

So. What would make St. Bernadette a really good parish?  
Um... (1) Powerful preaching, snappy music, a friendly congregation.  
Terrific. What else? (2) A new church, with enough room for  
everyone to actually pray. Super! And??? (3) Um...getting the youth  
active, keeping them connected. Excellent! What else would make  
St. Bernadette a great parish? (4) Helping us to know our Catholic  
faith, to learn Catholic beliefs and values. Very good. Anything else?  
(5) Building up our school, getting it out to the community.  
Excellent. Anything else? (6) A parish that's known for its love for  
the down and out, the hungry. Wonderful! And?? (7) How about a  
parish that prays? More retreats, more devotions, more services??  
Amen! (8) More social events, chances to get together and become  
friends. Sounds good! What else would make us a really good  
parish? (9) We could try to prevent unplanned pregnancies, and  
help pregnant women to choose to give birth. We could do that! Sure  
we could. (10) St. Bernadette could get involved politically: write  
letters to Congress, sign petitions, join a protest. (11) We could  
practice stewardship--get all our members to give a portion of their  
time, talent, and resources to this community. That would be  
wonderful! What else would make us a fantastic Catholic parish?  
(12) The parish that evangelizes--that invites people to become a  
Christian, to be a Catholic, to join St. Bernadette. How about one  
more way to be a terrific parish? (13) We could be a reconciling  
community; we could learn to forgive. Simply forgive. (14) People

would say of our parish: "See how they love one another!" [pause]

We have just described the Kingdom of God that Jesus wants to establish in Amelia and Pierce Township. But, where is Christ? In you; in me. We who are baptized are the Body of Christ. You and I are Jesus' hands and arms and voice in this acre of God's creation. Christ in us. To put it another way, we are the answer that the parish has been waiting for. All of us. Each of us. The parish will be about as loving as we are, about as prayerful as we are, about as welcoming as we are.

As you know, we have been in conversations with the Archdiocese about the future of our beloved parish, about the necessity of building a suitable church. Every Sunday we have prayed, "Guide our efforts toward a new worship space." But we have also prayed this: "And in your mercy, make our lives worthy of the new St. Bernadette Church." We hope to have some definitive response for our Town Hall meeting tomorrow night. Whatever their answer, our responsibility is the same: to be worthy of being a parish, worthy of a new church!