

After new name, new worship space in Glen Burnie a priority for Christ the King

GLEN BURNIE - Christ the King Catholic Church marked its inaugural feast day as a parish Nov. 5.

One day in the not too distant future, the pastor, priests and people of what was previously known as the Catholic Church of Glen Burnie intend to celebrate not just a new name, but a new worship space.

Archbishop William E. Lori celebrated Mass in the gymnasium at Monsignor Slade Catholic School. It was filled with those who previously identified with Holy Trinity, Crucifixion or Good Shepherd, the three churches that comprise the new parish; as well as a vibrant Hispanic community; and those from several African countries.

All look to the day when they can worship in a new church.

"We've got a building committee, and the goal is to put us all under one roof," said Father Lou Martin, pastor of Christ the King. "We own property on the Slade campus, and we hope that one day when you drive down Dorsey Road, it will look like a typical parish."

Rose Lis, chairwoman of the pastoral council, sees the parish's current iteration as the culmination of a process that has come full circle.

In 1972, she was an eighth-grader at Holy Trinity's parish school, what would become Monsignor Slade Catholic School. That was the year Crucifixion and Good Shepherd, as well as St. Bernadette in Severn, were created out of a Holy Trinity Parish that was bursting at the seams.

"Like many Catholic churches, attendance declined for one reason or another," she said, of recent decades. "We're coming together again, and I know that people will come back once we build our new church."

First came a new name, which was officially adopted last June.

“The three (former parishes) all had God-centered names as opposed to a saint, and a new name that is God-centered made sense to Archbishop Lori,” Father Martin said. “I Googled as many dioceses around the country as I could, and came up with 15 prospective names.

“Staff helped me pare that to five. We polled the community one weekend, and regardless of the Mass, each one picked names in the same order of preference.”

While the Feast of Christ the King is Nov. 26, the parish moved its celebration up a few weeks to avoid the Thanksgiving weekend.

It began Oct. 29 with Bishop Mark Brennan celebrating an International Day Mass that drew 700 to Monsignor Slade and drew comparisons to one of the five visits made to other churches in the archdiocese by the building committee.

“St. Katharine Drexel (in Frederick) left an impression,” Father Martin said. “Even eight months after it opened, it wasn’t just the building, it was the ambience, it was electric. Our International Day was the first time I felt that same pride here. It reinforced to me that this can work.”

The universal church was again on display Nov. 5, starting with “The Renew,” the plugged-in youth group led by Mauricio Ortiz, a sophomore from Archbishop Spalding High School in Severn. The majority of worshippers wore purple polo shirts or t-shirts with the new parish logo.

They included Ivette Collazo, a native of Puerto Rico who came to Holy Trinity a decade ago when her previous parish dropped its Hispanic Mass.

“We’ve got families from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico,” Collazo said. “We’ve also got Cameroonian and Filipino communities. The whole idea is *not* to have the Anglo and Hispanic and other communities doing their separate thing. Each can take pride in their own culture, but we need to build bridges and work together.”

A bilingual liturgy included translations from Father Jesús Aguirre, a native of

Bolivia who directs Hispanic Pastoral Care, in addition to being the Hispanic liaison to Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Returning clergy included Father Michael DeAscanis, pastor of St. Philip Neri in nearby Linthicum Heights and St. Clement in Lansdowne.

Archbishop Lori's homily highlighted the integrity, humility and compassion called for in the day's readings, qualities that Christ the King Parish is evincing.

"We started planning for this five months ago," said Father Vincent Arisukwu, an associate pastor and native of Nigeria. "If this was a new building, we would be giving Father Lou (Martin) a key. Individual efforts don't work. Community efforts do, when we all come together as one church, one parish."

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