

It's growing season at Our Lady of the Fields

Over the last few years, Father Eugene Nickol looked around Millersville and his parish, Our Lady of the Fields, and marveled at their simultaneous growth.

The pastor since 2002, Father Nickol knew something needed to be done to meet the physical and - more importantly - spiritual needs of Our Lady of the Fields' 2,500 registered families and potential parishioners.

One in a series of bold steps was taken Nov. 30, during a groundbreaking ceremony that aimed to usher in church renovations and a 40-seat Blessed Sacrament adoration chapel.

"It's an exciting time for us," Father Nickol said.

Prior to the groundbreaking, auxiliary Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski celebrated Mass with Father Nickol.

The church building, which is in its 50th year of operation, will be expanded to include a larger capacity, a new reconciliation area, quiet room, conference room and many more offices.

A glass wall in the back of the church that has been a trademark will be replaced with a newer, energy-efficient version and moved back three feet. The reconciliation room will be a welcome addition because the church had to remove its prior one two years ago, due to space issues in the development of the church.

Over the years, noise and other church activities have interrupted adoration of the

Blessed Sacrament. Father Nickol said a devoted space to the expanded eucharistic adoration is “the most exciting thing,” in the plans.

“I think we’re all looking forward to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the whole course of the day,” Father Nickol said. “It will be a helpful thing to people.”

If the parish receives final government permits and construction goes smoothly, the project should be completed by October 2009, Father Nickol said. Full construction is scheduled to begin after Memorial Day. The parish, he said, has already raised \$1.7 million since October 2007, with another two years in the capital campaign remaining.

“The people are giving generously,” Father Nickol said.

Our Lady of the Fields just completed a three-year strategic plan that is “charting the direction” of the parish as Millersville and Anne Arundel County continue their boom.

“We’re catching up to the growth,” Father Nickol said. “We already have standing room only. It’s an amazing area where there’s just a lot of Catholics. There are a lot of good things going on here.”