

PARISH PROFILE

No one becomes anonymous in this 'not-too-big, not-too-small' parish

SEATTLE
BY ARMANDO MACHADO

St. Bernadette Parish encourages members to commit themselves to daily activity by "seeking out the presence of Christ in themselves, in one another, and in the wider community."

The parish, founded in 1958, has about 800 registered households. The accompanying St. Bernadette School (K-8) has 215 students. Father James Williams retired as pastor last July but remains as priest in residence.

"We're not a huge parish, but we're not a small parish," Diana Mastandrea, the pastoral coordinator, noted last week. She said she and other staffers know many of the parishioners by name. "People don't become anonymous," she noted.

"We've got a very strong base of seniors who have been with the parish since its inception," Mastandrea said. "They really are our foundation; we have a Seniors Group that's very active.... And we've got new people too; we are attracting people from outside our area."

She said the parish and the school have a close knit relationship. The school was built in 1960. The church underwent moderate interior remodeling in recent years, including new carpeting and new Stations of the Cross.

The parish ministries include the Environmental Ministry, the Music Ministry, the Seniors Group, the Young Adults Group, and the Youth Ministry.

St. Bernadette Parish

Founded: 1958

Registered Households: 800

Pastor:

Father James A. Williams retired as pastor in July 2005, but remains as priest in residence.

Pastoral Coordinator:

Diana Mastandrea

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In the Environmental Ministry, members decorate and prepare the church in a manner that fosters moods of festivity, penance, or anticipation — and so they play an important role in the creation of the sacred space in which parishioners worship together as a community, according to informational material. A support person and resources are available to help people who are interested in learning about and becoming involved in that ministry.

The Music Ministry includes musicians, cantors, a traditional choir, a contemporary choir, and a youth choir. Staffers tell new parishioners that they are welcome to join any of the music

groups. "If you have been given the gift of music, please use it in service of the Lord," new church members are told.

The Seniors Group, which welcomes parishioners 55 and older, seeks to further the spiritual life of its members, provide social activities, and work for the betterment of the parish.

The Young Adults Group, open to parishioners between 18 and 35 years old, looks to further the spiritual life of its members through various social, prayer and outreach activities.

The Youth Ministry has a group for junior high school students, and one for high school students. Each group has its meeting after the 6 p.m. Sunday Mass. They participate in a variety of social activities, faith-based gatherings, and service projects.

At St. Bernadette School, informational material says the family spirit in the school "is due to a dedicated staff, friendly children, involved parents, and ethnic diversity.... (The school's purpose) is to foster Catholic values and academic excellence."

This weekend, St. Bernadette Parish will sell subscriptions to The Progress and receive \$5 for each new or renewed subscription and all subscribers receive a special premium. For more information about this program, contact Progress Circulation and Marketing Coordinator Keri Hake at 206-382-2075 or kerih@seattlearch.org.