

Carroll County parish dedicates new center for formation, fellowship

By Catholic Review Staff

Archbishop William E. Lori's first visit to St. Joseph in Sykesville May 31 included the dedication of the parish's new Formation and Fellowship Center.

Technically, the space is repurposed, as the parish of 3,200 families spent \$2 million to convert an old gymnasium. According to Marianist Father Neville O'Donohue, pastor, the space can be divided into two areas. It includes a kitchen, is fully audio-equipped and opens onto a wooded area.

"The generosity of members of our parish community, past and present," Father O'Donohue said, "combined with our hope of inviting everyone in the area to share our faith in Jesus Christ and our ability to enjoy life, made this project a no-brainer."

Tom Schwartz, facilities supervisor, was asked to join Archbishop Lori for a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"Tom was very involved in the whole process," Father O'Donohue said.

The center includes the commissioning of two oil paintings on wood by local artist Gordon Daugherty, depicting scenes from the Gospel of Luke. According to Father O'Donohue, the first panel shows Jesus accompanying two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

"The second," Father O'Donohue said, "depicts the scene later that day when the two disciples recognize Jesus when he broke bread. The two pieces express the two elements of the name of the center, formation and fellowship."

Archbishop Lori centered his homily at 10 a.m. Mass on the day's feast, the Most Holy Trinity, and connected it to the dedication of the center.

"Christian formation is not merely learning about Jesus, nor is it merely a question of

learning Gospel values,” he said. “Rather, Christian formation is all about our entering – body, mind and spirit – into the redeeming presence of Christ, who leads us to the Father in the Holy Spirit.

“Thus each parishioner contributes to forming a parish community of disciples – or, to use the phrase of Pope Francis, ‘missionary disciples’ – followers of Jesus who respond to the great commission Jesus gave his church: ‘Go and make disciples of all the nations ...’

“This means,” the archbishop continued, “bearing witness to Christ in our daily lives and looking for every opportunity to invite those who have left to return to the faith and to reach out to those who are searching for authentic truth and love.”

That, the archbishop said, ties into the second purpose of the center.

“Here the second purpose of the new parish center comes into view,” Archbishop Lori said. “We evangelize not just to increase Mass attendance but rather to be the Lord’s co-workers in gathering his people into a fellowship, a communion of truth, life, and love modeled on and sharing in the life of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

The morning included an acknowledgement of Marianist Father Paul Reich, associate pastor of St. Joseph, who is retiring to the order’s community in Dayton, Ohio. Father Reich spent 29 years at the faith community in southern Carroll County. He will be feted with a farewell dinner at the new center June 13.

The celebration of the May 31 Mass included another associate pastor, Marianist Father David McGuigan; Father John Worgul, pastoral associate for evangelization; and Deacons Michael Dvorak and Vito Piazza Sr.

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