to their gods. This religion and these practices were deeply rooted in their culture, and the Catholic Church had a difficult time leading them into the faith and away from these practices.

But this image of Our Lady was uniquely compelling. The Blessed Virgin wore the customary black band around her waist that indicates that she was pregnant. By appearing as an expectant mother, Our Lady demonstrated the sanctity of human life to the Aztecs. This fact along with many others opened the floodgates of conversion for the Aztecs. Within 10 years of the apparition, ten million Aztecs were baptized into the Catholic Church. The practice of human sacrifice and the other ancient pagan rituals faded away as more and more souls were brought into the true Church through the patronage of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The importance of this image and story did not end with the conversion of the Aztecs or the death of Juan Diego. We, in our own time, must confront a situation distressingly similar to the one just described. The culture of death that overshadowed our nation with the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973 has infected the minds and hearts of our neighbors. No longer is life seen as sacred and precious, but rather as an obstacle to the unhindered self-indulgence that has become the idol of our age. Legal abortion has become the means of human sacrifice to this pagan idol.

It came as no surprise then, when last year the New York City Council, in a vote of 30 to 12, declared that abortion is a human right. This has set the categoric tone for the abortion debate in this country. The Roe v. Wade decision of 1973 has infected our society with the false idea that abortion is a right. Unfortunately, similar situations have similar solutions. We, like Juan Diego and his Catholic contemporaries, have the answer. The answer to all of these problems and questions is the Gospel of Christ. We can no longer pretend like this is a simple political or philosophical debate. We must deal with the spiritual and moral good and a spiritual boon to mothers who elect to have the procedure. This mentality is manifestly similar to the ones held by the Aztecs. Our situation is only nominally different from Juan Diego’s. Fortunately, similar situations have similar solutions. We, like Juan Diego and his Catholic contemporaries, have the answer.

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This image is indicative of a much larger trend in the pro-choice lobby. No longer is abortion simply a medical procedure used to “preserve the life of the mother.” It has become the great sacrament of a neo-pagan cult. More and more people are beginning to view abortion as therapeutic. For them it is not only not a bad thing, but it has become a positive moral good and a spiritual boon to mothers who elect to have the procedure. This mentality is manifestly similar to the ones held by the Aztecs. Our situation is only nominally different from Juan Diego’s. Fortunately, similar situations have similar solutions. We, like Juan Diego and his Catholic contemporaries, have the answer.

The Church celebrates her Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and week long celebration at Christo Rey Parish, Florence, in this 2018 Messenger file photo.

A statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe is prominently featured during the Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration at Christo Rey Parish, Florence, in this 2018 Messenger file photo.

The Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and the unborn, on Dec. 12.

St. Juan Diego was canonized on July 31, 2002; his feast day is Dec. 9.

For more information about the Pro-Life Office or to be added to our e-mail newsgroup, visit us online at www.covdio.org/prolife/ or call (859) 392-1500.
Catholic docs, bishop welcome U.K. ruling against puberty blockers

Simon Caldwell
Catholic News Service
MANCHESTER, England — A U.K. court has ruled children are unable to consent to taking drugs to change gender, in a landmark case welcomed by Catholic doctors and a bishop.

Three judges at the High Court in London ruled Dec. 1 that drugs known as puberty blockers must not be given to children under 16 without permission from a court to confirm that such therapies were in the child’s “best interests.”

They said that a court judgment should also be sought if there was any doubt that patients up to the age of 17 years were not fully aware of the consequences.

The 19-page ruling makes doctors who act without such judgments legally liable for expensive clinical negligence claims from former patients.

Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth described the judgment as “a ray of common sense.”

“As Christians, we believe that God creates people as male or female,” he said in a Dec. 4 email to Catholic News Service. “This is why gender dysphoria is a condition that needs to be addressed first and foremost by spiritual and psychological therapies, with real love and emotional support for the individual concern, rather than leaping to surgical and hormonal interventions.”

He said: “The primary aim of therapy should not be to help people physically change their sex, but to assure them that they are loving and loveable human beings and to help them find their true identity.”

Dr. Dermot Kearney, president of the Catholic Medical Association, said in a Dec. 4 email to CNS that the ruling acknowledged “there are unknown potential dangers associated with such interventions that may cause lasting damage to children, both in childhood and in later years.”

People with gender dysphoria need understanding and help,” he said. “There is no evidence, however, that interventions that reinforce or affirm a preferred gender rather than the gender genetically and biologically determined are helpful or indeed safe.”

