

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH PARISH

PASTORAL COUNCIL MINUTES

April 30, 2025 – Parish Rectory

I. ROLL CALL

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

Excused: Deacon Brady, Lisa Kopertowski, Karen Brody, David Serrano Gonzalez, John Graham, Mike Herron

Recording Secretary: Alicia Augustine

II. OPENING PRAYER

“God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.”

Msgr. Gentili shared today’s gospel reading from John 3:16-21 and reflected on words from the late Pope Francis that remind us how everyone is included in the Body of Christ. Msgr. Gentili encouraged the council members to take on the challenge of seeing Christ in everyone around us, even those with whom we have a difficult relationship; this mindset should be imbedded in our efforts to evangelize, develop a pastoral plan, and honor our 25th anniversary as a parish. Others felt the passage called to mind trusting in God’s plan when we lack explanation for hardship, having a willingness to step out of a comfort zone to plant a mustard seed of faith in others, and encouraging others to “pray, hope, and have no fear.” The group then prayed a Hail Mary for Pope Francis and the intentions of those in the room.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS PPC MEETING

Matt Gavinelli asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2025 meeting. The first motion was by Bob Silberg and the second by Tony Martin. 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 was fruitful, with fifty-three signups across twenty-two ministries. Matt Gavinelli praised Fr. Sperger’s efforts to advertise the event during Mass that weekend. Matt also commented that while this is a worthwhile event that should be continued, he reminded everyone that ministries should not be waiting for the fair to encourage people to volunteer or they may miss opportunities for growth and assistance.

V. OLG STRATEGIC PLAN

The OLG Strategic Plan for 2026-2031 is being developed by several subcommittees. The three primary strategic areas are: Evangelization and Outreach, Organization and Institutional Review, and Fiscal

Responsibility and Stewardship. The group plans to put forth a proposal by June for review, with an intent to reach a final product by December 2025. Msgr. Gentili emphasized that the Strategic Plan should be a roadmap for progress in the strategic areas so that we and others will know how to implement our goals and efforts to be the hands and feet of Christ to our parish community, our geographic region, and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Msgr. Gentili reflected that a plan “is only as good as it is lived.”

Don Kraft provided an overview of Evangelization and Outreach and reflected on how past iterations of the Strategic Plan have provided a firm foundation to the parish. This section of the plan will outline how our parish will achieve new goals that are different in nature in comparison to past strategic plans. The goals will focus on how to efficiently leverage the physical and programmatic foundations to promote increased participation and spiritual growth of our parishioners, as well as engage those who do not come to church by drawing them into relationships with God and our community.

Don Kraft also provided an overview of Fiscal Responsibility and Outreach, which will focus on continued management of known financial obligations, as well as preparations for unforeseen events (eg: economic stressors) and growth in new ways.

Juan Navia provided an overview of Organization and Institutional Review. He shared that all twenty-two ministries are in good financial shape, with no overspending. The Parish standard operating procedures will need to be updated to ensure succession planning efforts are successful.

VI. RECAP OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA CONSULTATION SESSION AT OLG APRIL 24TH

Don Kraft and Fr. Sperger both provided feedback and insight into the consultation session held on April 24th. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is working on a strategy for resource management in a time of priest and parishioner shortages. They are focused on rolling out a strategy in which a few churches are gathered into a ‘hub’, which will be staffed and supported by the Archdiocese and serve as a nexus for collaboration, exchange of good practices, and conservation of resources among the member parishes. Currently, there are five hubs, with a twenty-year time horizon for one hub per county. As we form OLG’s Strategic Plan, we need to consider how we can maximize our readiness for participation in this process, both in giving (eg: what we have in place that would make us a good hub) and receiving (eg: how can we leverage hub operations to avoid redundancy to more efficiently and effectively achieve our own goals). The particular goal of evangelizing those who no longer attend church is particularly relevant to our own Strategic Plan.

