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News Briefs

Religious freedom sparks collaboration

CINCINNATI (CNS) — A Cincinnati archdiocesan official called it an “exciting breakthrough” that mainline Protestant churches in Ohio have joined with the Catholic Church in objecting to the federal contraceptive mandate based on religious freedom concerns.

The Ohio Council of Churches, which represents 18 denominations, have adopted a statement saying that with the mandate of the Affordable Care Act, the government is defining what constitutes a religious belief and who has a right to that belief.

“This is an exciting breakthrough. To have mainline Protestant churches in solidarity with Catholics on religious freedom sends a clear and powerful message,” said Tony Stieritz, director of the Catholic Social Action office of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

In its statement, the council said that even the most recent proposal to implement the mandate “still narrowly applies the exemption to only ‘churches, their integrated auxiliaries, and conventions or associations of churches, as well as to the exclusively religious activities of any religious order,’” and does not include religious charities, hospitals and universities.

“According to the mandate, therefore, the government has now defined that these institutions are not religious enough to follow their own religious teachings in certain circumstances,” the council statement said. “This mandate sets a concerning precedent for any religious institution which may find itself in a position of having values that, within reason, challenge that of the state.”

Pope Francis decides to summer in Rome

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Unlike many of his predecessors since the early 1600s, Pope Francis has decided not to spend the summer months at the papal villa in Castel Gandolfo south of Rome, although he will observe a reduced schedule in July and August.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, told reporters that Pope Francis has decided that for the summer he will be “based at the Domus Sanctae Marthae,” the Vatican guesthouse where he has lived since his election in March. However, Pope Francis will travel to Castel Gandolfo, 15 miles south of Rome, July 14 to lead the midday recitation of the Angelus with townspeople and pilgrims.

Father Lombardi did not say why Pope Francis had decided not to stay at Castel Gandolfo for the summer, although he noted that when he was the archbishop of Buenos Aires, the former Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio did not go away for his summer holidays.

Official

Father Paul E. Hrezo has been appointed by Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton as parochial vicar to Father Robert D. Borer, pastor of Christ Our Light Parish, Cambridge, effective July 1.

Father Hrezo has served for the past six years as spiritual director for the College of Liberal Arts at the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio.



Holy Name Cathedral, Steubenville, will be renovated, announced Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton June 21. The church, located at 411 S. Fifth St., was founded in the 1800s and designated the cathedral when the Diocese of Steubenville was created in the 1940s. Rhon and Associates Design Inc., Pittsburgh, is the liturgical design consultant on the project. Source Architechnology Systems Inc., Pittsburgh, is the architect. The renovation is expected to return the cathedral to some of its originality, before it was rebuilt in the 1950s. (Sketch provided)

Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton pens letter June 21, says: ‘To Restore and to Renew – the Time Is Now’

Dear Friends in Christ:

At the press conference last July announcing my becoming your bishop, I was asked a direct question: “What plans do you have for our diocesan cathedral?”

My reply? I would need to examine the situation and consult with groups and individuals within the diocese to determine the best course of action.

And that is what has been done; that is what I owed to you, the people of the Diocese of Steubenville. I visited with consultative bodies within the diocese – the Presbyteral Council, the Finance Council, the College of Consultors, the Diocesan Building Commission, the Parish Council and Finance Council for Triumph of the Cross Parish. I talked with bishops

outside of our diocese; with my brother diocesan priests; as well as with leaders of the civic and business communities. I brought the issue to prayer, as you would expect me to.

Here is the answer to that simple, direct question. The diocesan cathedral will remain Holy Name Cathedral in the city of Steubenville. We will renew and restore our cathedral which bears the holy name of Jesus. Of course, it is in the



Bishop Monforton

Bishop

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holy name of Jesus where lies all of humanity's hope. As different church building styles illustrate the beauty of God's love, we will renovate the Romanesque architecture of our own cathedral.

While I am grateful for the funds that were raised through the cathedral campaign nearly six years ago, this decision is not purely financial. It seems to me the Diocese of Steubenville should continue the tradition established by my predecessor, the founding bishop of Steubenville. Bishop John King Mussio decided that Holy Name Parish would be the diocesan cathedral nearly 70 years ago. I confirm and extend that decision in this letter to you today.

A Living Archive

The Letter to the Hebrews instructs us that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for but not yet seen" (11: 1). It also seems to me that our Mother Church should be a beacon of such hope; that she must be more than simply brick and mortar topped by a roof.

