

Archbishop O'Brien dedicates Spiritual Life Center in Davidsonville

A fast-growing parish in Anne Arundel County has more breathing room thanks to a new Spiritual Life Center that will provide much-needed space for parish programs and worship.

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien dedicated the two-story building at Holy Family in Davidsonville Dec. 6, marking the culmination of a decade-long planning effort to meet the needs of the parish's 50 ministries.

The first floor of the new building houses Holy Family's religious education program and provides meeting space. The second floor holds a conference room/library, nursery, social hall and kitchen. The building also features a perpetual adoration oratory which is complemented by an outdoor meditation garden.

In blessing the oratory, Archbishop O'Brien asked God to also bless those who will gather daily to pray before the Blessed Sacrament.

"May our worship of this sacrament of your body and blood help us to experience the salvation you won for us," the archbishop said, "and the peace of the kingdom where you live with the father and the Holy Spirit - one God forever and ever."

The archbishop also blessed the social hall, calling it a place where "all may come to know one another and give witness to our faith in Christ."

Father Joseph F. Barr, pastor of the 1,600-family parish, told The Catholic Review

that the new building was designed to look like it was “always here.”

“(The building) has an elegant, but simple social hall with large windows looking out on the trees,” Father Barr said. “Our former hall was in a basement with no windows.”

The pastor added that the former nursery was located in a 12-foot by 8-foot storage room in the basement. The new nursery is 30-foot by 15-foot and includes its own sink, bathroom and storage cabinets.

“Our religious education classrooms are spacious and can be doubled for larger evening meetings and activities,” said Father Barr, noting that the administration wing was doubled in size. “We did not have the space before to reach out to those families whose children are not participating. Now we can.”

The \$8.1 million building was designed by Corkill Cush Reeves Architects of Lanham and built by Hopkins & Wayson of Owings.

The parish’s participation in the archdiocesan Heritage of Hope Campaign raised \$1.2 million in 1999, which was invested and grew to \$3.5 million. A parish capital campaign called “Meeting Tomorrow’s Mission Today,” was launched in 2007 and has garnered \$3.6 million in pledges.

Holy Family traces its roots to 1890. It became a mission of Our Lady of Sorrows in Owensville in 1952 and an independent mission in 1980 before being formally established as a parish in 1982.