

This is pretty scary: 30 pages of architectural drawings, six contractors working on their bids, one ground-breaking being planned, and we arrive at the Fourth Sunday of Advent, turn to God's word for guidance, and listen to the first reading, Second Samuel, chapter 7: In which God says to King David: "So you think you are going to build a house for Me and my Ark of the Covenant! I, God, don't need a house, and you, David, are not going to build me one! I have done just fine in a tent, thank you!"

Thanks, Lord! Let's get a gift card from Scrip, go down to Dick's Sporting Goods, and buy a tent!

The Jews--we should call them Israelites--actually thought that God lived in the Ark of Covenant. What was the Ark? The Ark was a wooden box, 4x4x2, gold plated, that the Israelites carried around on poles. Inside the Ark were the tablets of the Ten Commandments. And the people would take the Ark into battle, because then God was leading them into battle.

And the Ark of the Covenant was in a big tent, maybe 45' x15' for so, and the Israelites would drag this big tent through the desert with the Ark inside, as they wandered through the desert to the Promised Land. King David doesn't build the Temple--the House--but his son Solomon does, and the Ark stays there until the Temple is destroyed 350 years later by the Babylonians. The Temple is rebuilt, but the Ark and the tablets are gone forever. If you are Jewish, where is God now? They would say, "in Jerusalem! God is in

Jerusalem more than anywhere else in the world!"

Here at St. Bernadette, we're not building a house either. God is building us a house! And against all odds: three years ago, Archbishop Pilarczyk said, "There is no parish that needs a church more than St. Bernadette, and no parish less likely to get one!" (I had told you the first part of that remark, but not the second.) As a direct result of humble prayer, God will fashion a new house--modest, reverent, and spacious. We have one architect, six contractors, and a bunch of subs bidding on the new church, but the real Builder is Jesus Christ. Our Ark of the Covenant will be the Tabernacle, and the new Tent will be an exquisite Eucharistic Chapel.

God is building our new church, but He doesn't want to live in it! God doesn't want to live in an Ark or a Tent, or even in our new church or our Tabernacle. God wants to live in you--and in me. *God came to earth in a person, not in a building....in the Virgin Mary, not in the Temple.* A life given over to Christ is far more beautiful than any church building. A life that is open to God's plan is more glorious than any cathedral.

Our Lord is not interested in being visited once a week for an hour. God favorite home is in you--and in me. And we can do that. Mary showed us how. We need to listen to Christ, and say yes--every day, all the time.

Groundbreaking in 60-90 days, but the real groundbreaking is our hearts, our relationships, our thoughts, our lives. That is where Jesus really wants to live!