“The evidence suggests that preferred gender-affirming interventions do not reduce levels of depression, substance abuse, self-harm and suicide among those affected by this illness,” Kearney said.

He said the current preferred approach “using pharmacological and highly invasive surgical strategies to deal with a complex psychiatric condition may represent bad medicine.”

The ruling followed a case brought by Keira Bell against London-based Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the U.K.’s most prominent sex-change service for children, and by the mother of a 15-year-old autistic girl who is on a waiting list for treatment.

(Continued on page 10)
Ruling against puberty blockers

(Continued from page 3)

Bell, 21, began taking puberty blockers at the age of 16 when she sought to become a man. She was injected with testosterone beginning at age 17 and underwent a mastectomy at 20 before she decided to “de-transition,” only to find even the drug therapies had caused irreversible changes.

She argued that she had been unable to fully consent because of her age and alleged that there were insufficient safeguards to protect young people. In their ruling, the judges said: “It is highly unlikely that a child aged 13 or under would be competent to give consent to the administration of puberty blockers. It is doubtful that a child aged 14 or 15 could understand and weigh the long-term risks and consequences of the administration of puberty blockers.”

The trust has said it is “disappointed” by the judgment and would appeal to the UK Supreme Court to overturn it. Gay rights groups in the UK have criticized the ruling, as well as Amnesty International and Liberty. Civil rights group

“Young trans people should not have their access to health care restricted simply because they are trans,” Amnesty and Liberty said in a joint statement posted online Dec. 3. “There must be no further curbs to the bodily autono-

mous and determination of any young person, particularly young trans people and anyone who wants to access gen-

der-specific health care,” they said.

Paul Conrathe, Bell’s lawyer, said in a Dec. 3 statement that his client would “vigorously defend” any appeal.

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‘Cathedral Square’ (Continued from page 1)

Assumption boasts world class artwork, including the following: (i) murals by internationally renowned artist and Covington native Frank Duvenek; (ii) the world's largest handmade church stained glass window measuring 67 feet x 24 feet, depicting the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., and manufactured by Mayer Studios in Munich, Germany; (iii) three significant organs, including the historic Matthias Schwab tracker organ built in 1859 and moved to the Cathedral in 1970 when the nearby St. Joseph Church was razed and the Wicks pipe organ in the south transept (circa 1930); WHEREAS, the Madison Avenue façade of the Cathedral Basilica was added between 1908 and 1910 and construction terminated in 1915, with two 52’ towers remaining unbuilt; WHEREAS, the façade features additional artwork, including the Assumption of Mary, and statues of saints and additional bas reliefs added to the remaining two tympana in 2020; WHEREAS, the Covington Latin High School is located immediately to the north of the Cathedral at 21 East 11th Street and offers an accelerated and challenging high school experience resulting in exceptional academic success for its graduates; WHEREAS, the Covington Latin School building was dedicated on December 7, 1941 (Pearl Harbor Day), and its expansion was dedicated on December 7, 2011; WHEREAS, the Covington Latin School has prepared many of the professional, legal, medical, judicial and governmental leaders in Northern Kentucky; WHEREAS, the former St. Mary’s Elementary School was housed in the “Cathedral Lyceum” building, which was dedicated in 1894 and located at 1125 Madison Avenue; WHEREAS, the Most Reverend Roger J. Foys, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese, moved the pastoral and administrative offices of the Diocese (the “Curia”) from Erlanger to the former St. Elizabeth North building, located on 21st Street, in 2005; WHEREAS, in 2012 the Diocese undertook to preserve the Cathedral Lyceum building as it constructed modern offices attached to the Cathedral Lyceum building in the same way that the original Covington Latin School building was preserved in concert with a modern addition to the facility; WHEREAS, the renovated Cathedral Lyceum building was dedicated on November 15, 2014, and the Curia was relocated from the St. Elizabeth North building to the new Curia headquartered in the See City of Covington for many decades to come; WHEREAS, Bishop Foys oversaw the construction of St. Mary’s Park at the corner of 12th Street and Madison Avenue. St. Mary’s Park features a striking bronze statue of Mary and Jesus, which was sculpted by David Frech of Beacon, New York; WHEREAS, St. Mary’s Park was dedicated on October 29, 2016; WHEREAS, St. Mary’s Park is open to the public during daytime hours and serves as Northern Kentucky’s “Fountain Square”; WHEREAS, the foregoing structures form a natural district that is worthy of distinction. NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered that the two-block area bounded by Scott Street on the east, 11th Street on the north, railroad tracks on the west, and 12th Street on the south is hereby designated as “Cathedral Square” as a means to celebrate the significance of the structures located within that area of Covington.
Next stop Grant County: ‘Food for Friends’ mobile food pantry

