

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH PARISH

PASTORAL COUNCIL MINUTES

February 12, 2025 – Parish Rectory

I. ROLL CALL

Attendees: Monsignor Gentili, Father Sperger, Deacon Brady, Matthew Gavinelli, Dominique Galloway, Juan Navia, Bob Silberg, Kim Hirsch, Tony Martin, Ed Zupanc, Don Kraft, John Graham, Ryan Visniski, Linda Wilbourne, Mike Herron

Excused: Lisa Kopertowski, Karen Brody, David Serrano Gonzalez

Recording Secretary: Alicia Augustine

II. OPENING PRAYER

“Jesus came down with the twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes towards his disciples he said: ‘Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.’”

Msgr. Gentili shared the upcoming Sunday’s gospel reading from Luke 6:17, 20-26, which is sometimes referred to as the “Sermon on the Plain” and speaks directly to the reader. Msgr. reflected on how our actions are important and reflect our desires. By aligning our desires with those of our Lord, we can accomplish great things in His name, such as the success of Code Blue during the month of January (~700 ‘heads on beds’ during that month alone). Others reflected that we are given many opportunities to do the right, or wrong, thing with our actions. Msgr. collected everyone’s intentions as the group prayed a Hail Mary.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS PPC MEETING

Matt Gavinelli asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2024 meeting. Don Kraft seconded and the members of the committee unanimously approved the minutes. Teresa Fischer will post on the website.

IV. CELEBRATING GROWTH MINISTRY WEEKEND

The Celebrating Growth Ministry Weekend will be held on the weekend of March 15th and 16th. Matt Gavinelli described how holding a bi-annual event that includes all the ministries seems to be successful and less time-consuming for the ministries than previous efforts. He requested additional assistance with event set-up and Tony Martin volunteered.

V. REMEMBERING BOB WEIKEL

Monsignor led reflection on the sudden and unexpected passing of council member, Bob Weikel. Monsignor recalled Bob’s integral contribution to the formation and success of OLG as a parish. Bob held a deep love for the parish and contributed both dynamic ideas and tireless initiative that shaped physical and programmatic infrastructure for the parish in necessary and innovative ways. His professional

assistance and friendship will be greatly missed, and his legacy serves as an example of service to current and future council members.

VI. OLG STRATEGIC PLAN

The OLG Strategic Plan for 2026-2031 is in progress under the direction of several subcommittees. The three primary strategic areas are: Evangelization and Outreach, Organization and Institutional Review, and Fiscal Responsibility and Stewardship. Several members have begun necessary preparation and fact finding, including starting a new tracking tool. The focus will be on how to efficiently leverage the physical and programmatic foundations that have been established by previous Strategic Plans to promote increased participation and spiritual growth.

VII. ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA CONSULTATION SESSION AT OLG APRIL 24TH

These consultation sessions are open to all, including priests and parishioners. They are designed for dialogue about the challenges that the church faces, including declining priest and parishioner populations. While OLG itself has been growing, our community will be called upon to share ideas and resources with locally and across the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, in what is being called the “Fourth Way”. This community mindset will promote growth and reduce redundancy, making better use of resources for all who participate. Fortunately, OLG already has several cross-parish initiatives from which to draw inspiration and connections.

VIII. EVANGELIZATION INITIATIVES

A. Disciple Maker Index

Back in 2021, OLG participated in the Disciple Maker Index (DMI), an Archdiocese of Philadelphia Initiative. This March, OLG will be participating again. This survey is voluntarily completed by parishioners to gauge satisfaction with their parish experience. In 2021, the majority of participants were those who were already active in the parish, so results may not be generalizable to the broader parishioner population. Though we hope a larger percentage of the parishioner base will participate this year, it will also be informative to compare results to those in 2021. The results of this survey will be used to inform evangelization activities.

B. PREP Update

Sixty-two students received their First Penance this past Saturday, along with any other parishioners who wanted to attend. We are grateful for the presence of so many priests from our local community. We are preparing for Lenten Confessions on March 11th and First Holy Communion Retreat on March 15th. New from the Office of Catechetical Formation and just approved by the Archbishop: Those families choosing Homeschool Catechesis rather than in-person Prep will be required to complete the Loyola Press Formation series. This is a 10-session video course that is required of our Catechists. Registration for 2025-2026 Prep, including 7th Grade Summer Prep and 8th Grade Confirmation Camp, will open the beginning of April. We will offer an early bird discount.

C. Youth Ministry Update

Lisa Kopertowski arranged to have travelling exhibition “Call from the Crucified Heart” come to OLG on Sunday March 16th. The evening will begin with confession at 5:30pm (until 7pm) and include meditation and prayer for each of a series of relics from Christ’s passion, followed by veneration of the relics. This exhibit brings together relics only found at more than six different churches in Rome.