VII. EVANGELIZATION INITIATIVES

A. Disciple Maker Index

OLG completed its third undertaking of the Disciple Maker Index (DMI), an Archdiocese of Philadelphia Initiative. This survey was voluntarily completed by parishioners to gauge satisfaction with their parish experience. Notice went out via all possible media channels, including text, email, bulletin post, and Mass announcements. The effort garnered 493 responses, which is down from 583 participants in the previous round. The organizers did find that targeted email blasts (eg a blast to PREP parents) generated slight boosts in response. The data will need to be processed and analyzed prior to making any insights. Msgr. Gentili reminded everyone that while this process is a worthwhile endeavor, it is intended to check the pulse of the community and that we will need to evaluate the results in context of the demographics of the participants. Additionally, any insights gained will be helpful, but we need to continue to rely on God’s grace to direct our efforts moving forward.

B. PREP Update

Sixty-four students will be receiving First Holy Communion on Sunday, May 4th. The May Procession is Tuesday, May 6th (both the parish community and PREP families are invited). The

May Crowning will be held during all Masses on Mother's Day weekend. The PREP students will be involved with the crowning during the 5pm and 11am Masses, while Lisa's youth ministry groups will be involved at the 9am Mass. PREP registration opened on April 1st and 112 students are registered (seven from other parishes and fifty-four registered for the 7th/8th grade summer camp).

C. Youth Ministry Update

Living Stations of the Cross had great youth participation and were wonderful again this year. We held Operation Resurrection again and delivered 47 lilies to families who had a family member pass away within the past year. We collected 1,832 candy-filled eggs for Visitation Catholic Social Services Center in Kensington and took them down to the Easter breakfast they did the week after Easter, as well as help them set up, serve and clean up. After Holy Thursday Mass, Frs. Sperger & Reagan, young adults, and some youth group members participated in "Churches-N-Eats" where we went to three different churches and then out to Applebee's. Twenty-four youth group attendees went to see the Carlo Acutis, Roadmap to Reality movie on Sunday and about ten young adults joined Fr. Sperger to see it April 29th. Veneration of Saint Carlo Acutis relic will happen in the church when his new canonization date is announced. The Steubenville bus is full and we'll be attending from June 27th through June 30th. We have kids from several other parishes coming as well. We will be starting our first male / female Catholic book study for young adults in two weeks. Young adults will continue through July. The Advisory Board for C.R.E.W. (Young Adult group name,) met and set a schedule for next year. To wrap up the year for our youth, Our Mother/Daughter Tea, (for all four Sunday morning girls' groups,) is in May and the Father/Son BBQ for Blue Knights will be at Bush Park.

Youth Group to continue this summer one night during the week. Looking to hopefully include any possible future seminarian in on this as well. Also looking to do a few service projects for those who can't participate during the year.

Walking with Purpose finished up strong with incredible survey results. They will be included along with the minutes. The results are really encouraging, as reflected in data and open-ended feedback/comments. They demonstrate the powerful impact of this women's study.

D. Hispanic Ministry Update

On April 29th, 2025, three couples got married in a beautiful ceremony presided over by Fr. Sperger (OCIA program). Three Spanish-speaking parishioners received confirmation and First Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil. Cafe Guadalupano continues on the second Tuesday of each month. We have a steady attendance of 14-15 people per session. Monthly Mass and Holy Hour in Spanish on the first Thursday of the month has had a steady attendance of 15 people per Mass. The Hispanic Ministry leaders will meet on May 5th to discuss our participation in the parish festival and how we can concretely collaborate with the parish's strategic and national pastoral plans for the Hispanic/Latino population at the parish and archdiocese levels. Msgr. Gentili emphasized that we will continue to support this ministry and the community logistically and spiritually.