Allegra Thatcher
Assistant Editor

"Have a blessed day!" rang through the air as masked volunteers loaded bags of groceries into the backs of cars at St. William Parish, Williamstown. Bud Barnes, a parishioner at St. William Parish, and even a planter, said he feels called to do that. "Faith calls us to take care of the people in our community," he said. "I think there’s a real need and our working with underprivileged families that are struggling wanting to get more involved with Catholic Charities and our County and is now helping out in Grant County. "I’ve been wanting to get more involved with Catholic Charities and working with underprivileged families that are struggling financially," she said. "I think that’s a real need of the faith calls us to take care of the people in our community I feel called to do that." Bud Barnes, a parishioner at St. William Parish, said he appreciates a chance to help out the community in a different way: "a broader way than that we normally do... If we can make 100 families have a better day, give them something to eat this month, that’s cool," he said.

Mr. Pickett and the crew at St. William Parish suspect the numbers will increase as the pantry becomes more well-known. "We started out in Bracken having 55 households, and at the (most recent) one we had 81, so there’s been an increase, and I think that’s going to happen in every county," he said. "Grant County is more than twice the size of Bracken County so we’re planning on 100 households for now, and we’ll adjust from there."

To aid in publicity, he sent a press release to Grant County, and to school districts in the area. "They’re going to reach the most people, because they know who in the school needs food. My hope is that they’re communicating with all the households."

Father Benton Clift, pastor of St. William and St. John Mission, was present helping at the distribution and said he’s proud of the parish’s outreach. "Now we have more opportunities to enrich the community. It’s all God’s work."

"Bishop Foy’s always reminds us that the diocese is 14 counties, not three," said Mr. Pickett. "This is a way for us to represent the Bishop in a tangible way outside of Northern Kentucky."

The goal, said Mr. Hehman, is six pantries in six counties, each distributing once a month. "I’m excited to start getting food out to those who need it, and I’m excited to see the number of volunteers coming out and the joy it puts on their faces to be able to help out their neighbors and their friends."

For more information or questions, contact John Hehman at (859) 581-8974 ext. 124 or jhehman@covington-charities.org.

Grant County is leading the charge toward the next step in providing food for rural communities in Kentucky under the wing of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Covington. “Food for Friends” mobile food pantry was hosted for the first time at St. William Parish, Dec. 7, 1-3 p.m.

After the program’s kickoff in Bracken County in August, Catholic Charities added its next location to be opened in December. According to Alan Pickelt, executive director, Catholic Charities, the food items are provided by The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Freestore Food Bank is responsible for delivering to six targeted outlying counties in the Greater Cincinnati Area where poverty is higher — Bracken, Grant, Pendleton, Owen, Gallatin and Mason Counties.

Residents of the county can pick up 20-40 food items at no cost, so long as they bring a photo ID. The items range from canned goods, rice, pasta, meat and fresh produce, no cost, so long as they bring a photo ID. The items range from canned goods, rice, pasta, meat and fresh produce, depending on availability. The pantry is utilizing a drive-thru format due to COVID-19, so that pre-assembled packages, depending on availability, will be dropped off in cars to minimize contact.

Representatives from Anthem insurance will also visit each car to assist in filling out paperwork for medical needs. Grant County’s food pantry is hosted at the hall of St. William Parish, Williamstown. "Yes, we want to do this," said John Hehman, mobile food pantry coordinator. "COVID has really slowed us up... I was hoping by this time we’d have three or four panties opened up; so with COVID, I’m very happy that by the end of the year, we’re going to have two opened up."

Volunteers from St. William Parish and even a few veteran volunteers from Bracken County distributed food, though anyone can volunteer, and people come from as far as Taylor Mill and Covington.

Anisha Gilreath, a parishioner at St. Pius X, Edgewood, has volunteered at every monthly pantry in Bracken County and is now helping out in Grant County. "I’ve been wanting to get more involved with Catholic Charities and working with underprivileged families that are struggling financially," she said. "I think there’s a real need of the faith calls us to take care of the people in our community I feel called to do that."

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