

# History of St. Bernadette Parish

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The Community of St. Bernadette had its beginning when Holy Trinity Parish was divided into five separate areas during the booming growth of Anne Arundel County in the late 1960's (by 1969 it was the largest parish in the Archdiocese of Baltimore). The central administration came from Holy Trinity with places for worship located in each area. We were designated as Area E with Fr. Aloysius Allen as our first pastor. The community celebrated its first liturgy in the Martin Spalding High School auditorium on February 23, 1969.

A CCD program was established using the available classrooms. Unfortunately, within six months, Fr. Allen's stay with us was cut short by a heart attack. After a brief period, Fr. Edwin Mylin became our second pastor.

From the beginning, Fr. Mylin developed in us a strong sense of community, and under his guidance we became a parish in 1972. A poll was taken, names were compiled and we elected to name our parish after St. Bernadette of Lourdes.

From the beginning, there was a generally held feeling that the Martin Spalding auditorium was not really conducive to good liturgy. This was true from both the aspects of function and aesthetics. It seemed that our Masses were up high on a stage with the community as an audience. The problems with our worship area led to much discussion about the possibility of erecting our own building. A parcel of land was purchased from the Archdiocese of Baltimore. In August 1974, the rectory building was completed, and Fr. Mylin moved in. It was adjacent to the site of a possible future structure.

Into this milieu, in July of 1976, Fr. Joseph Connolly arrived as our pastor. Acting in the spirit of lay participation that emanated from Vatican II, he led us into a planned program of discernment. Through this process, the community assumed the decision making that determined our future. Everyone was given a chance to voice an opinion. We then, collectively, made all the major decisions as to where, when and what would be done. It may come as a surprise to people today to know that during this process "no church building" was a viable option. The final consensus was to build a modest building and avoid a huge paralyzing debt. In this way, all of the program needs of our parish could be fulfilled and we would be free to reach out to the greater community.

Ground breaking took place on April 29, 1979. The architect used a pre-engineered steel building in a design that incorporated worship space, gallery, offices, library and hall. Brother Mel Myers, a Marianist, from a liturgical design group, was commissioned to create a complete, unified worship area. The success of his efforts can be seen today in the frescoes, steel statues, furniture and stained glass windows.

Over the years, the parish became involved with the churches in the Anne Arundel area, co-founding the North County Emergency Outreach Network (NCEON) and participating in the shelter for the homeless during the colder months.

In 1992 Fr. Joe Connolly retired and Fr. Nick Cieri became our pastor. Today we are busy with the task of fulfilling the vision of those who have gone before. God's grace has been shed abundantly on St. Bernadette Parish through the generous talent and love of our people, both clerical and lay. We look forward to many more fruitful years of service.

In May 2007 Fr. Nick Cieri resigned as pastor of St. Bernadette Parish. Ann McDonald, our pastoral associate was appointed Temporary Administrator.

July 1, 2008, Ann McDonald appointed Pastoral Life Director.

July 1, 2012, Deacon Fred Passauer appointed Administrator.

August 1, 2019, Father Patrick Carrion appointed Pastor.

July 1, 2021, Father T. Austin Murphy appointed Pastor of Christ the King and St. Bernadette Parishes