

My name is Adam Van Ersvelde. Many of you know my parents, Neal and Barb Van Ersvelde. And almost *everybody* knows my grandparents, Larry and Gini Van Ersvelde. I've lived in Grinnell and been a member of St. Mary's Parish for 17 ½ years - my entire life.

I was baptized by Deacon Bill right over there. I was trained by Baker Bill to be an altar server in this very sanctuary. I walked down this aisle to receive my First Communion from Father Bill Reynolds. (There have been a lot of Bills in my faith journey.) I stood at these steps facing Bishop Amos two years ago for my Confirmation. St. Mary's has been my Catholic home.

I attended that Town Hall meeting with my parents a few years ago when the building project was a pretty new idea. It meant a lot to me that the adults at our table were actually willing to listen to my input, even though I was just a kid. They asked me what I thought and why certain things were important to me.

At that point, I was excited, believing that this project would begin immediately and I'd enjoy using the new facilities during my high school years. Obviously, that didn't happen, and I'll graduate this spring and head off to college in the fall.

But the building project is still very important to me. One of my favorite parts in the design is the dedicated gathering space on this upper level. Currently, if we Van Ersveldes start chatting with people in the pews after Mass, it makes it tough for the people who want to stay and pray in silence. Sometimes the weather is just too cold or too hot or too wet to enjoy conversations outside. The new gathering space will be an area to chat without being affected by the weather and without bothering those still inside the church.

I'm excited for the possibilities the improvements will offer. I always imagine myself returning to Grinnell some day to work and raise a family. If that happens, my future family and I thank you for your willingness to contribute *now* toward improved facilities that we will enjoy *then*. And if I don't land back in Grinnell, countless other families will still call St. Mary's home, and *they* appreciate your willingness to contribute toward improved facilities that *they* will enjoy.

I'm already looking forward to seeing the progress when I come home from college on breaks next year. Thanks for supporting the Capital Campaign in whatever ways you are able to.