The Walking with Purpose group continues to minister to around 35 women, with extremely positive, transformative feedback. Lisa is planning the study for next year in order to capitalize on this momentum.

Youth Ministry groups are all doing well. The Father/Daughter Dance will be held on Friday, February 14th, with almost 100 fathers and daughters attending; about 1/3 larger than last year. The Kairos retreat will occur the following weekend, with around 13 attending/giving testimony. Stuebenville registrations are open and we have several service trips scheduled each month.

The Young Adult group is doing very well and recently hosted Deacon Steve Javie in a packed room. He was a dynamic speaker and Fr. Sperger commented that his talk was fabulous and faith centered. Additionally, the Young Adults are getting ready to start a new study for Lent with a focus on active discipleship. Lisa and Fr. Timothy will once again hold a Seder in April. They continue to look for ways to cooperate on activities and service projects.

D. Hispanic Ministry Update

On December 11, 2024, we held another “Mañanitas” with about 90 people in attendance. Evening Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, on December 12, 2024, was attended by around 500 members of the parish and the Hispanic community. We had very positive feedback on this special Mass. Cafe Guadalupano continues to support parishioners on the second Tuesday of every month (February 11th was Cancelled due to the snow). We continue to hold a special monthly Mass and Holy Hour in Spanish on the first Thursday of each month. January’s Mass was attended by about 20 people and we hope to continue to grow this group or make adjustments to accommodate as many as possible.

E. Adult Faith Formation

Mike Herron and others were very pleased with the first group that attended Christ Life and the six prayer groups that have spun out of that experience. John Graham supported this by reflecting on how the experience develops new relationships between people, knitting the community in tangible and valuable ways. These are the relationships that will build an active, nurturing community.

Mike Herron is working to book speakers that match identified parishioner needs or who are well-known enough to attract a large audience. He is hoping to get speakers like John Bergsma and Scott Hahn in the last part of the year and hoping to tie into our 25th anniversary as a parish. Msgr. commented that these are invaluable opportunities and encouraged the group to continue to push the limits for ideas and we’ll see what OLG can support.

IX. WE ARE ONE FAMILY CARNIVAL

The Family Carnival committee is in the process of recruiting managers to support the various carnival operations. Msgr. reiterated that “failure is not an option” and that all members will work to ensure that the Family Carnival has the necessary resources and advertising to draw parishioners to attend.

X. PARISH CELEBRATION OF THE JUBILEE YEAR, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH’S JUBILEE YEAR, AND AN UPDATE ON PARISH HISTORY

Msgr. Gentili described plans to weave in the Jubilee theme throughout homilies and talks throughout the year, as these “re-celebrations” are a wonderful opportunity for special blessings and graces. Additionally, upcoming talks and trips hope to incorporate these celebratory themes (e.g.: Miraculous Medal Shrine trip, talks by Deacon Brady and Fr Sperger on saints and Lenten spirituality, respectively).

Additionally, Juan Navia updated the council on his progress with cataloging the history of OLG. He commented that he has reached the current times and is looking for a few pieces. Tony Martin recommended that Juan reach out to Msgr. James D. Beisel, Pastor at St. Robert Bellarmine, who was Vicar for Bucks County during the conception and formation of OLG. Msgr. and others agreed with this approach.

XI. FINANCE COUNCIL UPDATE

Don Kraft provided an update on news from the OLG Finance Council. He relayed that income was up around 5%, but that this was put towards planned expenditures. A subcommittee has worked hard to develop a Planned Giving program, which will gradually be rolled out in a silent phase in early March. The Finance Council would love to consider Pastoral Council approved initiatives (from the Council itself or various ministries) as we shift from infrastructure to programmatic growth and outreach.

XII. QUESTIONS/CONCERNS/NEW BUSINESS

Kim Hirsch described a beautiful idea for helping parents remember lost children, particularly around the holidays: Parents write the name of the child mourned and put it in a “cradle of the beloved”. These children are remembered during Advent and at Christmas time, the families are presented with an angel ornament. All agree that this was a beautiful gesture and might fit well at any time of the year, perhaps Mother’s Day. Msgr. suggested that Kim present this idea to Denise and determine the best way to incorporate this act of ministering to the hearts of those who have lost a born or unborn child.

XIII. NEXT MEETINGS

Parish Pastoral Council: April 30, 2025

Joint Council Meeting: June 11, 2025

XIV. CLOSING PRAYER

Monsignor thanked everyone for their efforts, gathered intentions, particularly for those who are struggling, and remembered lost souls, particularly Bob Weikel as well as his grieving wife, and all prayed the Our Father.