E. Adult Faith Formation

Mike Herron, Director of Adult Faith Formation, had several updates on this ministry. OCIA (English-speaking) saw 6 newly confirmed into our Catholic faith this Easter. Linda & John Gray will naturally stay connected as good mentors and leaders, but have shifted OCIA Coordinator duties to Jake & Jeannie Sonke. Linda & John Gray have delivered OCIA 40 years of Distinguished Service! Commendable. Alongside the OCIA program, Mike will extend himself and bring to life our OLG vision for each of them to be vibrant and welcoming, growing disciples and making church matter. We will extend current efforts and activities to encourage addition of newcomers to OCIA throughout the summer and start new OCIA groups off right by

offering weekly orientation meetings to orient and help them to navigate the mass and the campus (watch relevant ChristLife video) and to take care of administrative matters.

There will be a meeting Sunday, May 4th for recent OCIA Alumni to review OLG ministries & adult faith formation programs. 7. Mike will continue outreach activities to guide OCIA alum (recent & past), including activities that get them oriented and excited about church events, ministries & prayer groups, as well as advertising evangelization efforts (what it looks like, how it fits with their personalities and faith). In tandem with these engagement efforts, we will help OCIA alum to explore potential for others in their lives to join us at mass, the next OCIA cohort, or one of our ministries or programs.

We have a number of programs running concurrently. The ChristLife Program is comprised of three Courses: Discovering, Following, and Sharing. Our current group will begin on May 1st and will follow the Sharing Christ course. We anticipate thirty-five attendees. We are also considering starting a new group in September with the Discovering Christ course.

Our Men's Faith Formation Group will meet on alternate Saturdays: May 3, 17, 31. Our Adult Bible Study meets on Tuesday evenings and is run by Tony & Lisa Cocchiara, who are guide the study, Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John. Our Women's Bible Study, run by Marylene Funk, meets on Mon/Tue and just completed 1st Corinthians. We are planning their next program. Our Rosary Group meets on Wednesday evenings.

Finally, we have big speaker events from the St. Paul Center coming up. On November 21, 2025, Dr. John Bergsma will be speaking at OLG. For Lent 2026 (hopefully March), we're working on another big event to feature Dr. Scott Hahn (and perhaps Kimberly or alternative). Anyone interested in helping me to plan these events, contact DAFF@OLGuadalupe.org or give Mike Herron a call at 267.884.1779

VIII. WE ARE ONE FAMILY CARNIVAL PLANNING AND GIFT BASKETS

The Family Carnival committee has received about twenty gift baskets from the various parish ministries. Additional efforts include securing entertainment (eg magician, juggler, stilt performer), creating pathways to buy tickets via Parish Giving, providing vouchers to PREP students, and marketing efforts to attract attendees from surrounding neighborhoods. Matt Gavinelli proposed a basket from the Pastoral Council and will organize this effort.

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

Msgr. Gentili reminded everyone that all 2025 initiatives should be done in honor of our Jubilee Year. This includes "branding" events and included our 25th Anniversary logo on event materials. On November 8, 2025, OLG will host a Parish Celebration Mass, followed by dinner at the Bucks Club. Father Joseph Quindlen plans to be in attendance. Matt Gavinelli suggested inviting past seminarians to attend, as well as hosting coffee/donuts after the Sunday Masses.

X. PARISH HISTORY

Juan Navia plans to have a first draft of the parish history project by July 1, 2025. He is grateful to all of those who have been assisting with this project, including council members and current and past clergy and staff.

XI. QUESTIONS/CONCERNS/NEW BUSINESS

No new items were presented to the council.

XII. NEXT MEETINGS

Joint Council Meeting: June 11, 2025

Parish Pastoral Council: September 24, 2025

Parish Pastoral Council: November 5, 2025

Joint Council Meeting: December 3, 2025

XIII. CLOSING PRAYER

Monsignor thanked God for the past twenty-five years as a parish, the life and legacy of Pope Francis, and that gift of our Holy Mother Church. He asked that Holy Spirit watch over the Cardinals at the conclave and guide their discernment of the next man chosen to occupy St. Peter's Chair. We entrust this process and the future of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Him. The group prayed an Our Father for these intentions.