As such, all diocesan parishes will be represented in the worship space of the soon-to-be-renovated cathedral. Furthermore, all parishes that have been closed, merged or consolidated will be listed in the cathedral in a prominent place, perhaps in the baptistry.

The Diocese of Steubenville was established in 1944. But we will comb the archival records and ideally be able to acknowledge all parishes that existed within the diocesan pastoral footprint prior to 1944. From the first celebration of the Eucharist at St. Barnabas in Deavertown and St. Mary in Temperanceville in 1822, through the most recent celebration of Mass in our own cathedral – all parishes have equal importance in building up the Kingdom. In other words, Holy Name Cathedral will be a "living archive" of our collective service to Our Lord Jesus Christ and our fellow brothers and sisters throughout almost two centuries.

Building an "Electronic Bridge"

With the elongated shape of the diocese that takes up nearly 6,000 square miles within the Ohio Valley and Appalachian foothills, it would be presumptuous to expect all diocesan residents to have the same access to our cathedral, especially at its rededication. That being so, I have instructed our design engineers to prepare a plan in which Holy Name Cathedral will have state-of-the-art technology permitting everyone in the diocese to view the rededication Mass by way of television or the Internet.

The consequence of such technology means we also will be able to broadcast Masses periodically from our Mother Church, so you can "attend Mass at the cathedral" wherever you may be. I hope this "electronic bridge" will

draw the people of our diocese closer together by means of our diocesan liturgies.

Under this same theme of unity, I have instructed the directors of the Holy Name Cathedral renovation project that all companies employed for this project will be companies within the Diocese of Steubenville. The only exception to the rule will be when there are no companies within the diocese that provide the services that are required.

Renovating Cathedral and Community

With Holy Name Cathedral remaining where it is, our diocese will maintain a northern and southern pastoral footing in the city of Steubenville itself. As the cathedral will not leave downtown Steubenville and both Holy Name Cathedral and St. Peter Parish will continue their respective pastoral presence, the question needs to be asked: Will the cathedral "renovate" its significant social presence?

As Holy Name Cathedral already does reach out to its immediate neighbors, the installation and application of improved security should provide an even more positive influence on the neighborhood. Electronic and human security – 24-hours-per-day, 7-days-per-week – will be provided within the annual budget for the cathedral. Improved parking and increased lighting along with electronics and constant human presence should help improve the neighborhood's safety and, more importantly, help with community-building efforts.

I am grateful for the substantial amount of funds remaining from the fundraising campaign of seven years ago. The \$2 million in the campaign fund has some contributions that are restricted, namely, individuals had stipulated to what cathedral project they were donating. Those individuals I will contact, requesting that the funds be appropriated to a similar renovation initiative at Holy Name Cathedral, thereby respecting the intention that the monies do benefit our diocesan cathedral.

A Symbol of Personal Renewal

Since last July, I have been blessed with the help and advice of many people from every region of the diocese. They all have the best interest of our Mother Church in mind, that "sacred space" where we celebrate so many of the most significant moments in our common life of faith.

Holy Name Cathedral is where, as in the past, we will have future ordinations for our priests and deacons, as well as professions of faith of our religious men and women, and consecrated virgins. Here is the sacred space where the first of two chrisms Masses will be celebrated during Holy Week, where oils will be blessed to be used throughout the diocese as we anoint our infirm and dying.

Here is the sacred space where we have the privilege to

celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper, commemorating the institution of the Eucharist, the hope of all humanity. We celebrate the Lord's Supper as well by recognizing the service to which each one of us is called at the reenactment of the washing of the Apostles' feet.

Yes, we are renovating brick and mortar at Holy Name Cathedral, but much more than that. Let this project really be about a renewal of our commitment to personal holiness, sacred service and unity of purpose. Let the cathedral stand for our renewed identity as believing Roman Catholic Christians, alive in Christ.

The Time Is Now!

Last September, I shared with you my episcopal motto: "Faith Comes From Hearing" (Rom 10: 17). I also shared with you at the beginning of this letter that "faith is grounded in hope." May we come together in prayer as a community of fellow believers, focusing our eyes on the holy face of Jesus all the while placing our hope in his holy name.

Hope has been a common theme throughout this strenuous process of deliberation. You placed your hope in me as your bishop that I will make the right decision. You placed your hope in me that I would have a willing and listening heart. You also showed kind patience with me these past nine-and-a-half months since my ordination and installation. For this, I am profoundly grateful.

