

# **‘Historic day’ finally comes for Holy Family**

Calling it a “historic day” for the parish, Archdiocese of Baltimore auxiliary bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski helped Holy Family parish in Davidsonville break ground on a new religious education center, adoration chapel and social hall Dec. 13.

He joined Father Joseph F. Barr, pastor of Holy Family, and a host of clergy, local dignitaries and parishioners in breaking ground on the new center.

“The work we are beginning today should enliven our faith and make us grateful,” he said in a ceremony which preceded a Mass. “Let us pray for His help through this celebration, my brothers and sisters, that God will bring this construction to successful completion and His protection will keep those who work on it safe.”

The journey to the construction of the two-story, \$8 million center lasted a decade. Early in the 1990s, the parish built a new church and was still \$1 million in debt for its construction when Father Barr arrived in 1996. He wanted to add on to the parish’s 800 registered families.

In 13 years, the parish has doubled in size and outgrown some its facilities, creating a need to expand. For example, Father Barr said the parish is “maxed out” with the current 570 religious education students at the parish. The parish will now be able to host a summer Bible school that it has shared with other local churches in the past.

“I’m hoping it will help us inter-network better,” Father Barr said.

A year from now, the parish could be opening the building, which will feature eight new classrooms, the adoration chapel, a nursery and the social hall. Groups from inside and outside the parish are already lining up for their chance to hold events inside the building, which will be located behind the church and joined to it through a glass gallery.

When opening day arrives, Father Barr will face the challenge of fitting all of the groups into a schedule. He is also hoping the building will interest registered

families who might not attend Mass regularly.

During the ceremony, parishioners brought “river rocks” inscribed with prayers that will be used as the foundation for the new building.

“The river rocks are there to focus them on the fact they are part of the spirit of the building,” Father Barr said.

Bishop Rozanski blessed the rocks and the ground, calling on worshipers to ask God that “the work we begin today will contribute to the building up of his kingdom and join us in faith and love to Christ, who is the cornerstone.”

The church recently received a permit from Anne Arundel County to begin construction. The contractor, Hopkins and Wayson, has begun preliminary work as well. Architects Jim Cush and Bill Reeves of Corkill, Cush and Reeves, P.A. designed the project.

The building has been long anticipated by parishioners, Father Barr said.

“I think they are excited now,” he said. “After so many years of saying ‘Is this really going to happen?’ they can finally see something happening. They see that mound of dirt.”