As we move forward with the Holy Name Cathedral renovation project, please be aware that no additional goals will be asked of our diocesan parishes. But I do hope we will work together as a diocesan family in raising the additional \$3 million necessary for the completion of this shared endeavor.

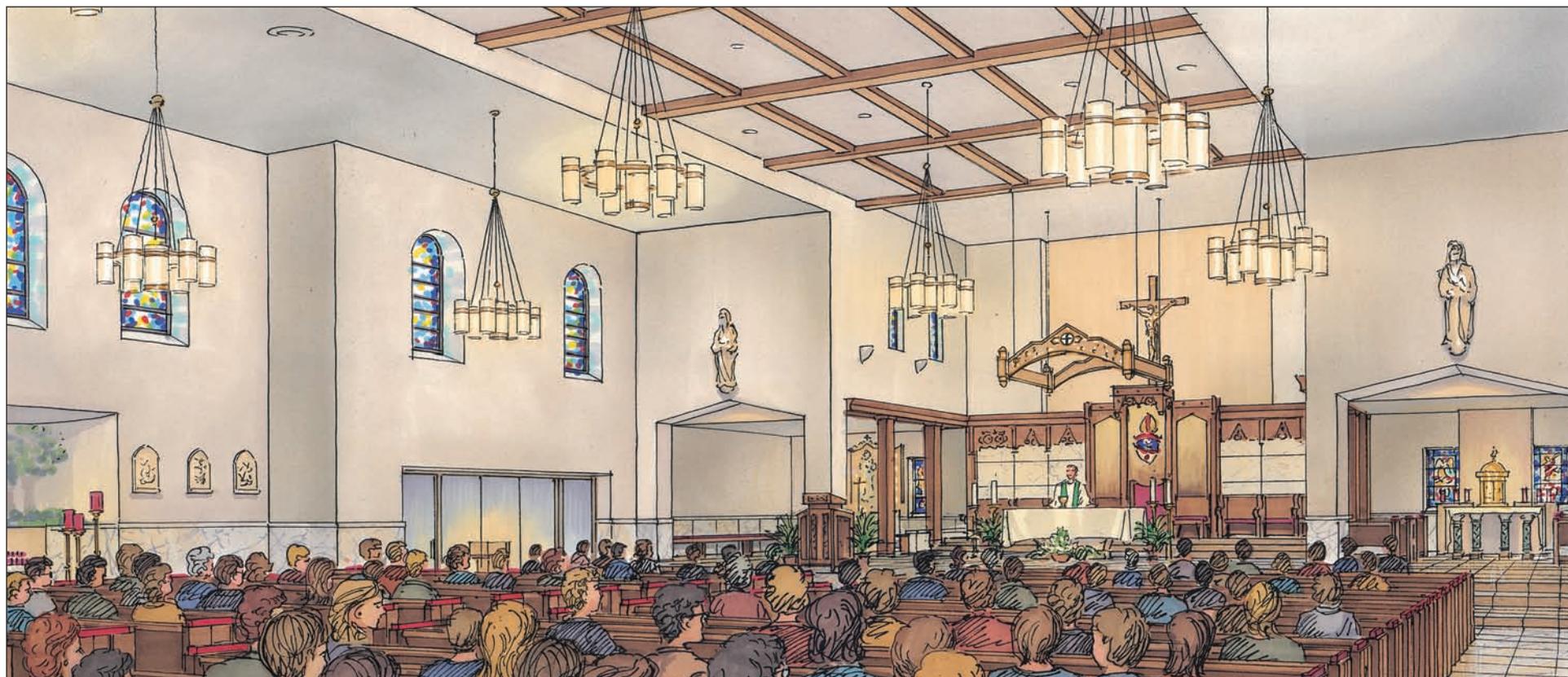
When will the cathedral renovation begin? That time is now! The initial work at Holy Name Cathedral will be modest at first. But I am confident our trajectory will become much greater in the coming months as we renovate our Mother Church from altar to front doors, from roof to basement hall.

Together let's pray for the intercession of the patroness of the Diocese of Steubenville, the Immaculate Heart of Mary. May she guide us through this blessed moment in our common history.

In gratitude for your patience and prayers, I remain,
Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Jeffrey M. Monforton
Bishop of Steubenville



In a renovated Holy Name Cathedral, interior light will more than double, predicted Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton, as he detailed possible changes, which, he said, will make the Steubenville church dignified, but not ostentatious. The chapels will remain in the front of the cathedral. (Sketch provided)